

## Readiness to Change

Improving our emotional awareness contributes to improved happiness, health and well-being. The information and tools you receive in Kids Fitness Clinic are intended to help you on your pathway to better health. However, the timeline on the path to better health is different for everyone. Why? The timeline is based on an individual's readiness to change.

People are ready to change for different reasons and at different times. For example, maybe during COVID, with the quarantine and uncertainty, you lost the opportunity to interact socially and be active physically - resulting in being far more sedentary than usual. Perhaps your stress level has escalated and one way you manage stress is using food for rewards or solace. You might have had a concerning visit with your doctor, received a new diagnosis and are looking for ways to change your nutrition and exercise behavior to manage your health. You may be low on energy, patience, purpose and want to feel more invigorated.

How ready are you to change? Do you have the internal desire (motivation), energy, belief and support to develop new habits? Our old habits save us time but lead us down a pathway to the exact behavior we want to change. To develop new habits/behaviors we must take the time to pause, think and develop new ways of doing things, new habits.

Readiness to change is concept derived from both Motivational Interviewing technique, Miller and Rollnick, and the Transtheoretical Model of Change by Prochaska and DiClemente. It is arguably the most important variable in changing behavior. A visual way to look at readiness is a ruler:

Modified Readiness Ruler

1	2	3	4	5
Not ready	Unsure	Planning	Action	Maintenance

When we acknowledge where we are on the ruler, we know what type of information and skills are needed to move forward. It comes down to using the right tool at the right time to improve effectiveness and gain momentum for behavior change.

Why is this important?

If you have tried over and over to make a behavioral change and haven't been successful, **reconsider** where you are on the readiness ruler. If you say to yourself, "I just need more discipline, I am not motivated," the truth is you aren't ready to change. You aren't lazy or undisciplined, you haven't visualized what you want, aren't ready to make new plans, or haven't decided it is worth it to change how you spend your time/or what you choose to eat (action stage). For every stage there is a skill or technique to move forward.....when you are ready!

Stages of Change	Skill used to move through to next stage
1 - on the ruler: Not Ready – “I won’t, I can’t”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*unconditional acceptance, empathy, self-compassion (I am doing my best right now)</li> <li>*safe, supportive, non-judgmental environment</li> <li>*curiosity about health concern and diagnosis</li> <li>*look for another area where you are more ready to change (sleep, screen time, more water)</li> </ul>
2 - on the ruler: Unsure – “I may”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*learn about the diagnosis (read, talk, think)</li> <li>*increase belief in yourself, the process</li> <li>*notice how you feel when you try something new/different</li> <li>*identify and lean on support people</li> </ul>
3 - on the ruler: Planning – “I will”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*develop a health vision, what do I want?</li> <li>*understand the difference between current/desired behaviors,</li> <li>*build a pathway to desired behavior with short-term and longer-term goals,</li> <li>*identify non-food rewards to reward yourself for making changes</li> </ul>
4 - on the ruler: Action – “I am”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*DO what you planned to do, review goals and reset goals to be successful</li> <li>*create a system for accountability, honesty to yourself</li> <li>*identify support people, mentors to help you build confidence, belief in yourself,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*acknowledge “wins”, reflect on your progress, what is working, what could be better?</li> <li>* daily acknowledgement of pride, confidence, joy in new behavior</li> </ul>
<p>5 - on the ruler: Maintenance – “I still am”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*honesty to self, accountability for behaviors</li> <li>*Re setting goals, working through challenges, setbacks,</li> <li>*keep the vision alive,</li> <li>* self-compassion, accept that stuff happens which can disrupt but not derail your plans, you may need a short detour</li> <li>*view these habits as journey not a destination</li> </ul>

Coaching Psychology Manual, second edition. Moore, Jackson, Tschannen-Moran, 2016