

PRACTICAL
STEPS TO
**BIBLICAL
ABUNDANT
HEALTH**



NEWLIFE

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The Process of Change

People often ask how change happens and how to move away from unhealthy traits. A good place to start is by understanding that change is a process and it occurs in three stages.

The first stage is to acknowledge what negative traits we want to let go of and recognize what strategies we've used to cope with fear and pain. Some of the more common habits to say good-bye to are rage, blame, overspending, overeating, emotional or physical affairs, chemical dependencies, and playing the 'victim.' The pain of letting go may trigger overwhelming feelings. This is normal and, although tempting, it's not a time to give up. Instead of quitting, this is the time to press into God through prayer, His Word, and His people for comfort and encouragement.

The second stage of change typically brings with it a period of confusion. This is a disconcerting season where we've said good-bye to the old, but the new is not yet familiar. Things may appear worse instead of better, as others are also unaccustomed to our new ways. During this time we may be tempted to go back to old habits for comfort, but doing so will ultimately end in destruction. Instead, we need to remind ourselves of God's grace through the changes that we've already survived. Our hope during this stage is dependent on our being rooted in Christ. He is faithful; and after the 'shaking', we will be left standing on a firm foundation found only in Jesus.

The third stage is a time to embrace the new things in our life and to welcome the sense of relief, peace, and energy that are becoming a consistent part of our experience. We can begin enjoying the spiritual enrichment that the fruits of the Holy Spirit bring to our innermost being. And, although we still need to be intentional to make our new habits a regular part of our new life, as time passes, they will become a part of who we are. The result of this newfound fulfillment and satisfaction can also help motivate us to keep cultivating life-enhancing choices.

God will give us the grace to let go of those things that limit us from growing in His love and reaping the abundant harvest produced from abiding in Him. He is faithful to complete the good work He began in us through Jesus Christ.

Are You a Sugar Addict?

Drug and alcohol addiction are real struggles people are facing. But what about sugar? Sugar addiction isn't real, right? Wrong! Many people struggle with sugar.

Like any addiction, there is a craving. The love of cookies, cakes and ice cream and any form of sweets. Just a little becomes a lot and more is better. Until the sugar is impossible to resist.

Signs and Symptoms of a Sugar Addiction

As with any addiction, there will be a struggle with cravings. What are the symptoms that go with a sugar addiction?

- You need to eat sugar just to feel normal.
- It's hard—if not impossible—for you to say no to desserts and other sugary foods.
- You turn to sweet foods when you feel upset or stressed.
- You have to eat more and more sugar to feel satisfied.

Being addicted to sugar means that the tolerance level increases so to eat more and more of it is to get the same effect. From ketchup to sweetened cereal, sugar is in so many different foods. As the tolerance level increases, so does the number of sugary products needed to consume. The brain becomes desensitized; eating a bowl of ice cream after dinner every night just doesn't cut it. And the sweet taste is also desensitized so more sweet food is needed to satisfy.

Quitting sugar creates withdrawal symptoms. A sugar addict will experience withdrawal, such as headaches, digestive issues, and fatigue. They might also struggle with feeling anxious, fearful, and depressed.

Solutions to a Sugar Addiction

After doing the hard work of cutting out sugar and going through withdrawal, now what? Take it a step further—avoid eating white foods altogether. Steve Arterburn, Founder of New Life Ministries and author of *Lose it for Life*, calls this the ‘North Pole Diet’.

What’s the North Pole Diet? The North Pole is white—it has snow on it. So, the North Pole Diet restricts all white foods. Most white foods convert into sugar. What are the white foods to avoid? Avoid eating foods such as:

- white sugar
- white bread
- white pasta
- white rice
- potatoes
- table salt

Don’t eat brown sugar—it’s still sugar. Other things to also limit or avoid altogether include honey, artificial sweeteners, sodas, sports drinks, fruit juices, whole-grain bread, whole-grain pasta, and fried foods.

What’s left to eat? First, have a serving of protein—chicken, fish, beef, or a plant-based protein. Make sure that it is grilled or baked, not fried. And avoid or use sparingly sugar-laden sauces.

Second, add a serving of complex carbohydrates like brown rice, quinoa, or sweet potatoes. Watch your portion sizes—too many complex carbohydrates can stall weight loss.

Third, eat a generous portion of non-starchy vegetables like salad greens, broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, and Brussels sprouts. Finally, don't forget to add some healthy fats such as avocados, organic olive oil, nuts, and coconut oil to the meal. Healthy fats helps brain health!

Want something sweet to eat? A healthy snack? Stick with fruit, vegetables, and healthy fats. Eat apples, berries, a handful of nuts, frozen grapes, vegetables with hummus, or baked pears. If still wanting something sweet, try dark chocolate—it will provide a mood boost.

By cutting out all of the white foods and making healthier choices, a steady level of blood sugar can be maintained. This helps reduce the craving and uncontrolled sweet eating; and, of course, provides for a healthier life!

If you need more help overcoming sugar addiction, attend our **Lose it for Life** workshop. Also, Steve Arterburn's book, *Lose it for Life*, outlines a complete, faith-based program to help you lose weight and keep it off for good! Finally, get support by joining a **Life Recovery Group** in your area. To find out more, call us at 800-NEW-LIFE.

9 Ways to Lose It For Life

1. Write It Down.

You think you're eating healthy foods and the right amounts, but are you? Instead of assuming what you're eating, write it down. Or even better, get a weight loss app and record everything you eat and how much. This will open your eyes to any mindless eating that you may be doing. Several studies have shown that keeping a food diary will help you lose more weight than if you don't.

2. Say No To Soda.

An easy way to lose weight is to get rid of soda—even diet soda! If it's hard for you to stop drinking soda, try simply replacing it with sparkling water or unsweetened iced tea, maybe add a slice of lemon. Don't drink your calories, instead hydrate with water and healthy drinks.

3. Enjoy your meals.

Too often, we eat our food in a hurry. Eating quickly can mean we consume much more than we need or planned to eat. Take time when you eat, set the table, turn the television and devices off and spend time with your family or friends. By turning off the distractions, you can enjoy your meals. As a result, you will be much more aware of what you are eating and how much.

4. Know When You Are Full.

While you are eating, think of your hunger as on a scale of 1-10. One being you feel so hungry you could faint; five means you would be slightly full.

But if you were a 10, you would've eaten too much and would be so stuffed that you feel sick. After you finish a meal, try to make it a goal to stop when you are full, you end a meal or snack feeling satisfied and energized.

5. Get Plenty Of Rest.

Studies show that not getting enough sleep can lead to weight gain. Being tired and having a hectic lifestyle can lead to weight gain. You may be tempted to turn to junk food or fast food or sugary sweets to pick you up. A better way is to lower your level of stress and get enough sleep.

6. Stay Connected To Others.

As you strive to live a healthy lifestyle, it's important to find connection. We read in [Proverbs 27:17](#), *"As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend."* Research shows that if you join a support group or see a counselor, you'll be more successful at losing weight. Join a **Life Recovery Group** such as a Lose it For Life Group—it will help you keep the weight off permanently.

7. Stop Eating White Foods.

Eliminating or avoiding white foods will help you lose weight for life. This means you should avoid eating foods like:

- refined white sugar
- white flour
- white pasta
- white bread
- table salt
- potatoes

Your diet should be comprised primarily of healthy foods such as lean protein, healthy fats, greens, low-glycemic fruit, and complex carbohydrates. When you stay away from white foods and add healthy foods into your diet, you will start to stabilize your blood sugar.

8. Take Small Steps—Produce Big Results.

If you're out of shape, exercise can seem intimidating. Movement is necessary for a healthy life. Begin to walk for 5-10 minutes each day—after it becomes a daily habit, try to work your way up to walking 20-30 minutes most days a week. Walking has been shown to alleviate depression, lower anxiety, and help with weight loss. You can also try to learn some strength training, or stretching, perhaps connect with a trainer. Over time 'moving' becomes your way of life!

9. Go Deeper With God.

Faith is a key component to losing weight. Instead of turning to food to meet your emotional needs, turn to God. The Bible puts it this way, ***“Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts,”*** ([Colossians 3:16](#)). Ask God to reveal the hurts or issues in your life that you might be 'feeding'.

Do you need help losing it for life? If so, consider attending our **Lose it For Life** workshop. You can also get Steve Arterburn's book, *Lose it For Life*. To register for the workshop, order the book, or find a **Life Recovery Group** in your area, give us a call at 800-639-5433.

The Power of Journaling for Mental Health

“Journaling helps you get in touch with your real self. And since no one’s looking over your shoulder, you know you’re being honest.” – Steve Arterburn

Can one habit help with depression, reduce stress, and manage anxiety? Yes! Journaling can help to improve all these and more. Seems too simple, yet many people have found journaling to be a great tool for life.

Keeping a journal is a great way to unwind after a stressful day. When hard-to-understand emotions and situations are written down, the brain is better able to process them. This can help to stabilize emotions in a short period and provide some space to be able to let out the negative emotions.

By keeping a record of personal thoughts, feelings, events, and insights, anyone can journal to improve their mental health. Putting recurring thoughts down on paper can help calm the mind of obsessive thoughts. Keeping a journal can improve self-awareness, as well as provide direction and inspiration for personal goals.

Journaling can help encourage authenticity, honesty, and transparency with every thought and feeling experienced. Once someone starts being real with themselves, it’ll be easier for them to be honest with others. It may provide confidence to seek counseling, connect in a group or share with a close friend or loved one.

Writing in a journal helps measure progress with emotional, spiritual, and relational goals. Studies show most people don't even write down goals—writing goals down increases the likelihood of accomplishing them.

One of the challenges of journaling, however, is that it's not always easy to get started. For some people, it may feel like it's work. So, writing every day may not always be realistic for everyone. Instead, set a goal to journal a couple of days every week. Even if it's not done daily, there are benefits to journaling a few times a week.

Not sure where to start? Set aside a few minutes each day to write. It could be simply writing three things that went well during the day. This can be done before going to sleep at night—or, journal at whatever time works best. Writing helps to establish the feeling of gratitude in the brain; it can help someone feel happier almost instantly.

One of King David's prayers, found in [Psalms 139:23-24](#), reads, ***“Search me O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”***

Journaling is a way to search and know the thoughts that get in the way of personal growth and healing. It's easily done, and it can be as personalized as the individual doing the writing.

Need a journal? Look no further than ***The New Life Journal***. It has writing prompts to inspire daily writing! While keeping a journal isn't going to solve all of life's problems, it's a valuable tool to use to learn how to process challenging emotions and situations.

Your Stress Remedy

Many people initially see a counselor because of job stress . . . either from the work itself or from the stress of dealing with difficult people at work. But stress really needs to be dealt with in the beginning stages, before it becomes destructive. Many advocates of positive mental health have long emphasized the need to lighten up—and humor is one of the best ways to do that!

We feel good when we laugh. In fact, it's almost impossible to feel bad when we laugh. Research shows that humor and laughter can even help us recover from the extreme distress of life-changing losses. When a researcher at the University of California at Berkeley studied widows and widowers whose spouses had died six months before, he found that those who were able to laugh within weeks of their loved one's passing displayed less stress and many more positive emotions two to four years later. Incorporating humor and laughter into the many stresses of everyday life can help us to not only survive, but also thrive and be better able to handle whatever comes our way.

Laughter elevates natural mood-enhancing endorphins and releases the feel-good brain chemical dopamine. At the same time, laughter turns down our stress hormone spigot. Studies show it also significantly lowers the chemical cortisol, which is associated with negative stress. After exposure to humor, there is a general increase in our immune system activity.

Scripture lists joy as the second fruit of the Spirit and states: ***“a merry heart does good like medicine”*** [Proverbs 17:22](#); and John 15:11 says: Christ wanted His ***“joy to be full in them”***.

Joy and happiness can be increased and stress levels lowered by learning to see the bright side; increasing exposure to humorous videos, books, and magazines; sharing humor with fellow workers; being around lighthearted people; and most important, praying for more of the joy of the Lord!

Other helpful hints to reduce stress are to get a good night’s sleep, have quality nutrition, participate in daily exercise, learn to manage difficult people, have a daily dose of play, and take life one day at a time!

Bringing in lots of joy and laughter at work and at home can go a long way towards preventing personal distress, depression, and general malaise. And those around us will be encouraged and refreshed by our cheerful attitude. As [Nehemiah 8:10](#) says, ***“The joy of the Lord is our strength!”***

10 Ways to De-Stress

1. Pray and meditate on Scripture.

Through our personal time of prayer and meditation on God's Word, we will find the *"peace that passes understanding."* Spending time in God's presence helps us remember who we are and how very much we are loved. Scripture tells us Jesus often went to a place by Himself and prayed.

2. Listen to music.

When you need to relax, listen to some calming music. If you need some extra energy, find something upbeat that makes you want to move. Be aware of your moods and your needs, and you will find that music can play a big part in helping you achieve a positive emotional state.

3. Exercise.

Not only is exercise the number-one stress reducer, it also controls appetite, increases energy and body temperature, releases endorphins, and improves sleep quality. Physical exercise is the most natural way you can come to experience a state of well-being or satisfaction.

4. Keep a Journal.

Take this time as an opportunity to journal about what's going on in your life and how you feel about things. Journaling can help you sort out the many things that may be going on in your head and your heart. Once you've expressed your feelings in writing, they become much easier to understand.

5. Talk to a friend, pastor, or therapist.

Not only does talking through your stresses with a close confidant help relieve those stresses, but it will also help you feel more connected with a human being.

6. Read.

Take time to read a good book, an inspirational story, or even the comics or sports page of the newspaper. What you enjoy will be unique to you, so don't get stuck in a rut of comparing yourself to others.

7. Get some R&R.

It's important to have getaways that last for a couple of days or more. Vacation time really does make a difference in your mind-set and outlook.

8. Become involved in discipleship.

Discipleship involves growing in wisdom and knowledge of God through the process of gathering with other believers. This involves more than just your personal quiet time. It's the fellowship of believers that results in building each other up, mentoring, accountability, and Bible study. Discipleship serves the purpose of spiritual growth and gives us a sense of connection and belonging that we all need.

9. Do something for someone else.

The process of giving to and doing for others can lift up your spirit and bring about a sense of pleasure faster than just about anything else. When you give of yourself, you move away from a focus on self to a focus on others, and that's always a good place to be.

10. Laugh.

Laughter is good medicine, especially when it comes to managing stress and increasing pleasure in life. Laughter is the natural expression of pleasure and fun. The more we can include laughter in our lives, the better we'll feel physically and emotionally.

13 Keys to Achieving your Goals

We all love a promise of a fresh start! Where do we begin? Here are some keys to achieving your goals:

1. Start with God.

Trusting God with your goals means believing that He is the source of all good things and that He can instruct you about what is good.

2. Make following God your primary goal.

As you reach your other goals, He will guide you in determining what they are and reaching them.

3. Say “yes” to who you are.

To reach your goals, say “yes” to who you are and “no” to others’ definitions and expectations of you.

4. Leave room for God’s will.

Sometimes it is just not God’s will that we reach a particular goal. Yet it is not His will that you never reach any of your goals. If that seems to be happening, look for how it may be a pattern in your life that needs addressing.

5. Examine your goals.

See if you can relate to any of these patterns: No defined goals; specific goals, but too unrealistic; specific goals, but under-resourced or under-planned; external motivation or definition; derailed by personal weaknesses; start

but don't complete or finish; lack of discipline or structure; hit obstacles and not able to recover; failure did you in; people failed you.

6. Identify your strengths and gifts.

Always operate within them. Take a strengths or gifts test to determine what they are.

7. Count the cost.

Before you set out to reach your goals, sit down and figure out what it is going to cost you in terms of money, time, sacrifices, relationships, acquiring skills, emotion, and gaining knowledge.

8. Be realistic.

As you count the cost, be realistic. Look at your goals in terms of reality, and let reality motivate you. Also look hard at what will be true if you do not pursue your goals and dreams. Can you live with that?

9. Write out a plan.

Include details, specific timeframe and strategies for each step. Decide to commit to the plan and not make excuses.

10. Mark small achievements.

Goals are reached in little steps and should be acknowledged to encourage you to keep going!

11. Expect challenges and problems.

Realize obstacles like fear, other difficult feelings, conflicts with people,

busy schedule, lack of resources, lack of abilities, discouragement, doubt, distance from God, second-guessing, and criticism will occur and can help you grow and create resilience.

12. Don't fear failure.

Failure is not the worst thing that can happen to us. Wasting our lives by not trying is a greater loss.

13. Ask God to lead you.

Ask God to show you who you are and what you are to do—and then trust Him to make a way.



Combining a deep commitment to biblical truth with the best in psychological knowledge, New Life Ministries offers compassionate and empowering solutions to those who find themselves in life's difficult places and who are missing what God desires for their lives.

Through our live call-in radio and TV broadcasts, *New Life Live!*, and Weekend Workshops, we provide practical wisdom and help people see that they are not alone. And by connecting people to a professional in our New Life Counselor Network, we are helping many find the intensive support they need.

newlife.com

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