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Managing diabetes: How to make changes



By [MsH_ISB](#)

Three steps to making lifestyle changes that can help you manage your diabetes.

I think change gets harder with age. I cringe inside when I find out I'm going to have to change the way I've been doing something at work and learn a new way, for example. It seems the only thing we can be certain about with change is that it will happen again. Health care behaviors seem to be some of the hardest changes to make.

A number of theories about human behavior and change exist. One such theory, by Kurt Lewin and Edgar Schein, proposes that change is a three-stage process — unfreezing a behavior, changing, and then refreezing the new behavior.

Getting motivated: Unfreezing

The first stage — the unfreezing stage — is becoming motivated to change. How do we become motivated to change? A new diagnosis of diabetes, a poor A1C report from the medical care provider, nudges from a family member or self-evaluation all might motivate change. At this stage, the change process becomes a mental game of mind over matter. We realize the current situation isn't working and that ignoring the condition won't make things better. Real and unreal anxieties can slow down and impede the process of change. You might question if you can change, how to start or if it will make a difference.

Making changes

The change stage follows making the decision that a change needs to occur. Next, we must decide what needs to change. Activities that help us change are beneficial in the change stage. These activities might include:

- * Choosing a specific behavior you want to work on changing
- * Being realistic — avoid trying to change everything at once
- * Writing down the change and posting it in plain sight to give yourself a daily reminder
- * Discussing the change with others around you and asking for their support and encouragement
- * Finding a support group
- * Seeing your diabetes health care team regularly
- * Changing your environment to support your change, such as getting snacks out of the home

Making it permanent: Refreezing

The refreezing stage — making the change permanent — is probably the hardest stage. This final stage is when the change becomes habitual and includes developing a new self-concept. You become a person identifying and living for wellness.

[Living with diabetes](#)

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