

BE STRONG

Eat. Move. Live

THE KNOWLEDGE

INCREASING SELF AWARENESS

Self-awareness is the practice of truly understanding your own beliefs and values, and the way you react to situations. It is the cornerstone of developing good, healthy habits. Once you begin to develop greater self-awareness, you will begin to take control of your reactions and improve your chances of achieving your goals.

HOW TO DEVELOP GREATER SELF AWARENESS

- 1 Move more** - If we are more present in our feelings when we move our bodies we become aware of how our body feels and how our emotions change when we move. This helps us to understand what movement we enjoy and which types of exercise help to resolve the mental and physical aches and pains we experience day to day, making us more likely to engage in it regularly.
- 2 Practice mindfulness** - Mindfulness requires you to acknowledge thoughts and feelings as they pass through your brain, but then let them go. You can start to do this by taking part in a mindfulness session, where you focus on your breath, acknowledge thoughts and feelings as they pass through your brain, then let them go as you refocus back on the breath. In time, with more practice you will do this naturally, in day to day life, allowing you to let go of negativity without taking you into a spiral of negative thoughts and behaviours.
- 3 Ask for feedback** - Ask people you trust for feedback on certain aspects of your life. Whether that's ideas for goals or plans, their view on your response to situations, or even feedback on how they see you. You will receive some gems of advice and also lots of esteem-boosting compliments about the strengths and abilities you didn't know you had.
- 4 Identify your emotional Kryptonite** - What is it that upsets you? What always gets you riled up and causes you to behave irrationally, then make a series of bad decisions when it comes to food, drink and exercise? Identifying these nuggets allows you to rethink your reactions, and devise a strategy for dealing with what upsets you or causes irrational behaviour.
- 5 Write down goals, plans and priorities** - This action doubles your chances of success. By writing something down, we turn it into something tangible. How many of us write notes on our hands, phones or diaries so that we don't forget things? Why not do it for our longer term plans, goals and priorities too? Use the Gameplan process to help you with this!
- 6 Reflection and journaling** - This is a really valuable practice, and also part of the Gameplan - where we ask you to keep a weekly progress log. Looking back at your performance over the previous week recognising what went well, and what can be improved upon and how, can be a very productive process. It's no coincidence that those who do this regularly and thoroughly have a great deal of success.

Whilst at first becoming more self-aware could be quite uncomfortable, you will soon realise that it is quite a powerful and enlightening process. Only when you know things about yourself can you change your behaviours.

Being self-aware is particularly powerful in lifestyle change, in two ways - knowing your purpose and understanding your behaviours.

If you truly understand your purpose in life, you can link any goals that you may set yourself to this purpose. Getting that deep emotional link to your goal, will give you a far greater chance of success.

When you acknowledge and understand your thoughts, feelings and behaviours, particularly around food and exercise, you can address negative routines and habits that you have, and develop strategies to allow you to have a more positive response to set backs.