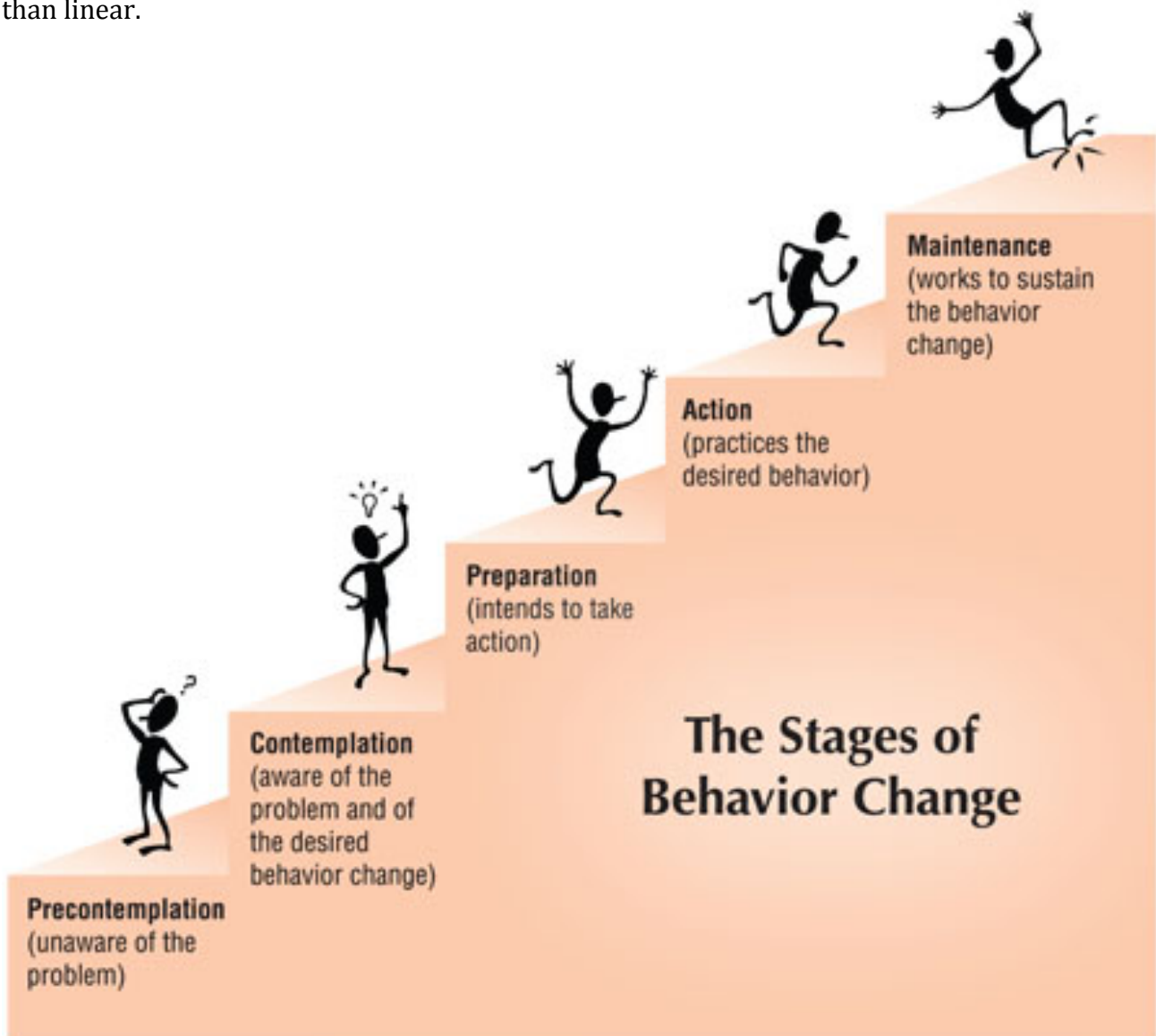
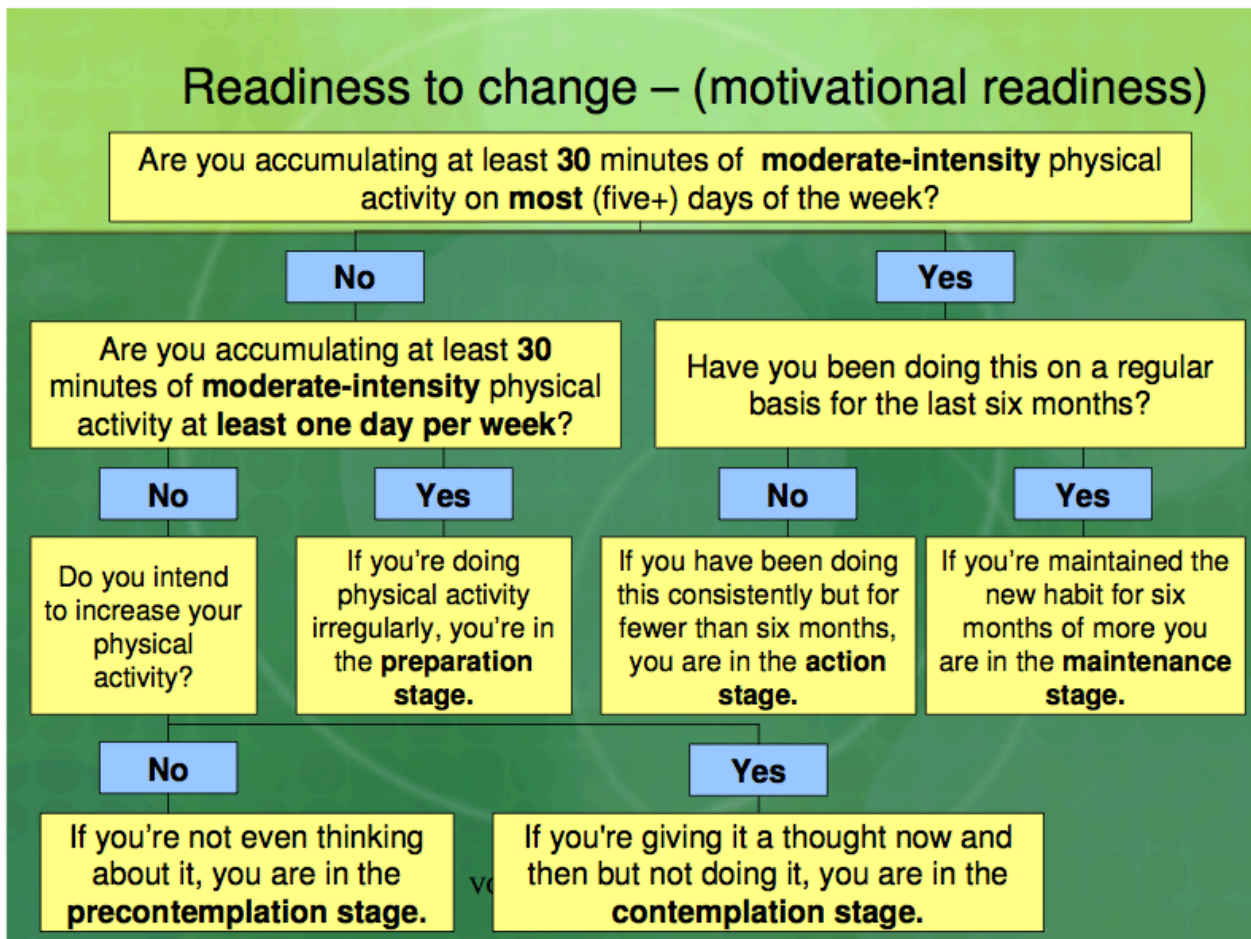


## Stages of Change & Process of Change

The 5 Stages of Change Model (SOC) is a very useful framework that describes the series of stages we go through to change our lifestyle habits. The critical assumption that underpins this model is that behavioral changes do not happen in one step, but through a series of distinct, predictable stages. According to the model, individuals move through a series of stages as they adopt and maintain a new habit (physical activity). Specifically, the stages include Pre-contemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action, and Maintenance

**Pre-contemplators** are inactive and not thinking about becoming active. **Contemplators** are inactive but are thinking about becoming active. **Preparers** are physically active but not at the recommended levels (30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all days of the week). Individuals in the **Action Stage** are physically active at the recommended levels but have been active for less than six months. Individuals in the **Maintenance Stage** are physically active at the recommended levels and have been for six or more months. Given that it often takes many attempts before individuals succeed at adopting and maintaining physical activity, movement across the stages is thought to be cyclical rather than linear.





According to the SOC model, individuals use various processes of change as they progress through the stages of change. Researchers have identified five cognitive processes and five behavioural processes used throughout the stages of changes.

**Cognitive processes** include increasing knowledge (e.g., reading about being physically active), being aware of risks (e.g., becoming aware that being inactive is unhealthy), caring about consequences to others (e.g., thinking about how inactivity affects family and friends), comprehending benefits (e.g., understanding the benefits of being active), and increasing healthy opportunities (e.g., increasing awareness of physical activity programs).

The **behavioral processes** include substituting alternatives (e.g., participating in physical activity when experiencing stress), enlisting social support (e.g., finding a family member to provide support for physical activity), rewarding yourself (e.g., doing something special for reaching a physical activity goal), committing yourself (e.g., making promises to be physically active), and reminding yourself (e.g., posting physical activity reminders around the house).

Among individuals progressing through the stages of change, use of the cognitive strategies typically peak in the Preparation Stage and use of the behavioral processes typically peak at the Action Stage.

**Stages of Change = WHEN people change their behaviour**  
**Process of Change = HOW people change their behaviour**

**Self-efficacy** is another important construct that changes as individuals progress through the stages of change. Self-efficacy refers to one's confidence in their ability to adopt physical activity. Research indicates that self-efficacy for physical activity increases as individual's progress through the stages of change.