

*The First 6 Steps
for Creating
Change in Your
Life*

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When you try to make a change in your life, create a new habit, set a resolution ... are you usually good at it, or does the change fail after 2-3 weeks?

Some people are better at it than others because they've learned some simple strategies for changing, but also because they've built up their **change muscle**.

What's a change muscle? It's the muscle we use for creating changes in our lives, and like our physical muscles, it is weak if you haven't trained it.

I started understanding more in-depth the power of the change muscle when I started to workout.

Since I've started training, I've learned in that the change muscle is like other muscles: you might be weak at first, but you get stronger with regular training.

Imagine trying to lift a barbell with 350 lbs. of weights on it. Even lifting it 6 inches off the ground would be a nearly impossible feat for people who haven't trained their muscles to lift heavy loads. You'd struggle and nearly burst a vein, but you wouldn't budge the barbell. But ... if you started with just the barbell (no weights on it) and began lifting that, you'd be much more likely to succeed. Then add 5-10 lbs. on each side, and your muscles will grow stronger. Keep adding a little at a time,

and soon you'll be able to lift the 350-lb. loaded barbell that once seemed impossible.

Your change muscle works in the same ways. As I've been learning about growing physical muscles, I realize how many parallels there are with growing the change muscle.

Principles of Growth

The principles for growing your change muscle are similar to growing regular muscles:

Start small.

If you try to lift too much weight at first, you'll have bad form and injure yourself and won't last long. But if you start with just the barbell (or other light load), you can learn how to lift and you're much more likely to stick with it for awhile. The change muscle is the same: start with one change, just 5 minutes a day. You will want to do more, but if you do more, you're much more likely to fail in the long run.

Train regularly.

Some people will go to the gym for a week, then stop, then start again in a few months. This is a waste of time, and no progress will be seen. You have to do it regularly to see progress. Same with the change muscle: do it daily, just 5 minutes a day. You'll get stronger and

stronger with regular training. Don't start big, then fail after 1-2 weeks, then start again later. Regular repetition is key.

Increase load gradually.

If you don't increase the weights, you don't get stronger. But if you increase too much, you'll get injured. With your change muscle, increase your daily training by 5 minutes each week — so 5 minutes a day the first week, then 10 minutes a day the second week, etc. You'll be amazed at how strong your change muscle gets with gradual progressive loading.

Rest, & cut back on other work.

Most people don't understand the importance of rest when it comes to training. We train, then rest, and we grow. If we don't rest, we hurt our progress. Growing the change muscle is the same — you need to train (just 5 minutes a day at first), then rest. Meaning don't try to make changes all day long at first. Don't try to make your first change as you're traveling and taking on big projects and also taking classes and making three other changes at the same time. You'll overload yourself. Make one change, and let yourself stick to your regular routine/load the rest of the day.

Fuel the growth.

Aside from rest, fuel is one of the most overlooked aspects of muscle growth. You need sufficient calories for growth, otherwise all the training in the world won't get you anywhere. So what fuels the growth of the change muscle? **Motivation**. Find as many ways to motivate yourself as possible: make the change enjoyable, get a partner, join a class, blog publicly about it, join a forum, create rewards, celebrate small victories, create a chart to see your progress, etc. The more, the better. Most people under-fuel their change muscle.

The First 6 Steps for Creating Change

So how do you get started training your change muscle if it's weak and undertrained? Just like you'd get started with strength training — start with bodyweight exercises, and just a few per day.

Here's what I'd recommend:

1. Pick an easy, positive change that you can do in 5 minutes. Want to garden? Just 5 minutes of gardening a day. Want to declutter? Eat fruits and veggies? Jog or swim? Meditate? Just 5 minutes a day.
2. Focus on enjoying the new habit. If you enjoy it, you'll want to keep doing it for longer. If you're doing it to "improve" or because it's "good for you" or you "should", you won't stick with it for long.

3. The focus is on doing it regularly, not on growing it quickly. Do it daily, at the same time every day.
4. Cut back on other changes, so you can put all your energy on this one change.
5. Fuel your change with as much motivation as humanly possible. More is better in this case.
6. Grow it gradually by adding 5 minutes to your daily training a week.

You'll be amazed at how much progress you make over time, as your change muscle grows stronger.

We tend to blame our failures on our lack of discipline, but we're not undisciplined ... we're just undertrained. Grow your change muscle with smart principles of growth, and soon you'll be a hulking beast of a change master.

This article is part of the Happiness Toolkit and is not found on the blog.

This information is given to you purely for free. All I ask is that if you know someone that can benefit from reading this, can you please send this to them, or let them know about [The Start of Happiness](#).

Additionally, you may want to share on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#). The more people we have on this planet that are waking up excited each day and living a happy and fulfilling life, the better the world will be!

If you have any questions, feel free to email me directly at brendan@startofhappiness.com or simply leave a comment on The Start of Happiness.

Remember, you can change the WORLD, one smile at a time!

Cheers!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "B. Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Brendan