

the Exercise Motivation Change Cycle (EMCC)

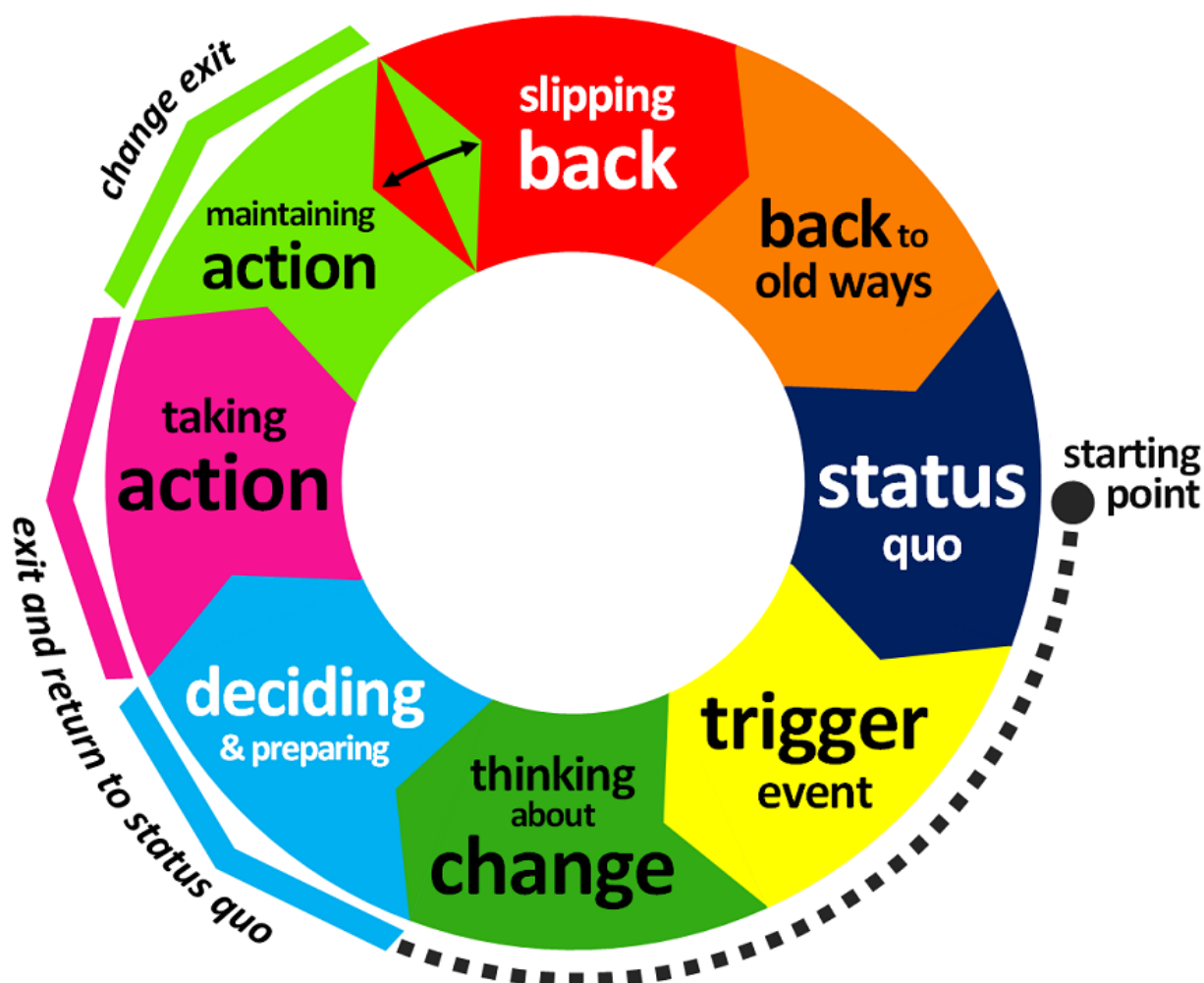
The Trans-theoretical Model of Behaviour Change describes how people can move through various phases when they undergo change in their lives.

The research behind the model is dedicated to solving the problem of how people intentionally change their behaviour, with and without professional intervention. The following question was the foundation for this investigation;

Are there basic, common principles, or stages that commonly occur when people make a change?

The research showed that YES! There were indeed similar structures underlying behaviour change in general, and thus the Trans-theoretical Model of Behaviour Change (1983) was born.

The following diagram, 'the Exercise Motivation Change Cycle' is an adaption of the original model.



The 8 Stages in the Exercise Motivation Change Cycle

1. Status quo

You're either unaware of needing to make a change or are in denial about needing to change. The latter often refers to 'the fear of being different being greater than the fear of staying the same'

2. Trigger event

An event occurs that kick-starts you into contemplating change. This event could be a small thing, like a comment from another person, or a big thing like a health warning from a doctor.

3. Thinking about change

Maybe you do, or maybe you don't want to change. At this stage you would be weighing up the pros and cons of change. You could be ambivalent (sitting on the fence) or you could be sure you want to change.

4. Deciding and preparing

You want things to be different, or you have decided it's not worth changing. After thinking about change you have now made a decision to either change or not. If you have decided to change you will now need to prepare.

5. Taking action

You are now walking the walk. This is where you put your plans into action. It's all systems go as you use initially high motivation to get things started. Alternatively you may get a shock, as you find actually doing it is harder than you thought.

6. Maintaining action

This is for real. This is where you start to see the light at the end of the tunnel and realise that this change could be for real. If you maintain your action for long enough you will exit having made a change. Alternately your initial motivation will fade and you find yourself questioning why you're changing in the first place.

7. Slipping back

You've done so well for so long so you can let your guard down. This is a dangerous stage and will often see you reengaging in old behaviours. Often justifications and minimisation of behaviours will occur at this stage, e.g. I've been going so well, I can afford to miss a workout.

8. Back to old ways

Stuff it, this is too hard. This stage begins when the maintaining action stage has been left to languish and the previous stage, slipping back, has become dominant. You've now completed the cycle and will soon return to the status quo stage.