

Using Your Tic Blocker - Transcript

So, now we know what constitutes a good tic blocker, how do we use it?

Well, the first thing to know is that we should only really start one tic at a time.

It's going to be enough work starting off with one tic alone.

Trying to stop all of our tics at the same time, that's really more like old-school suppression. And as you probably know, it doesn't work very well.

Now, the second important thing to know is that stress makes tics worse, and so if we really want to hedge our bets, we need to plan for success.

We need to make sure that we start working on our tic blocker in a fairly low-stress period. So, often people will pick a long weekend or March break or even summer vacation.

Now, when you're doing that, make sure you let your cheerleaders know that you've got some hard work planned for you during that period of time so that they don't accidentally sabotage things on you without meaning to.

Now, once we've picked our tic that we want to start with and we've picked a good time to start it, when you wake up that morning, start right away, because in a 24-hour period, as soon as you wake up in the morning, you're at your strongest because you've just slept all night and your tic is at its weakest because it didn't get to come out all night, if at all. So, really think of it as a game, as if you're a goalie and you're going to see, as soon as you wake up in the morning, "How could I shut out that tic?"

And the fourth thing then, is that now that you're up in the morning, you're starting to do this, there's really three times throughout the day you want to be using your tic blocker.

First of all, when you feel that urge coming. So, back to that tic detective work that we did.

This is where it comes in handy.

So, when you feel one of those warning signs, then you're gonna start doing your tic blocker.

Also, oh, one of those tics snuck out.

That's okay.

Do your tic blocker afterwards again anyway because tics like to show up in bursts and so even if one snuck out, you start doing that tic blocker and the rest of them aren't gonna get by you. And then also, and this goes back to the tic detective work again, if you're about to go into one of those hangouts the tic really likes, if it's getting to be that time of day, if you're about to go be with that particular person the tic likes or in that particular situation, before you get into it, you know the tic likes it so...

You're doing that on your way in.

Now, if we were just doing suppression, we'd probably only be fighting our tic to please other people.

When we're trying to avoid embarrassment or if someone who doesn't like that tic comes into the room. That's not what tic management is about.

Tic management, you want to be doing it all the time because really, tic management is about you and what you want, not about pleasing other people.

Okay, so you're all set to go.

You've picked your first tic to work on.

It's first thing in the morning on that stress-free day that you've chosen for yourself and you're all set to do that competing response every time you feel the urge of that tic, every time that tic sneaks out and every time you're going into one of that tic's favourite hangouts.

So, how does it go from here?

Well, it can be a little tricky for the first few days.

In fact, maybe for the first close to a week, you might think it's a pretty dumb treatment, that you're thinking a whole lot more about your tic.

You're feeling that urge to tic a whole lot more than you ever were before the treatment started, but don't worry. That's not going to last long.

After a few days to a week, it's going to seem like that urge has dropped right off. You're gonna think you're done. You're not quite done yet.

That tic's gonna come back for more.

He's a little bit of a slow learner.

He's a sucker for punishment, and so there'll probably be a round two, maybe even a round three, four, five and six, but don't be fooled.

Every time that tic comes back for more and that urge starts to grow again, you're not back to square one because each time you fought that tic, it's gotten a little weaker.

So, every new time you're fighting the tic, it's going to be a little quicker and a little easier to beat him.

The other neat thing about tic management is that urge gets lower and lower over time too.

With old-school suppression, that urge to tic was always there, but actually with tic management, just like the tic decreases over time, so will the urge.

It'll be weaker, it'll come out less and it won't last as long when it does come out.

Now, the final thing I want to mention about tic management is that if you're anything like me and you've got ADHD as well as Tourette's, the last thing you need is ADHD teaming up with the Tourette's to interfere with your tic management.

So, if you've got medication to take for ADHD, make sure you take it because it'll keep ADHD out of the way. It'll help you concentrate a little bit more, and notice your warning signs a little bit more while you're working on your tic blocker.

So, I'm Dr. Dunc. Stick that tool in your toolbox.