

By Lacy Wolff, ERS Health Promotion Administrator



As we emerge from the darkest part of the winter, January brings with it hope for new beginnings, growth, and positive change. If you are feeling an internal pull toward change, that's great! If you aren't, that's okay, too. The key to sustaining successful behavior change is to use the skill-power, rather than will-power to turn the good behaviors you desire into habits, where you don't even have to think about them! The goal is to do these things without thinking about it, like brushing your teeth in the morning or turning off the lights when you leave a room.

This month, there are countless opportunities to get started in building healthy habits into your days. No matter where you are on your personal journey toward health, there are plenty of ways to improve your health right now by starting new habits and moving toward your personal goals in 2021. Here is a list of 10 fitness and wellness opportunities you may want to explore this month:

1. Register and participate in the 2021 Get Fit Texas Challenge! This 10-week challenge is for all state agencies and higher education institutions that have chosen to participate. The goal is to log 150 minutes a week of movement for six out of ten weeks. The challenge begins on January 11th. Find out more about the challenge and register through www.getfittexas.org
2. For support during the Get Fit Texas Challenge or while you're building any healthy habit, participate in Group Wellness Coaching, a weekly 15-minute conversation led by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) wellness team. Register through the [Fitness Connect Community Registration Link](#).
3. Join the weekly wellness webinars this month where we will be exploring topics with passionate speakers who will give us the know-how and inspiration to build healthy habits! Explore and register for upcoming events through the [ERS Wellness Events Calendar](#).
4. Participate in one of the on-demand fitness classes led by the Texas DPS Fitness Wellness Unit through the [DPS Fitness Wellness Daily Workout Calendar](#).
5. Learn about the many wellness programs available to you at no cost through your health plan. Start from the [ERS Wellness webpage](#) and select your plan to be directed to the resources available to you.
6. Complete this [10-minute Stretch Break](#) sequence daily for a week and notice how you feel before and after.
7. Write down three things you are grateful for at the same time each day for a month. Notice if you experience a shift in your thinking over the course of the month when you are under stress. If you want to learn more about the science of gratitude, listen to this recorded webinar on the topic through this [Gratitude Webinar Recording Link](#).
8. Start this year off with a financial wellness goal! Learn more about how you can create financial freedom through budgeting and savings strategies with the Office of Consumer Credit Commissioner's regularly scheduled [webinars, budgeting worksheets, and credit quiz](#).
9. Join Jewell Smith, the wellness coordinator at the Texas Office of Attorney General, for a Live Virtual Zumba class, where she takes the work out of the workout in a fun and interactive dance style format. Classes take place Mondays via ZOOM from 12-12:45 p.m. CT. Log in with this link: [Zumba Zoom Link](#)
10. Develop a weekly meal plan that won't break the bank through the USDA's Tasty and Low-Cost Recipes site.