



FREE RESOURCE · HABITS

Building Routines That Stick

A simple 6-step method for turning a healthy intention into something you do without thinking.

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Much of what we do each day happens on autopilot — brushing our teeth, making coffee, locking the door. Those are habits. Research shows a new habit forms by repeating a small action at the same moment each day. On average it takes about 2 months to feel automatic, and missing a single day doesn't undo your progress. So the secret isn't more willpower — it's a better setup.

- 1 Start with why it matters**
Instead of "I should exercise," try "I want to stay strong enough to keep up with my grandkids." Changes tied to what you care about last longer.
- 2 Make it tiny**
Two minutes of stretching. One glass of water. A version so small you could do it on your worst day. You can always do more.
- 3 Link it to something you already do**
Use this sentence: "**After I** ____, **I will** ____." For example: "*After I pour my morning coffee, I will do 5 stretches in the kitchen.*" The everyday moment you link it to becomes your reminder.
- 4 Make it easy to start**
Set things up ahead of time: shoes by the door, yoga mat unrolled, water bottle filled. Put things that distract you — like your phone — in another room.
- 5 Repeat, and celebrate**
Same time, same place, most days. Check off a calendar. Missed a day? No problem — just don't miss two in a row.
- 6 Check in once a month**
Is this still working? Adjust one small thing.

When it isn't working

"I keep forgetting." Link the habit to something you do every single day without fail, like brushing your teeth. Then put a reminder right there — a sticky note on the mirror.

"I start strong, then stop." The habit is probably too big. Cut it in half, then in half again.

"My routine got thrown off." Travel, illness, and busy seasons happen. Start again with the smallest version as soon as you can.

LEARN MORE

- **Book:** *Tiny Habits* — BJ Fogg (tinyhabits.com)
- **Book:** *Atomic Habits* — James Clear

KEY EVIDENCE

- Lally P, et al. Eur J Soc Psychol. 2010;40:998–1009 (habit formation).
- Gollwitzer PM, Sheeran P. Adv Exp Soc Psychol. 2006;38:69–119 (if-then plans).
- Clark F, et al. JAMA. 1997;278:1321–1326 (Well Elderly / Lifestyle Redesign RCT).

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Educational wellness information, not medical advice or treatment. Check with your care team before starting new activity. Stop if you feel pain, dizziness, chest pressure, or shortness of breath.