Irish Life

Wellbeing

The Final 5: a toolkit for healthy habit success





Congratulations on making it to the final week of the Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs Healthy Habits journey. Now that you've been actioning a lot of new Healthy Habits, it's time to look at how you can move this beyond four weeks and keep Healthy Habits part of who you are.

Here's a toolkit of options to support you for the future!

1 Capacity + opportunity + motivation = Healthy Habits

a. **Capacity** – the 'what' or the ability to take change one step at a time.

b. **Opportunity** – the 'how' is often the environment around us that supports our plans, e.g. making sure that the fridge has healthy options, the trainers and workout gear ready to go, the class booked, the meet up organised, the social media apps removed from your home screen.

c. **Motivation** – the 'why'. Depending on the 'what' you've chosen, your 'why' can be the impact of your new Healthy Habit on how it makes you feel day to day, or what it means for you.

2 Watch out for thinking traps

Comparing ourselves to others

It's easy to compare ourselves to what others are doing. That can stop us from focusing on what we can do with the resources, time and skill that we have. Catching yourself early here really makes a difference.

'All or nothing' thinking

When we feel we've failed at something, our default thinking can be to abandon all our efforts. In the same way, if things are going well, we tend to add too much to our plate that can overwhelm us.

Catastrophising

It's ok if things didn't go to plan the way you imagined. The important thing is to not attach too much meaning to the thing not happening.

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3 Stick to an even spread of meals throughout the day where possible

Hacks are something we typically endorse but there are ones that can support our efforts to introduce and make Healthy Habits stickier!

a. **'If…then' plans**

Help support the 'when, where, and how' you can action your Healthy Habits. They give us a more detailed roadmap of how we will do the thing we want to do:

e.g. 'If I can't get a walk in, then I will focus on eating more fibre instead'

b. **Habit stacking**

This is where you pair something you already do with something new that is a Healthy Habit so you can follow through with it more easily. The thing you already do acts as a trigger for new things to happen:

e.g. You boil the kettle every morning. Try pairing the time you are waiting to do some stretching

c. **Behavioural shaping – tiny steps**

Week 1 – trainers on & outside for 5mins

Week 2 – walk to end of street / lap of block

Week 3 – walk 10 mins

= Build on success and acknowledgement!

4 Fake it 'till you make it'

We've probably all heard about faking it until you make it but this applies to behaviour change and Healthy Habits as well. You have the freedom to change from now!

Shift from the 'do x to get to y goals', to **'I am the kind of person who'**.
What would a person like that do today?

Choose one small action consistent with that identity (the new you!)

5 The importance of acknowledgement

Acknowledging success is important when we do something hard. It doesn't matter if it's hard for other people (or not). It is for you, and you did it!

Take a moment to think about how you might want to acknowledge the work you have put in, and the impact that has had.

Download our Healthy Habits tip sheet here!

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