

Remember, there are a lot of people who can help you on this journey to good health. One of the most important is your partner. They know you best, so listen to them and let them help you. If you don't have a partner, there are many people around you that can help such as family, friends, members of your church or other religious or social group, members of support groups such as Heart Support Australia and your local doctor. No-one should be alone.

Also, listen to what your body is telling you. People think body signals are visual, such as winking or crossing your arms etc. However, body signals are also what your body is trying to tell you about your physical condition. The DVD explains them in detail. It is very important to listen and take note. If you are doing too much, slow down a little.

CHAPTER THREE – Structure For Action & Change

This chapter is about working out what you need to do to help you change your lifestyle. The DVD talks about all the things you need to do such as identifying the problem, finding out what you need to change, working out why changing will better your life and then getting some advice and collecting information regarding these changes.

Tell everyone about your decision to change. It's a lot harder to stop trying to get healthy if you have told everyone what you are doing.

Work out what your role will be in this plan. The doctor may be able to advise you on what you should do and prescribe medication to help. However, you will be responsible for exercising and making sure you eat the right foods etc. If you get too tired, rest and most importantly, acknowledge your achievements and give yourself a reward. As you achieve your goals, make new ones. Challenge yourself and grow in the process.

The DVD gives an example of someone who has had a heart event and goes through the process and the plan. Listen to this scenario a few times. It will help you when you are working out what you need to do. You may not have the same kind of problems as the man in this example, but if you have a heart event of any kind, this plan can still assist you.

CHAPTER FOUR – The four step plan to good health.

When you watch this chapter, remember what you have learned in the previous three chapters.

In the first step we need to assess the problem and the cause. This is the assessment stage.

STEP ONE – THE ASSESSMENT STAGE

Firstly you will work out what the problem is. In the example that we saw on the DVD, it was a heart attack.

Secondly, what is the cause of the heart attack? Have you been working too hard, smoking too much, not exercising enough? Is your blood pressure too high, your cholesterol levels too high, or do you stress out a lot?



Next you need to work out what you can do about it. There are many different things you can do, such as get information on lifestyle changes, diet, exercise, medication etc and once you have this information, you need to work out why you want or need to change your lifestyle. As Peter points out, for many people it is simply fear of dying.

STEP TWO – THE PLANNING STAGE.

This is where you need to develop a specific plan that is targeted at your circumstances and level of fitness. This is best done with the assistance of your Doctor and/or cardiac rehabilitation program coordinator.

Example Lifestyle Plan									
Diagnosis	e.g. Heart Attack due to high cholesterol.								
Medication	List any medications here	and here...	and here	and here...	etc				
Goals	e.g. Reduce cholesterol from 6.8 to 4.5 in 3 months								
Action/Task	e.g. Walk for half hour a day.					Reduce alcohol to 2 std drinks daily.			
	Week1	Week2	Week3	Week4	Week5	Week6	Week7	Week8	Week9
Record of Achievement	✓ ✓	✓	✓	✓ ✓	etc.				
Record Mood	👍	👍	👎	👍	etc.				

You will need to set goals. It is important that your goals are achievable and measurable. Otherwise it may be easy to become discouraged or difficult to see any progress. A good goal to set initially may be to lower your cholesterol, cut down on smoking or perhaps to lose a few kilograms.

Set a timeframe for this goal. Initially start off small and work your way up as you set new goals.

STEP THREE - THE IMPLEMENTATION STAGE OF THE PLAN

This is the action stage – the time when we put what we have talked about into action. So if you decided that you wanted to lose weight, you would start to exercise and watch what you eat. If you have just had your heart event and you have the option to attend Cardiac Rehabilitation, do so.

There can be obstacles and you need to be aware of this. The biggest obstacle is usually yourself. It is difficult to change long established patterns. We often tell ourselves that we will start tomorrow, but it is important to start NOW. If you don't feel you can walk for an hour, don't avoid walking, just walk a little less. If you don't feel you can quit smoking, don't give in, cut down and seek help from your doctor. Do as much as you can and always reset your goals higher.

If you tell everyone what you are doing they will help you manage and you may find it easier not to back-slide into bad habits.

Test to make sure the actions you are taking to achieve your goal are working. Some tests can be done by you. It is easy to hop on a set of scales to see if you are losing weight. For some tests, like checking your cholesterol levels, you will need to consult your doctor. Either way, make sure you know how you are progressing towards achieving your goal.

STEP FOUR - THE EVALUATION STAGE

This where we see if what we are doing is actually working. By measuring your weight loss, your ability to walk further or for longer you are evaluating whether your plan is working. If you find you have lost weight, then you know that what you are doing has worked and maybe now you can reset your goals.

What does this mean? If for the last three months you have been walking half an hour a day, this may have become easy for you. You may now choose to walk for an hour a day, or join an exercise class. If you continue setting yourself challenging goals you may be surprised at how much you can accomplish.

As the DVD says – **the road to health is right in front of you.** Roll back the years and start to live again. A healthy lifestyle does not have to be boring. Ask any member of Heart Support Australia and they will tell you... **A second chance may be the only one you get. Take it and make life matter!**