

EVERYDAY HABIT HACKS



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Introduction



We, as human beings, are a product of habits, both positive and negative. Everyone, whether we like it or not, has hundreds of patterns that are activated daily that range from taking a shower to watching a particular television show, to getting ready to work.

Every day we consciously and unconsciously we are performing habits, and whatever you call them, whether it be your routines, rituals, or behaviors, habits are a part of all of us.

Habits can be divided into three different areas. First, are those habits that we don't notice anymore because they are deeply embedded in our daily lives. These habits include brushing our teeth or tying our shoelaces.

The second kind of patterns is those that are healthy for us and that we tend to try and build upon — these kinds of habits, including eating a healthy diet, getting enough sleep, and exercising regularly. The third kind of habit involves those habits that are seen as unfavorable, like overspending, smoking, and procrastination.

Every January 1st, a majority of people are filled with enthusiasm for changing their lives. They hope and desire to start the new year off fresh and setting goals that will change our lives.

However, within a few weeks, we find ourselves battling the same bad habits from the previous year.

The worst part about this is that we revert back to our bad habits unknowingly and unwillingly. Over time, the ritual of setting New Year resolutions and quickly breaking those resolutions ends up disappointing use to the extent that we give up with the idea of changing our bad habits and instead choose to opt out of the yearly ritual.

Eventually, we end up with a negative connotation about change. We are made to believe that change is meant only for a few who have a lot of will power or a unique self-drive.

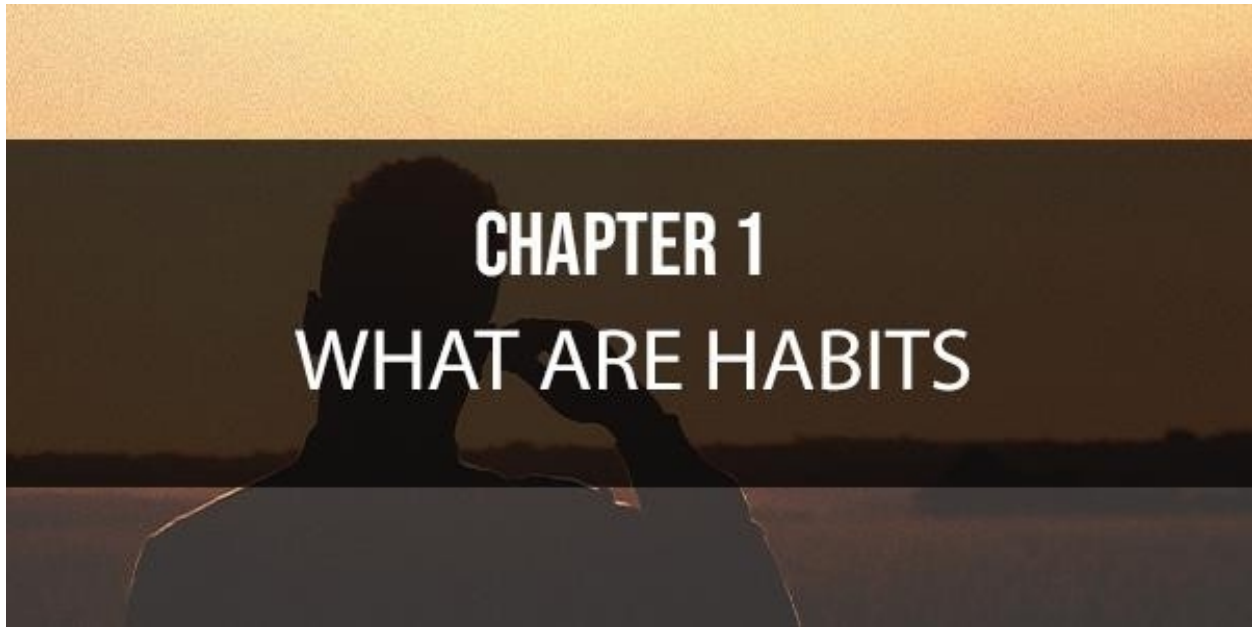
Unfortunately, this revelation leaves most people with questions that often go unanswered. If you find yourself in this place with lingering questions, then you can find answers here. Not only can

you rest assured that you will be able to take control of your habits after reading this book, but you will also learn the necessary steps for overcoming the bad habits that are holding you back. You will gain the knowledge and tools that are needed to break the bad habits and replace them with good ones.

Since a habit is something that you acquire as a result of the influences in your life, being able to change it will require some skills. Like any other skill, it needs both effective techniques and practice to be successful. You need to equip yourself with these skills so that you can be competent enough when facing your habit. If you want to change your habits, then you have to work on developing your skills continually.

This is because your habit becomes automatic when it is practiced with consistent, repetitive patterns that are created in your mind. The only way you will be able to defeat your bad habits is by standing up and equipping yourself for the tasks.

Chapter 1 – What Are Habits?



In order for you to understand how to break your bad habits, it is essential that you first understand precisely what habits are. According to the dictionary, a habit is a recurrent and often unconscious pattern of behavior, which is usually acquired through regular repetition.

To understand this concept, you need to know how your brain works. Your mind is created by and connected with a complex array of neurons. These neurons are fed with input from our sensory nerves and organs, which are then delivered to the brain.

These neurons are interconnected with others throughout the body and form one of the most significant frameworks of

interconnected elements of the body. The brain registers, as well as maintains pathways of various neurons through the chemical impulses that it receives from the neurons. To increase cognitive ability, the brain has to keep a simple, streamlined process. This process includes setting the most used pathways as connections, which allows them to run automatically.

For example, you might find yourself in a room and can't remember what brought you there. The same applies to driving and walking. But what about bad habits?

There isn't a specific definition of bad habits. This is because a habit isn't bad or good on its own. What matters is what you do with the habit. Consider whether your habit has a positive or negative impact on your life and the life of those around you.

Asking yourself this question can help guide you in defining your habits.

A positive habit will bring you success in all areas in your life, while a bad habit is one that can ruin the success you experience in life.

A bad habit can be considered as anything that takes up your time and prevents you from achieving your immediate or long-term goals, without providing you anything in return. For example, you might have the habit of playing video games during your free time.

This could be a good or bad habit, depending on how you do it. If you usually play video games with your family, it could mean achieving your goal of spending more time with your family, making it a positive habit. However, continually playing video games by yourself every day contributes to nothing, making it a bad habit. When determining whether your habits are good or bad, you have to be honest with yourself.

Take the time to weight your habits and see if they are beneficial to you. If something hinders you from achieving your goals, define it as a bad habit, and start devising a plan to break the habit.

While you can pinpoint specific bad habits, something's you are so used to the habit that you actually don't recognize how it is affecting you. Therefore, you need to understand how you can realize your habits so that you can do something about them.

How to Recognize Your Habits

Most of us are so used to our habits that we don't actually realize that you have those habits. The first step that you need to take if you want to change your habits is being aware of which ones you have. You can't change what you don't know.

You can become aware of both your positive and negative habits by doing a self-assessment. Here are two methods that you can use to help you identify both your good and your bad habits.

Internal Review

Doing an internal review of your habits requires self-reflection. Self-reflection is nothing more than analyzing your daily behaviors and taking note of how they make you feel. If you always find yourself snacking on sugary foods, and feeling guilty about it each time it happens, then you've just narrowed down one of your bad behaviors.

You can also use measurement as a way to recognize your bad habits. Most of the time, we tend to lie to ourselves about our bad habits or ignore them completely. With measurement, you can quickly note your bad habits.

To do this, take a notebook and pen, or use your phone to record down everything that you do daily. If you want to find out if you have any bad eating habits, write down everything that you eat in a day, how it makes you feel, and what you think you could do about it. When you take the time to write down what you do every day, you can uncover and reveal habits that you didn't even know existed.

External Review

When you do an external review, you use information outside yourself as a way to understand your habits. You take the time to

observe and study the people around you and your environment so that you might gain a bit of insight into your own habits.

For example, reading books will enlighten you on different behaviors and their repercussions. You will be able to determine which habits are good for you and which ones are bad.

Another example of using the external review process to discover your habits is observing the lives of successful people around the world. Look for people who accomplished remarkable things in their lives and note what habits helped them to achieve their goals and determine if there were any habits; they possessed that kept them from reaching their goals. Observing successful people will help you note some bad habits that you might not have considered harmful before.

Types of Habits

Habits are a crucial part of our daily lives. Some of these habits started when we were young, like sucking your finger. Habits are a part of us, and we are a part of our habits. Most people categorize habits into two areas, bad and good.

The bad habits tend to be more popular than the good ones and can include procrastination, telling lies, stealing, and laziness, among others. Different schools of thoughts have their own notion

of different kinds of habits. Here are two different schools of thought on the different types of habits.

First School of Thought

According to the first school of thought on habits, they can be divided into four different kinds as follows:

- Instigating
- Avoiding
- Regimental
- Unconscious

Everyone falls into one of these four types. Let's explore each category a little further so you can determine which one you fall into regarding your habits.

Instigating Habits

These kinds of habits are those that are established throughout the course of our lives to help guide us through our life projects. These habits are responsible for moving us forward toward a preferred idea. They are the habits that tend to lead to serendipity. You can enjoy these habits without actualizing any goal.

They tend to take us on a path that is rewarding on its own. At times, these habits might have goals attached to them, but

achieving these goals isn't necessarily as important as the process. You can refer to these kinds of habits as open-ended habits. Since you aren't focused on the result or outcome, what happens during the process can be framed to be a success.

Examples of instigating habits include:

- Reading
- Working out
- Spending time with friends
- Eating healthy
- Building a home

Avoiding Habits

These kinds of habits are widely known by everyone because we see these habits everywhere. They are the habits we are trying to break off. Avoiding habits include media addiction, slothfulness, gambling, gossiping, drinking, smoking, and every kind of addiction that you can think of. In this stage, the focus is on changing from one thing to something else.

These are the habits that we try hard to push away. You are either complying with them or not by moving them toward the instigating habits, which is by mentally reframing them. For example, if you are in the habit of gossiping, rather than trying to stop the habit, you can look for ways to compliment others instead.

If this is done over and over again, it will eventually override the habit of gossiping.

Regimental Habits

These kinds of habits involve doing an activity each time the same way without leaving any room for change. It is an automatic response. You can call it the devilish cycle, which robs you of the current moment. People who tend to rile against habit formation only consider this type of habit. Once you form a regimental habit, you lose control of the present.

These habits usually become unconscious if you aren't careful and on the watch. For example, parking in the same spot every day, showering, drinking a cup of coffee every morning, and more.

Unconscious Habits

These habits operate through us, and undeniably, we have them all. We don't see them, but we rely on our friends and family to help us expose them. These are habits that we repeat over time and that have become embedded in our character and lifestyle. We don't have conscious control over these habits. They include pessimism, negativity, overspending, frowning, picking your nose, etc.

Second School of Thought

Besides the habits mentioned above, they can also be categorized into three distinct groups based on the nature of the activities according to this second school of thought on habits.

Motor Habits

These are referred to as muscular activities. They are the habits that directly relate to our physical actions. Motor habits include walking, talking, sitting, standing, exercising, and maintaining a particular body posture, among others.

Intellectual Habits

These kinds of habits relate to the psychological process that is needed for our mental abilities. Intellectual habits include logical thinking, accurate perception, use of reasoning before making a decision, and good observation, among others.

Habits of Character

These are the habits that are expressed through our character. For example, helping those in need, trusting people, being honest, time management, being clean and tidy, etc. These, at times, are called emotional habits because they have the essence of feelings and emotions.

Chapter 2 – How Habits Work



Your life today is the sum of the things that you have done consistently over time. Your life is the product of habits, whether they are good or bad. Ultimately, you are what you repeatedly do, and your habits form the things you believe, the person you are, and the personality that you portray.

Sometimes, we don't even know how we exhibit certain habits. We do, however, know that over time, we end up doing them unconsciously. Understanding how habits work is the key to a life where anything is possible.

The Pattern of Habits

Every habit that you develop, whether good or bad, has a pattern. They follow a specific pathway. A bad habit also accompanies the same pattern that is followed by a good habit. Knowing that habits follow a particular pattern, it is essential for you to know about the three patterns of habits, that are followed sequentially. The three patterns of habit are:

- The Reminder
- The routine
- The reward

Every habit follows this pattern. Whether you have the habit of reading, exercising, procrastinating, smoking, or something else, the pattern is the same.

Every habit is learned and can be unlearned with the help of this process. Habits are just the result of practicing and repeating a particular action over time. Any kind of habit that you desire, you can learn. All you need is persistence and discipline. With persistence and training, you can shape your character and personality to whatever you want.

You can rewrite the script of your life if you aren't happy with it. You have the power to rip off your former habit and produce a new one. Most of the problems and frustrations you face in life are due to the bad habits you've developed over time.

Taking a look at the good habits, there are many things that could be responsible for their development, including motivation, the drive to succeed, and competition. You might be wondering how motivation can cause habits? It is rather simple. For example, you might not be able to read a book a month, but while watching television one day, you see a teenager talk about how he reads four books per month.

The words of the teenager continue to play in your head. This constant replaying of the teenager's words motivates you to pick up the book and finish it in a month. As the days turn into weeks, and the weeks turn into a month, you finish the book and accomplish your goal. You feel so good about achieving the goal that you begin to read at least one book every month consistently. The words of the teenager motivated you to start a new habit.

Bad habits are typically caused by stress and boredom. Things like drinking, overspending, smoking, biting your fingernails, etc., are ways of responding to stress and boredom. However, it doesn't have to be this way. You have the power to deal with stress and boredom without developing bad habits.

The Three R's of How Habits Work

The moment you can comprehend the mechanics of how habits work, you have the power to change the path of your life to the

way you want it. Understanding how habits work will help you transform your habits, even if you've had them for years.

Unfortunately, you can't escape the three R's of habit, but you can change how they affect you.

The Reminder

This is known as the “cue” or the “trigger” and is the first pattern of how habits work. All your habits start with a trigger. The trigger is responsible for telling your brain to go into an automatic mode, as well as the particular habit of using. An external trigger reminds you of the habit, which is associated with that particular habit.

This reminder immediately stimulates your subconscious behavioral pattern.

This means that from that point forward, your subconscious mind is in control of your behavior. The trigger from your environment can be likened to a button, which puts your entire behavior into action when pressed. This is then translated into the second pattern, the routine.

The Routine

This is the actual behavior that is triggered by the reminder. The routine could be mental, physical, or emotional. The routine can happen quickly, without much thinking.

This is the key to it becoming a habit because it doesn't require any thought or conscious effort by you to carry out the sequence. It merely happens because it has become encoded in our brains. It is not firmly planted in your muscle memory.

It is like driving to work, and you automatically know where to turn without thinking. The moment the sequence is ingrained into your muscle memory and brain, it becomes difficult to change. The third pattern is the reason why it can be a challenge to change a habit once it is learned.

The Reward

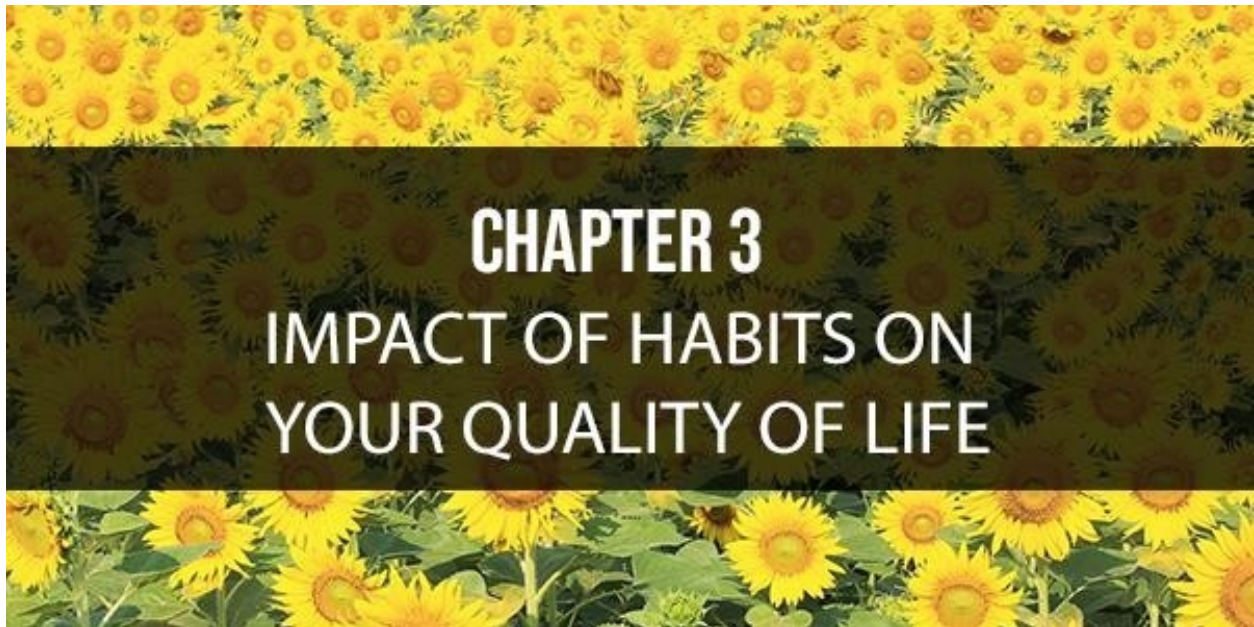
Every routine has a reward, either positive or negative. The reward process is responsible for helping your brain find out if such a routine is worth remembering for the future. As time goes on, the process becomes automatic.

The reminder-and-reward process ends up becoming entangled until a sense of eagerness and craving arises. Most times, the reward is connected with a feeling.

The moment this three-habit pattern becomes encoded in our minds, it remains there forever. There is a specific neural network for each habit that is formed in the brain. This unique neural network strengthens whenever you repeat an activity, and it also weakens when an activity is stopped.

This is why people who have stopped a particular habit, and think that they've overcome it, will later find themselves going back to it when it is externally triggered. In this situation, the only way of changing the habit is to form a new habit, which is strong enough to replace or override the old habit pattern.

Chapter 3 – Impact of Habits on Your Quality of Life



Whether you know it or not, habits can hinder and hurt us. Not only that, but they can also help us create a life that is full of impacts and actions. Bad habits have the capability of festering and growing into a lifestyle that can take away from the life you want to create.

Moreover, good habits can lead you to live a beautiful and successful life. Habits can make use of successes or failures.

According to the author and motivational speaker Jim Rohn, “motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going.” Bad habits influence our daily life and distort everything in

our lives. A bad habit can have a tremendous impact on everything from your health, personality, brain, and character.

The Impact Bad Habits Have on Your Brain

Every bad habit either affects your brain directly or indirectly. Bad habits tend to make your mind needy. Irrespective of the form that bad habits take, they are incredibly addictive. This is why it is so much harder to break a bad habit, as opposed to creating a new one.

Our brains are hardwired at the biological level to seek out things to fulfill addictions. When you are involved in a bad habit that you've become addicted to, your brain releases dopamine, which is the chemical that is responsible for making you feel good.

You can say that the chemical makes you high. Once you continue to participate in a bad habit, they ultimately become a routine, which means that your brain is forced to look out for these activities.

This causes your brain to become dependent on such events, which makes it incredibly challenging to break away from an addiction.

Bad habits also tend to build a resistance of dopamine, which will end up effect or reducing the quality of your life. Each time your

brain is flooded with dopamine, it gradually gets used to the influx of the chemical.

After a certain period, your brain becomes discontented with the little dose that it receives. The next time the habit is triggered, the brain becomes unsatisfied and needs a higher dose of dopamine. The greater the treatment, the more it affects other aspects of your life.

You can even end up becoming less joyful, gloomier, and duller. This lowers the quality of the life that you are meant to live and can steal away your ability to find pleasure and fulfillment in the little things.

The Impact of Bad Habits on Your Health

During your childhood, your mom might have told you not to suck your thumb or pick your nose. Like most children, you were probably a little rebellious, and once you were out of your mom's sight, you continued the action.

At the time, you didn't consider the social conventions and carried on with the action. Given enough time, the habit became something that you could do without, and suddenly you are known in the neighborhood as the kid who picks his nose.

While this won't affect your health, brain, or body, other bad habits can cause severe damage to your health and will ultimately reduce your quality of life. It is imperative that you avoid these four habits.

Smoking

In this day and age, there isn't a person alive who doesn't know that smoking is bad for their health. Even smokers are aware of the truth, yet they still continue to participate in this habit. As with any other habit, it still has to do with the dopamine resistance discussed earlier.

Smoking has different side effects that affect not just themselves, but those around them as well. Not only can it cause lung cancer, but can cause complication for pregnant women, heart disease, COPD, and many other health concerns. If you have formed the habit of smoking, it is time that you find a way to stop.

Lack of Physical Exercise

Keeping your body vitally active is crucial in enhancing our physical fitness and health. Exercise is performed for a variety of reasons. However, once you form the habit of not exercising, you end up depriving your immune system of the boost that it needs, which can eventually end up causing you to develop heart disease and other severe medical conditions.

Consuming Alcohol

Even moderate alcohol consumption ends up damaging the body and brain cells. When you drink too much alcohol, you increase your chances of experiencing liver issues, brain damage, high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancer.

This isn't what you want if you are thinking of improving your quality of life. Too much drinking can interfere with your normal sleep patterns, which can lead to nervousness and trauma.

Chapter 4 – How to Break Bad Habits



As humans, we like rewards and are always on the lookout for satisfaction in everything that we do. Unfortunately, this means that trying to change something that you enjoy doing can be incredibly challenging. You will need to make the ultimate decision before you even embark on the task of breaking your bad habits and understand that it will take sacrifice on your part.

In the beginning part of your journey to breaking your bad habits, you will more than likely be forced to deal with depression. You will be tempted to repeat your habit for one last time, but if you want to stick to the program, and finally free yourself from your bad habits, then you will have to be strong throughout the entire process.

How to Break Your Bad Habits in 4 Easy Steps

Even though the process of breaking bad habits can be incredibly difficult, the process isn't impossible to complete. You need to head into the process, knowing that it will be challenging, but with enough determination and persistence, you'll be able to break your bad habits for good. Here are the four easy steps that you'll need to follow if you want to get rid of your bad habits permanently.

Step #1 – Define the Habit

The first step that you need to take when breaking a bad habit is to identify the habit. Conduct an internal and external review of your life, as mentioned in Chapter 1, to determine the habits that you have in your life.

The moment you can understand and accept the habit, you will have a better chance of dealing with it. If you identify a bad habit in your life, you need to accept it, by telling yourself that you have a problem and that you are willing to do whatever is necessary to stop it.

Step #2 – Find a Replacement

The key to breaking any bad habit is finding a replacement habit. For example, say that you love watching television. Instead of

expecting just to stop watching TV and being idle, you need to participate in something that you love to do and do it during the time that you could have been watching TV. If you like to read, pick up a good book that you've been meaning to read and get started reading. If you enjoy listening to music, start listening to it instead of flopping down on the couch and watching TV.

If you have a habit of biting your nails when you're bored or stressed, you can replace this unhealthy habit with something else. You could buy sugar-free gum and pop a piece in your mouth every time you feel the urge to bite your nails.

Your goal when it comes to breaking bad habits is to avoid leaving a vacuum because your habit will come creeping back because you haven't filled the void with something else. As you try to find a replacement, make sure that you don't end up replacing the habits with something else that in turn becomes a bad habit because you'll have to start the process over again to deal with the new, bad habit.

Step #3 – Find Your Motivation

The power that keeps us moving forward in life is motivation. If you want to overcome your bad habits, then you have to find the motivation for changing your behavior. If you don't have the motivation in your efforts to get rid of your bad habits, then you need to find one.

You can start by thinking and analyzing the good reasons why you need to break the bad habit. Use the reasons that you come up with as your motivation. For example, if you are trying to reduce how much you smoke, or want to quit altogether, you can look at how smoking negatively affects your health.

Smoking also affects those around you indirectly, which could be the motivation you need. If improving your health and the health of those around you isn't enough for you to quit smoking, you could look at the financial impact this habit has on your life.

Consider how much money you are spending on cigarettes daily, monthly, or yearly and think about all the other things you could have spent that money on if you didn't have the habit of smoking. If your finances are tight, you can use this as an excellent reason to stop smoking.

If money isn't an issue for you, you might want to look at the time that you spend smoking as your reason. As an active smoker, you may be spending more than 1000 hours every year smoking. This is over 40 days a year just spent smoking. Think of what you can do in 40 days and find the motivation to quit. This is a lot of time that you could be spending on something else more productive.

Finally, look at the health issues that you could end up dealing with if you continue to smoke. Not only are the chances of

succumbing to lung cancer high, but other cigarette-related diseases are among some of the top-ranked killers in the world.

Step #4 – Change Your Environment

Where you live and who you interact with on a regular basis will determine whether or not you can change your behavior. Most people head to addiction recovery clinics to help them deal with their addictions. Unfortunately, after treatment, they often go back to where they came from and start hanging out with the same people who were a part of their lives before they got help.

At first, they might be able to resist the habit and can even caution those around them about the habit. Unfortunately, the more they interact with these people, the blinder they become to the issue. Given enough time, they give in and return to their old habits.

If you want to overcome your bad habit, then you have to change your environment and distance yourself from the people that tend to influence your choices. The hardest part of this step is that you might be forced to change your friends and your schedule.

Other Necessary Steps for Changing Bad Habits

The steps discussed above are universal steps that are needed to overcome a bad habit. In most cases, these comprehensive steps will also require additional supplementary actions to help make

them more useful. Here are some other things that you might have to do to change your habits.

Change Your Thinking

Your brain is the engine of your body and everything that you do starts from your mind. If you want to break a habit, you have to change your thinking. Here are ways that you can change your thinking and get rid of your bad habits for good.

Commit to a Goal

While this may seem obvious, it is something that you have to do if you want to break a bad habit. You can't merely start by wanting to break a bad habit without being sure that you really want to break the bad habit. If you want to avoid failing, then you have to commit to a goal.

Understand Your Habit

You can't go into a battle without the knowledge of your enemy. Likewise, you have to have a full understanding of your behavior if you ever want to be successful in breaking it. Habits are patterns that have evolved because they have been rewarded.

There is a trigger that tells your brain to start the habit; then the process is rewarded for this habit. These rewards from

neurochemicals reinforce the habit loop. If you develop mechanisms that interrupt the behavior part of the loop, then you can more easily break the habit.

Assess the Context of Your Habit

If you can get to know both the emotional and situational context of the things that trigger the habit, then you can effectively determine how to break the habit. You will be able to understand better the rewards your brain is continually looking for. This will also you to develop alternative, healthier means of achieving the same rewards that the bad habit provides.

Bad habits are generally formed as a way to tackle situations that cause boredom and stress. For example, procrastination provides you with free time to engage in other activities that are more fun. Instead, you need to find an alternative positive method to deal with your stress.

You need to be aware of what prompts the bad habit. Most habits are so every day that you aren't really aware of them when you are doing them. You want to try and be aware of the time it happens and try to write down what is happening at the moment.

If you bite your fingernails, take a few notes of what you are feeling when you have the urge to start biting your nails. Writing down what you've been feeling, what's happened, and what

you've been thinking about will help you lay a good background of how to deal with your habit.

Make a Plan

When you know what triggers your habit, you can start to make a plan for minimizing or eliminating the habit triggers and behavior change. You should set up milestones for how to break your habit. This can help you to create new patterns of action. For example, you may decide that when you feel like smoking, you take a walk instead. It is important to remember that your plan will only work if you stick to it.

Changing Your Behavior

Another thing that you will need to do if you want to break your bad habits is to change your behavior. Changing your behavior will help to set you up on the right path to success. Here are some things that you can do to improve your behavior to help you break your habits.

Change Your Environment

When you change your environment, you will dramatically reduce the temptation that you have of going back to your bad habit. You can avoid places that you used to visit that triggered the habit;

you can look into studying a vocation or break your past relationships.

Create Obstacles to the Habit

If you can create barriers that make the habit unpleasant to perform, you will successfully be able to break the bad habit. One way you can do this is by finding someone else who is trying to break the same habit and join forces with them.

If you want to stop using Facebook or Twitter during the day, you can disconnect the Internet or download an app that turns off distractions. You can also create a punishment for the habit. For instance, maybe you can add another 30 minutes of cardio exercise to your daily routine every time you overeat.

Start Small

Take the process one step at a time. Don't aim to achieve the entire goal at once because it will only lead you to failure. Instead of saying, "I will stop eating junk," consider saying, "Today, I'm going to eat a healthy breakfast." Continue increasing the steps, and with time, you will reach your goal.

Breaking your problem into smaller pieces can give you a positive result.

Reward Your Successes

Since your bad habits developed because of the rewards they received, you can do the same for your new, good habits. After achieving a particular goal, reward yourself immediately.

For example, if you have a terrible habit of always being late to work, you can reward yourself in some way when you arrive on time. Choose a reward that you like and repeatedly do it until the reward is no longer needed.

Be Patient

Breaking a habit is a challenging task. It can take years for you to achieve it. This means you have to learn to be patient. Even if a month passes without any sign of progress or success, don't quit.

Breaking your bad habits is a complicated process. Make sure that you follow the steps outlined in this chapter and be patient. Rome wasn't built in a night, and you won't be able to break your bad habits in a night either.

Chapter 5 – How to Form Good Habits



Before you start on the journey of breaking your bad habits, you have to know what some of your bad habits are and have found an excellent alternative habit to fill the void.

This is because you can't break a bad habit without finding a replacement. When you have a good habit in mind that you want to replace your bad habit with, follow the below steps to get you started on forming new, good habits.

Step #1 – Start Small

The slightest adjustments in your daily routine can dramatically alter the outcome of your life. When you want to form good habits

to replace the bad ones, you need to start small and find a manageable habit that you will be able to continue for life. You don't want to start with overly ambitious, unrealistic habits because you are just setting yourself up for failure. Don't try to reinvent yourself all at once.

For example, if your goal is to get and stay fit through regular exercise, you don't want to vow to do an hour of cardiovascular training, four times a week if you're overweight, out-of-shape, or sedentary. Instead, start with a habit that you know you can do and don't mind doing, and build upon the habit over time.

Step #2 – Decide When

If you want to be successful in forming good habits, then you need to decide when you will perform the new habit. You want to try to link this new habit to the end of a routine that you have already established. Typically, you want to try and plan your new habit in the morning when you have the energy.

Willpower fatigue is a real issue, making it increasingly harder to resist the temptation to forego your planned routine. Give the morning routine a try, even if you don't consider yourself a morning person.

Step #3 – Use a Trigger

Just like triggers can cause you to develop a bad habit, you can also use them to help you form a new habit. For example, your trigger might be something that you do habitually, like brush your teeth, or it might be something that happens regularly every day, like commercials interrupting a TV show. Here's an example of how you can use a trigger to form a new habit.

- After I brush my teeth, then I'll do ten minutes of yoga.
- When a commercial comes on, then I'll do five pushups at the kitchen counter.

Step #4 – Change Your Environment

Making changes to your environment will make it much easier to follow your new habit. For example, if you want to create a habit of working out first thing in the morning, keep your shoes and exercise clothes near the bed.

If you're going to drink more water, fill up a pitcher with the amount of water you want to drink daily and place it in the refrigerator the night before. Seeing your exercise clothes or water in the fridge is a visual cue that will help you practice your new habit.

Step #5 – Visualize

Spend time picturing your daily routine, not just your wished-for results. Visualizing your anticipated results can be incredibly motivating. A study conducted by UCLA found that visualizing yourself achieving your goal can help in forming a new habit, but only if you also imagine how you will meet your goal. You need to picture yourself actually doing the daily routine that will ultimately help you achieve your goal.

Step #6 – Use the “If: Then” Strategy

Nothing ever goes as planned, which means you need to develop an “if: then” strategy to determine what you will do if your habit routine gets interrupted. First, you need to think about the situations that are likely to pop up to interfere with your schedule.

Then you need to figure out what you will do for each scenario. For example: “If it rains and I am unable to go for my daily jog, then I will put on an exercise video and workout for 20 minutes.

Step #7 – Reward Yourself

Every day that you successfully practice your new habit give yourself a reward. Use positive self-talk or give yourself a pat on the back.

Actions have to be repeated if you want to form new habits, and you will want to repeat actions that make you feel good. Giving yourself rewards when you successfully practice your new habit will help you better enjoy creating and sticking to the new habit.

Don't Be Too Hard on Yourself

If you have a lapse in your habit-forming plan, don't give up. Most habits can be formed in about 21 days. However, don't be so tied up in this "magic 21 days" that you feel lost if you end up slipping up.

A study completed by the University College of London in 2009 found that missing one opportunity to perform the behavior did not materially affect the habit formation process. This means that you can occasionally mess up and fail to practice your new habit without it changing the overall result.

Conclusion



In most cases, bad habits are formed in our childhood, while others are created as a result of abuse, peer pressure, or imitation. All of these habits have a singular goal to suppress your stressful situation and create the illusion that everything looks alright.

Fortunately, you aren't alone in your desire to break your bad habits. Just about everyone in the world has an undesirable habit that they would like to break. What matters most is what you do with your bad habit.

The biggest problem is not in having a bad habit but allowing it to take control of your life while you sit back and do nothing.

All you need to do to break your bad habits and form new ones is to start small.

It may take you a month or longer before you are ready to embark on the journey to break your bad habits.

What's important is that you don't take too long to start on the journey so that you don't continue to find comfortable living in your status quo.