

Vantage Voice

A quarterly newsletter by Vantage Physicians



Six Tips for Building and Breaking Habits in 2026

By: Dr. Marla Calvert

This is the time of year when habits are on many of our minds. As I write this, some of you might even be starting a New Year's Resolution. I'm a person who is perennially habit-obsessed. Every day at work I see how daily habits shape the wellbeing of my patients. In case you are feeling inspired to make or break a habit in 2026, I thought I'd share a few of my favorite tips and tricks for making a healthy change (even if you've ditched your New Year's Resolution already!).

Continued on Page 2

This Issue:

Six Tips for Building and Breaking Habits in 2026

Pg. 2

Forest Bathing

Pg. 3

Sign of the Times

Pg. 4

Vantage Announcements

Pg. 5

Your Vantage Physicians Team

Pg. 6

Office Schedule and Closures

Pg. 7

Take Advantage of a Fresh Start



You don't need to wait until January 1st! Transitions can be a powerful time to think about your habits. You might be moving to a new home, celebrating a birthday, or observing the anniversary of an important event in your life. I can't count how many patients I've met who finally succeeded in recovery from an addiction when they became a parent. Picking a date that has meaning can make it easy to remember your "why" and to celebrate the longevity of your change as time goes by.

Make it Easy

In order for the interest to compound on your new habit, pick something easy to do - even on a busy, stressful, or low-motivation day. I like the 2 minute rule. 2 minutes of meditation, or flossing, or brisk walking is far better than zero minutes. You might forget the clock is running and exceed 2 minutes, but at the beginning it's best to set the bar nice and low.

Build in Accountability

Most of us are more likely to stick with a new habit when someone else is watching. It might be your dog that begs for a daily walk, the trainer you hired to meet you at the gym, or a loved one you told about your quit date. Our desire not to disappoint others can make all the difference when internal motivation is low. I spent several years trying (and failing) to lift weights regularly on my own. What finally clicked for me was joining a group that meets 3 mornings a week. Every time I slept in and skipped a workout, I knew someone in my group would say "We missed you Wednesday!" and this little nudge helped me turn a difficult task into a regular habit. I love it when my patients share a new goal or habit they are working on. If you are contemplating a new habit, let your Vantage physician support you!

Pick a Process, Not an Outcome

Maybe you've heard the quote "We don't rise to the level of our expectations, we fall to the level of our training." Many of us want to eat healthier, lose weight, or feel less stressed. It's easy to come up with a desired outcome, but more effective to pick a daily action instead. Rather than a goal to lose 20 lb, I recommend picking a process-oriented habit that supports the outcome you want (pack a healthy lunch for work Monday through Thursday). Many healthy habits become intrinsically rewarding with repetition, but before that happens, checking off an easy win most days might be the motivation you need to keep going.

Check and Adjust

Not everything that matters can be measured, but many of us are motivated by seeing evidence of progress. I've been wearing a Whoop band for several years and still enjoy looking at my sleep and exercise data. Right now, I'm trying to improve my VO2 max (a measure of cardiovascular fitness) by increasing my minutes of vigorous intensity exercise each week. My VO2 max is painfully slow to change, but being able to see my high intensity exercise minutes accumulate each week keeps me motivated. Maybe you are counting the days since you quit something, or the miles you've walked this year. Whatever you are measuring, celebrate the evidence that your new habit is growing.

Change is hard, and failure is a normal part of habit change. We've all set a goal and found it impossible to reach. Or, realized the goal was not worth pursuing. I like the concept of "failing forward." As long as your initial attempt gives you forward momentum, it's not a failure. Can you adjust the target? Change your environment to make it easier? Build in better support? If you've decided your New Year's Resolution was misguided, don't give up on a healthier 2026, but do give yourself permission to change the goal and keep moving forward.

Books for Inspiration

- Atomic Habits by James Clear
- The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg
- The Four Tendencies by Gretchen Rubin

What Gets Measured Gets Managed

Forest Bathing

By: Dr. Erin Kershnik

Western Medicine teaches us to identify disease, properly classify it, and find treatments to cure or lessen suffering. We focus on “Pathology” or the study of disease. In other eras and other cultures, the focus is often more on promoting health and studying the habits of those enjoying a robust and joyful life. Ayurvedic medicine employs diet and certain spices; Chinese medicine works to balance the humors or Qi (chi); and in the modern era, a researcher Aaron Antonovsky coined the term Salutogenesis to describe ways to promote health after studying Holocaust



survivors who continued to thrive after trauma. Recently in Japan, there has been a lot of interest and study of the practice of Shinrin-yoku (“Forest Bathing”). This last concept has been front of mind for me over the last few months.

I typically find walking to be my favorite exercise and a good form of relaxation. A foot injury has made this difficult so I had been spending less time outside overall. I could tell this was not a good choice for me! I stumbled upon the practice of Forest Bathing and found that it is something I can do even on a bad day and even in less than great weather. Studies have shown that it lowers cortisol and blood pressure, improves mood, and promotes a state of calm and healing.

I confess this practice isn’t always easy. My inclination is to multitask – listen to a book or podcast while I wander in the woods. I want to check my Apple Watch to see if I closed any rings. What I do instead is take pictures of mushrooms, interesting plants or textures, or things to maybe research later. I’m trying to just be present and notice, but photography helps ease me into that.

Being somewhere green works best. But, I think these principles could apply sitting on a bench and watching the water or sitting in the grass in your backyard. And, Olympia has several woody parks with well maintained trails. Check out Priest Point Park, Burfoot, Watershed Park, Tolmie, and others.

We are blessed with green and all this rain is a part of it! Consider heading outside and wandering this winter to see what Salutogenesis is all about.

Forest Bathing Involves:

Slowing Down

Walk at nature’s pace, not a hiker’s pace, and wander aimlessly.



Disconnecting

Leave phones and devices off to avoid distractions.



Engaging Senses

Notice colors, textures, sounds (birds, wind), smells, and tastes (even the air).



Connecting

Feel your presence as part of the natural world.

Breathing Deeply

Inhale the forest air, exhaling tension.

Observing Details

Look closely at small things, like leaves or insects.

Being Present

Focus on the moment, letting go of worries and to-do lists.

Sign of the Times

By: Dr. Erin Kershisnik

"I used to practice Medicare. Now I practice medicine."

-An excerpt from Dr. Erin Kershisnik's article, "The Joy of Family Medicine; Retainer Fee Practice"

Did you know that 2026 is Vantage Physicians' 20th birthday year? Over 20 years ago, I took a deep breath and mailed the letters telling my patients we were making a change. There wasn't even a name for what we were doing back then. Now, we can confidently call ourselves a DPC practice (Direct Primary Care) and have other DPC friends in the community! It has been a wild ride with some changes along the way. Stay tuned to learn how you can join us in celebrating this milestone later this year!

One small change we are making in the New Year is to no longer offer paper billing to new patients. For whatever reason, we are finding our mail service less and less reliable with invoices not being received, and checks lost in limbo. Technology offers us a perfect solution to this – good for my office manager AND the planet! If you currently receive an annual bill in the mail and would like to streamline with automatic billing, please call us at 360-438-1161 and ask to talk to Natalie. If you have always used paper invoicing and feel strongly about not changing, we understand.

"Capturing a moment: an early advertisement showcasing Vantage Physicians' transition to a Direct Primary Care model."



A NEW medical practice has opened in the South Sound.

3703 Ensign Road, Suite 10A, Olympia, WA 98506

In practice for nearly 10 years, Dr. Ogilvie and Dr. Kershisnik are now offering a unique high-access, personalized practice open to all ages.



Typical features of this practice include:

- No or little wait times for appointments
- 24 access with **YOUR** physician via telephone, email or pager
- Personalized care whether in our office, at the hospital or at your home or care facility
- Conveniently located near Providence St. Peter Hospital



Erin Kershisnik, MD Board Certified Family Medicine **360.438.1161** **Patrick Ogilvie, MD** Board Certified Family Medicine

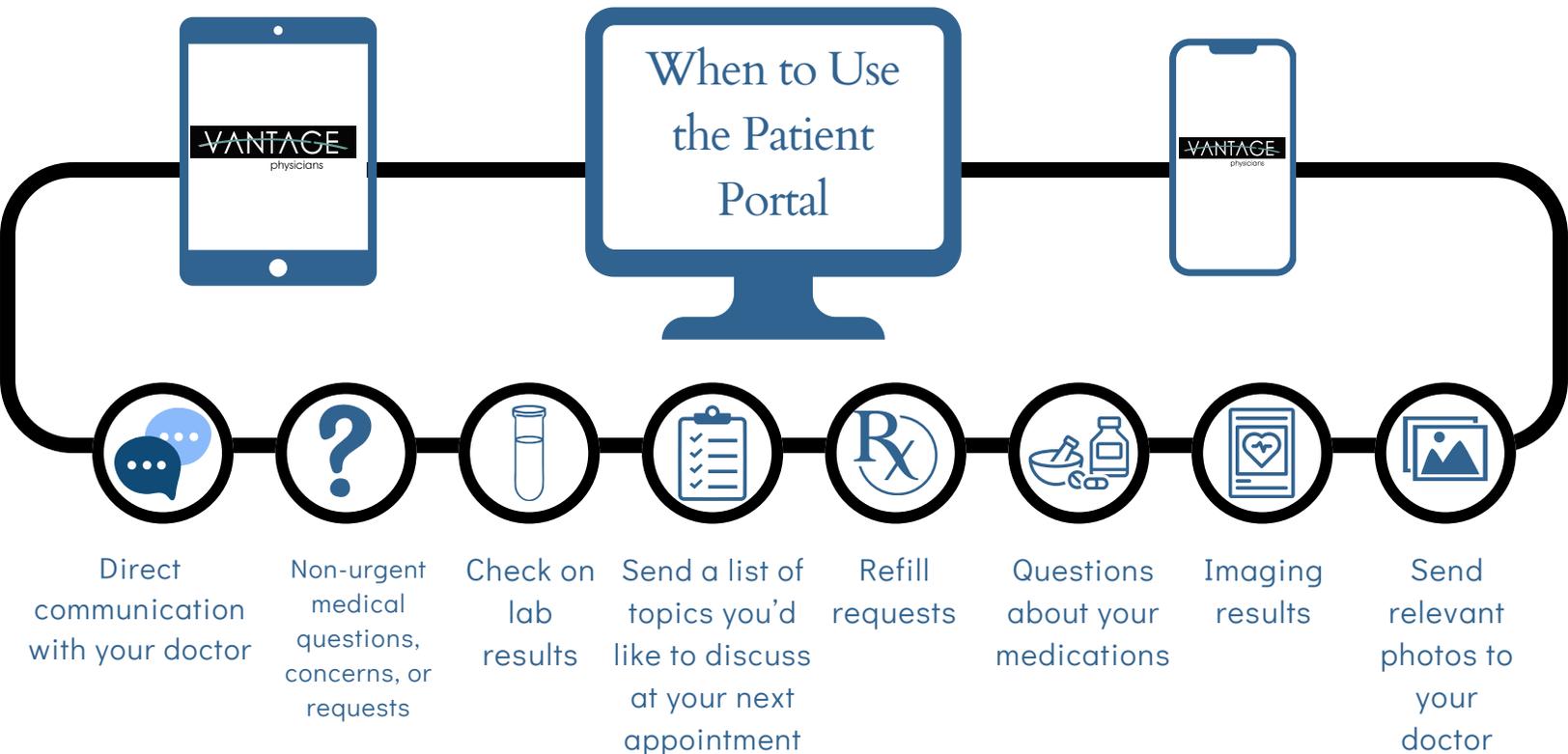
Call today to learn more about joining this innovative membership practice.

~ NOW ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS AND FAMILIES ~

An Important Note From Vantage Physicians

We regret to inform you that we are currently facing challenges with our mail delivery system.

If you have sent a payment that has not yet cleared at the bank, please contact our office to verify its receipt.



A Note About Medication Refills

If you are out of refills on your medication please contact us directly instead of submitting a request through your pharmacy. You can submit a refill request directly to your doctor via the portal or by calling our office. This does not apply for prescriptions that have refills remaining - if you have refills available please call your pharmacy.

Your Vantage Physicians Team



Dr. Kershisnik



Dr. Vazquez-Bryan



Dr. Calvert



Natalie



Yaritza



Ryan



Mitzy



Do you enjoy being a patient of Vantage Physicians? Let others know!
Your reviews are always appreciated. Scan the QR code to leave a review.





Office Closures & Provider Vacations

At Vantage Physicians we are deeply committed to providing prompt, friendly, quality medical care to our patients. Our practice model allows us to focus on our patients' needs rather than the requirements of their insurance carrier. We are free to focus on the primary interaction in healthcare: the patient-physician relationship.

Dr. Kershisnik is out of the office every Tuesday. This winter, she will also be unavailable on February 5th and 6th, as well as from March 11th to 13th.

Dr. Vazquez-Bryan is out of the office each Thursday.

Dr. Calvert is out of the office every Wednesday. Additionally, she will be out on February 17th and 26th, as well as, March 5th and 6th this winter.

The office will be closed for the following holidays:

- Monday, January 19th - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Monday, February 16th - Presidents' Day

Please take note of your doctor's schedule and office closures. When making your own plans don't forget to check your medication needs and give us 48 hours notice on prescription requests. Thank you!

Vantage Physicians

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