

14. Know the benefits – Basically, what’s in it for you? Notice the good feelings and other benefits that come with carrying out your new habit. Imagine all the good stuff you will get when your habit is a regular part of your life.

15. Know the pain - You should also think about the consequences of not adopting your new habit. You've chosen to create this habit for a reason and exposing yourself to realistic information about not making a change will give you added motivation.

16. Watch your language - If things don’t go to plan, use words like 'slip' or 'trip', and never 'fail'. You can learn from these experiences what doesn’t work for you and how to do better next time.

17. Do it for yourself - Don’t worry about all the things you feel you “should” have as habits. Instead, choose habits to get you nearer the goals that are important to you.



Easy Mind Hacks to Make a New Habit Stick

from

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With a small amount of determination, you can create a new habit that requires little effort to maintain. Here are some tips for creating new habits and making them stick:

1. Make small changes first - A study by Baumeister (Florida State University, 2012) showed that regular small acts of self-control can improve your ability to perform bigger ones.

2. Start simple - Following on from the point above, don't try to completely change your life in one day. It is easy to get over-enthusiastic and take on too much. If you want to study two hours a day, go for thirty minutes at first and build up over time.

3. Repetition is key - Repeating actions over time creates physical changes in parts of the brain through neuroplasticity. For example, if a light flashes or a beep is sounded whenever animals are given water, they learn to associate the light or sound with drinking. Changes in the physical structure of their brains can be seen within a week. (Graybiel, Professor of Neuroscience at MIT, 1999.) Your old, unwanted habits will have created these changes, but your new ones will too in time. The more you repeat them, the stronger that connection becomes in your brain.

4. Remind yourself - If your initial enthusiasm wanes it can be easy to forget. If you want to go running after work, leave your gym kit where you will see it when you come home. If you've quit smoking, leave a post-it note with a motivational reminder where you used to keep your cigs.

5. Use "But" - If you start to think negative thoughts, add the word "but" and stick on a more positive ending. "I'm no good at this ... but, if I work at it, I'll get better."

6. Stay consistent - The more consistent your habit is, the easier it will be to stick to it. If you want to start exercising, do so at the same time, and the same place each time. When cues like time of day, place and circumstances are the same in each case it is easier to stick.

7. Remove the old triggers - Restructure your environment so it won't tempt you to go back to your old ways. Remove junk food from your house, cancel your betting site subscription, throw out the cigarettes, change your routines at times you used to carry out the old behaviours.

8. Meet your own needs - If your old behaviour served a purpose then find a new and better way to reach that goal. If smoking gave you 'time out' or a way to relax, for example, you could take up meditation or reading to meet that same need.

9. Be kind to yourself - High standards are good to have, but not impossible ones. It takes time to set up a new habit. Remain determined to succeed and refuse to be discouraged if you meet a few bumps along the way.

10. Get a buddy - Find someone who will support you and keep you motivated if you feel you're tempted to go back to your old habit. Contact them if you need to.

11. Associate with role models - Spend more time with people who already have the habits you want. Their ideas may rub off on you.

12. Go public - Tell people about the changes you're making. Keeping your intentions secret gives you more excuse to give up on them.