

Habits

Most people develop the habits they have by performing a particular task over and over a certain way. Habits are not changed overnight, the methods people choose to lift, sit, stand, and move are the result of years of practice. It requires additional practice to change these behaviors.

People need to pick a particular activity and attempt to do it in a less demanding, more efficient manner. They should allow it to be the only thing they try to change until it becomes a more natural behavior. Soon, they will be able to do this activity in a manner that is better for their body without needing to think about it. There is a good chance that this new habit will carry over into other activities.

People understand the concept of practice as it relates to athletics. Basketball players may shoot 100 free throws before they leave practice. This lets the skill become so automatic that they don't have to think about it in a high pressure situation. The concept of practice is the same in the area of back safety. Using the body in ways that reduce, rather than increase the physical demands of work becomes habit with practice. While most people do not go home and practice their lifting techniques, safer work habits can be developed by practicing them.

Making Changes

The best way to make a change is to first recognize that a change is necessary, and then to acknowledge that the process of change takes time. If change is attempted too fast, people can get frustrated and return to doing things the "the old way".



HABITS

Talking Notes

POINTS TO REVIEW

1. We have habits that are good for us, and habits that can cause us harm.

Change is always difficult. It's amazing the changes that people make when they are in pain. Watch people with back pain and how they will lift better, move better, sit better, and even stretch to minimize their pain. However, once the pain is gone, these same people return to their original habits unless the new behavior becomes a new habit.

2. If you want to change, think about one thing at a time.

When people want to lose weight, some of them gradually change their eating and exercise patterns, go on a starvation diet or begin training for a marathon. Rapid and drastic changes rarely last because people burn out and quit before a new habit is established. If you want to make changes, go slowly and be patient with yourself. Practice the new behavior until it becomes a habit.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1. What is the best way to change a habit? How would you go about changing your lifting habits?**
- 2. Why is pain such a motivating factor for change? How can we motivate people to change without pain?**
- 3. How do habits work to our benefit? How can our habits hurt us?**

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