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# Using ROUTINE (RO)

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**Core concept:** Develop a schedule to get your life on track.

Use the acronym *ROUTINE* to remember the building blocks (**R**esponsibilities, **O**ngoing Structure, **U**se of Skills, **T**raditions, **I**nterests Included, **N**ovelty, **E**nvision a Satisfying Life) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

**Responsibilities:** We get overwhelmed when our responsibilities are not taken care of daily. Break bigger responsibilities down into daily steps. Make a list of both major and minor responsibilities and fill them into the “Schedule” worksheet.

**Ongoing Structure:** Routines are about structure that is ongoing, predictable, and repeating. Structure keeps us from getting stuck in symptoms and is the foundation for building a satisfying life. Use the “Schedule” worksheet to structure your days and be sure to follow it.

**Use of Skills:** Remember that you need to learn and practice all of your skills as a part of your routine, just like someone in school or college does daily homework. Include reminders for the skills you want to specifically practice on a given day. Also remember that other skills might be needed to follow your routine, like Opposite to Emotion.

**Traditions:** Traditions give meaning to our lives and those of others. Part of a satisfying life is developing traditions that you and the people around you enjoy. Many of us think of traditions as being tied to seasons and holidays (and those can be fun to establish), but traditions can also be as simple as a family bowling night, a specific dinner on a certain night, or celebrating accomplishments (yours or others) with something special. You can get back into traditions you have valued or use your imagination to create new traditions for yourself and your loved ones.

**Interests Included:** Routines that do not include our personal interests are difficult to maintain. Be sure to build in what you like to do. If you are unsure

what you are interested in, pick some options from the Activities List and plug them into your schedule. Remember to approach a new interest or activity with a Nonjudgmental Stance.

**Novelty:** Be careful not to build too much structure into your routine. Routines also need space for flexibility and novelty. Make sure you explicitly leave space to try new activities or be spontaneous. Consider “scheduling” a free morning, afternoon, evening, or day into your routine.

**Envision a Satisfying Life:** Routines, schedules, and structure take time to get established. Remember not to give up on building habits toward living a more satisfying life. Stay mindful of how your routine will help you with your priorities, goals, and values. Do not give up!