

#508

*A* Guide  
*to* Long-Term  
Health *and*  
Fitness

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*Many people start off on the road to health and fitness, joining a gym or going on a diet with bright visions of personal transformation. It's relatively few, however, that actually persevere and are rewarded with*  
*lasting results.*





*Long-term* health and fitness benefits can be  
achieved with the help of 3 "pillars"

1

## "Why" discovery

Many brides-to-be go on diets before their weddings, and a good number of them are successful. However a study has found that women who dieted before their wedding put on significantly more weight within six months after the event.

Are you after a lasting fitness reward, or just want to be picture-ready on that next beach holiday? Having a long-term goal such as longevity and good quality of life will enable you to focus on purpose rather than quick, short-term results. It can sustain you through challenges, and help you seek appropriate strategies.





2

## *Leveraging pain thresholds*

Pain threshold from a goal-driving perspective varies from person to person, pain here referring not to physical pain but to psychological pressure from strategies such as social promises and deadlines. So given, the following examples won't work for everyone.



*Monetary penalties/investment*  
Getting your ROI on that gym membership might be the push you need to stick with your exercise plan.



*Competition*  
Competing with others or one's self can be a powerful driver for some people.



*Public declarations*  
Promising and delivering results to your coach, your family or your friends can be strong motivation.



*Deadlines*  
Some personalities are effectively driven by the challenge of hitting a fitness goal by a given date.

The basic point is to come up with a way that a person can *emotionally connect with their outcome*. And whatever the tactic, the best results will come from an individual *owning responsibility* for their results.





3

## *The power of habits*

Forty percent of what we do is linked to habits. Seeking to save energy, the brain creates a habit loop - a cue triggers your brain into a routine for which there's a reward. Tapping into that loop from a health and fitness perspective can be quite powerful. Intertwining the cue and the reward can create anticipation around the right foods or preparing for the gym.



# *You can modify negative health habits with a 4-step framework:*

1. Identifying the routine
2. Experimenting with rewards
3. Isolating the cue
4. Having a strategy to change habits

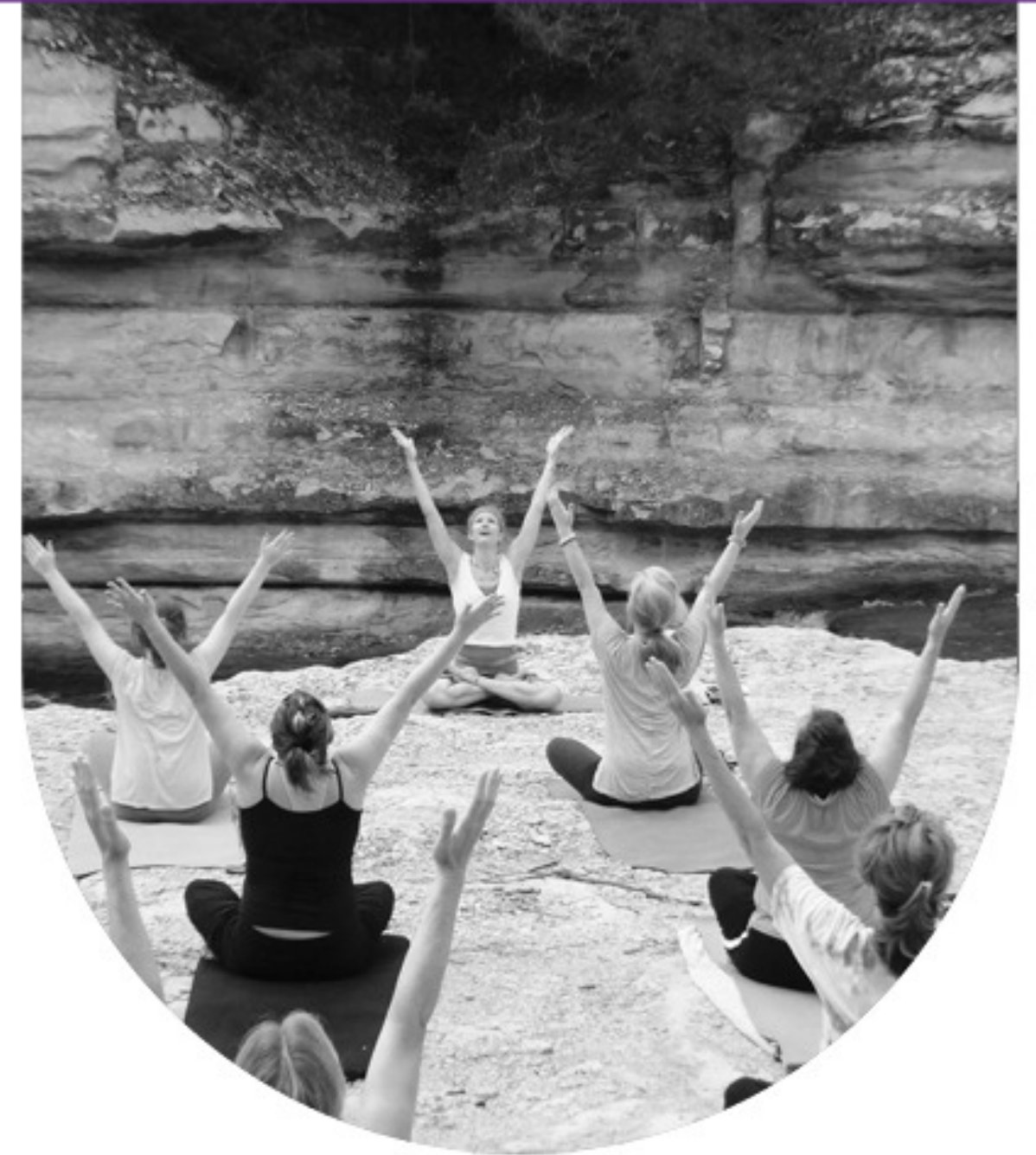


Example: If you're used to eating sweets while you watch the tube, replacing your TV viewing with a workout and allowing a treat afterwards may change the accustomed relation between routine and reward.

## *The role of community*

One great tool for lasting habit change is community. Alcoholics Anonymous is an example, offering the rewards normally associated with a drink, i.e. relaxation, companionship, escape, etc., but without the cocktails.

You're likely to emulate the people you hang out with, and positive habits and beliefs are more likely to stick within the context of long-term community.





## *Improving your overall quality of life*

Beyond physical well-being, health and fitness can influence the rest of your life in amazing ways. They can enhance your willpower, your mood, your relationships, your concentration. They can lower stress and give you better mental stamina. These are just some of the reasons why healthy habits are worth developing and maintaining long-term.

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