

Routines and Organisation with CF

Developing good routines can seem overwhelming, as we all know if you have started a new exercise program or tried to give up chocolate!

What we do know is that 90% of our behaviours and habits are automatic and often unconscious. When behaviours have become a habit, we feel more in control and less stressed. However, creating new habits and routines can feel exhausting. So, it's important to be really connected with why you want a new habit or routine, as this will help motivate you to get organised, set clear goals and make a plan.

If the ultimate goal is for you or your child to stay healthier then this may be a good motivator, however it's also good to look a little deeper. For example, we want to stay healthier so that we can have more energy, get a career and have good relationships. What is it that motivates you and/or your child?

Staying motivated takes willpower, which is exhaustible. It's important to minimise the decisions that you need to take when creating a new habit or routine and not rely only on willpower to be successful. Set up a good plan and get organised to minimise decision fatigue.

General Tips for Getting Organised

- Have a clear plan and prioritise what is manageable.
- Break the new routine into smaller,



more manageable tasks or goals that will take less time and seem less overwhelming.

- Build on small successes as this will help your confidence to develop other routines or habits.
- Congratulate or reward yourself or your child. Positive reinforcement will help build a new habit. Discuss and plan what this could look like, put pictures on the fridge as motivation and as a reminder of what you are working towards.
- Build a network of supporters who can keep up the motivation and help debrief when it's hard. This could be family, friends, your CF team, workmates or a support organisation like CFWA.
- Use cues or triggers as reminders e.g. an app, a phone calendar, diary, schedule on the fridge, running shoes by the door.

People lapse and that's ok; review and get back on track. Show self-compassion and don't feel guilty when you don't get a task done or don't quite meet your goal. These deviations from the plan are all part of the process.

Creating Physio Routines

Including CF treatments and physio in an already busy schedule takes EXTRA organisation. Here are a few tips:

- Store equipment and medication in the same place so you always know where it is when you need it. Maybe leave it out on the bench as a trigger to remind you to get it done.
- Develop a cleaning routine for equipment so it is in good condition and works well for you.
- Set reminders to refill prescriptions so you never run out of your medications.
- Understand how each treatment works and why you need to do it. This will make it easier to get it done. Explaining this to your child in an age appropriate way can help get their co-operation.
- Have physio at the same time each day. Maybe set a calendar reminder or use an app to help you remember until it becomes a habit.
- Have a printout of your physio plan and make a chart to tick off each session when it is done. Try using stickers if it's for a child.
- Try to do physio in the same place, or if you can't, use the same things to create a sense of familiarity. This might be a special physio blanket, book or toy. Some families find that choosing a favourite tv show that they only watch when physio is on helps create a sense of routine.
- Build fun things into your physio routine like counting sets of breaths on an abacus, or reading a page of a favourite story between sets.

- Use a timer, sing a song or clap your hands to signal the end of the session. Young children will listen out for this if it is part of your routine.
- Try to schedule some time in for a treat or a reward after physio or other treatments. This could be anything from a big cuddle or a story to a game of hide and seek or an outing to the park.

CFWA have a [homecare worker \(HCW\) service](#) to enable ongoing support in the home with airway clearance, exercise, and development of routines.

Useful Resources

- [Perx Health App](#)
- [Routine Articles \(CFWA\)](#)
- [How to Break Habits](#) (Charles Duhigg)
- [Sticking to a New Routine](#) (Charles Duhigg)

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