

Creating a Tic Blocker Transcript

You know, if you have tics, you've probably heard as many times as I have, "cut that out", "just stop doing that tic", "maybe you should just try harder to stop". Duh, we would if we could, we're not idiots. It's a leaky brake, we have a hard time stopping, it's tourette syndrome. Now, that being said, sometimes there are tics that you do want to stop and one of the things we know is that however you stop the tick, whatever it is that is keeping it from coming out, the more you keep a tic from coming out, the weaker and weaker it gets. Now, obviously our breaking system isn't going to back us up. So, we need something else to run interference. We really need something to prevent that tic coming out even though we can't stop it ourselves. Now, the fancy term that people use for that is competing response, in the Brake Shop what we tend to call it is a "tic blocker". Now, there are three really important things to know about a tic blocker in terms of coming up with a good one for it. The first to know is that you really want it to be the opposite of the tic; you want it to be something that your body can't possibly do at the same time as doing the tic, that's what blocks it. Now, typically for a motor tic, it might be slightly tensing the muscles that are the opposite of what the tics use. For a phonic tic, it may be, breathing in and out slowly through your nose because most phonic tics involve some noise out the mouth. Now, to use an example, maybe my tick wants to do this with my arm and so a good response might be to hold my arm firming down at my side with my elbow locked. I can't do this, and this at the same time, so there, that is the first component. Now the second thing, not only do we want to do the opposite, we don't want the solution to be worse than the problem. Maybe a good way of blocking one of my tics would be to stand on one foot, yodel, spin around and eat a piece of cheese, but that's probably going to cause me more problems than the tic did. I mean it's certainly going to get me noticed a lot more than the original tic, it might cause me more pain than the tic would, it might mean I can go fewer places than the tic would. So, we really want the tic blocker to be more benign. So, not only should it be the opposite, not only should the solution not be worse than the problem. But we need to be able to keep the tic blocker up for a minute or so or until that urge to tic goes away. So of course, this tic is used to getting its way so of course if you don't let that tic come out, if you block it somehow, it's not going to take that lying down, it's going to throw the mother of all tantrums. So for a moment or two, the urge to tic is going to be stronger rather than weaker. Now, that will only last a moment or two before the tic gives up and you win as long as you can keep the tic blocker up. So those three things then, the opposite, solution not worse than the problem and keeping up for a moment or two are important aspects to a good tic blocker. Now, really what we need is an example here too.

[Female Speaker]

I have this really bad snorting tic, do you know how to get rid of it?

[Male Speaker]

A snorting tic is a good example, it's something that can be really interfering and hurt your throat and get you teased a lot. So let's break it down, this is where if you've done some good tic detective work, it's going to make it a lot easier. I realize, okay, in terms of snorting, I open my mouth, I tighten my throat and I breathe in quickly, through my mouth with my throat closed off. If I want to do the opposite of that, I want to relax my throat, keep my neck loose, I want to close my mouth and I want to breathe in and slowly through my nose instead of my mouth. So, both can't happen at the same time. So we've got the opposite criteria down. Well, what about, is the solution worse than the problem? Well I don't think so; I think people are going to notice me people snorting a lot more than they are going to be noticing me breathing through my nose. What about the third piece? Can I keep it up for a minute or so? I certainly hope so, if I can't keep breathing for a minute or so, I've got a bigger problem than my original tic. So, those are really the three important things to know about the tic block and the final thing I want to let you know is sometimes we may have a series of tics in a row, yeah sure I may be snorting but at first I shake my head, blink my eyes open my mouth and hop on one foot. Well, do I need to come up with a tic blocker for every one of those things? Well no, the neat thing about a tic blocker is as long as you come up with a response for the first piece and keep it from coming out the rest of them won't come out either. It's kind of like dominoes, if you don't knock the first one over the rest of them won't follow suit. So I'm Dr. Dunk, stick that tool in your toolbox.

[Text at the end of video]

Creating a Tic Blocker

Tic Blockers (competing responses) = stop from coming out

What makes a good tic blocker?

- "Opposite" to the tic!
- Not worse than the tic!
- Can do for one minute or more!

Series of tics - only block the first tic!