

# Healthy Habits for Mental Health



A big emphasis in our class is that small changes over time can snowball and result in a new direction in life. In this video you'll learn about tiny changes that take a few minutes a day to build atomic habits for mental health.

## **Books**

Atomic Habits by James Clear

<https://jamesclear.com/atomic-habits>

## **Website and Articles**

Article by James Clear on using Inversion thinking for self-improvement: <https://jamesclear.com/inversion>

Article about increasing neuroplasticity or the ability of neural networks in the brain to reorganize and change:

<https://secondwindmovement.com/neuroplasticity/>

Article by BJ Fogg about the power of celebration to make new habits stick:

<https://ideas.ted.com/how-you-can-use-the-power-of-celebration-to-make-new-habits-stick/>

Worksheets to help focus in on “what matters most”

<https://positivepsychology.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Personal-Values-Worksheet.pdf>

<https://positivepsychology.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Values-and-Problems.pdf>

## **Videos**

A podcast by Dr Andrew Huberman that discusses the Neuroscience behind habits. Specifically he details how our brain and its connections with the organs of our body controls our perceptions, our behaviors, and our health.

## [The Science of Making & Breaking Habits | Huberman Lab Podcast #53](#)

Confessions of a Bad Exerciser, a Ted Talk by Christine Carter, sociologist and senior fellow at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center, <https://youtu.be/FzgwArOkUUO>

Wendy Wood is a social psychologist whose research addresses the ways that habits guide behavior. Her research shows that the only way to change a bad habit is through repetitive good behavior. Good behavior leads to better outcomes, which leads to our brain releasing dopamine. This "reward" is what helps us form good habits.

<https://youtu.be/Ywec1MbeQDk>

Here are the videos played during the class:

<https://youtu.be/SgMXe3O86FA> Headspace - Create Rituals and Take a Tech Break

[2 Minute Re-Centering Mindfulness Meditation for De-stressing](#)

*Some habits including substance/alcohol use and smoking are incredibly hard habits to break. However, it has been well established that these activities cause increased inflammation in the body and therefore increased pain. Avoiding these activities may help decrease pain and improve your overall quality of life. The following are resources that can offer some support in these areas:*

Alcoholics Anonymous

<https://www.aa.org/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association

<https://www.samhsa.gov/>

Quit Smoking

<https://smokefree.gov/>

[Allen Carr's Easy Way To Stop Smoking: Carr, Allen: 9780615482156: Amazon.com: Books](#)

Atomic Habits for Mental Health: <https://youtu.be/AOHT-YiOeQA>

*Habit tracking provides visual proof of your hard work and can “make it satisfying”. This is Step 4 of the four steps we covered in class. It provides a subtle reminder of how far you've come. Plus, the empty square you see each morning can motivate you to get started because you don't want to lose your progress by breaking your streak. It can be as simple as a hand drawn chart. Or, here are some of the tools that the provider team uses:*

Perspective, a mindful journal <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/perspective-a-mindful-journal/id1186753097>

Full Focus Planner [https://fullfocus.co/planner/?m\\_ac=20040&m\\_pl=04&m\\_tm=81&gclid=EA1aIQobChMI05LI8JLw-AIVYRLnCh02mwDpEAAYASAAEgJFbPD\\_BwE](https://fullfocus.co/planner/?m_ac=20040&m_pl=04&m_tm=81&gclid=EA1aIQobChMI05LI8JLw-AIVYRLnCh02mwDpEAAYASAAEgJFbPD_BwE)

Water Reminder app <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/water-reminder-daily-tracker/id1221965482>

Noom – weightloss app that identifies your eating and exercise habits <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/noom-healthy-weight-loss/id634598719>

Habit Tracker app <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/habit-tracker/id1438388363>

For more app suggestions on tracking your habit, consider checking out this article: <https://www.lifehack.org/668261/best-habit-tracking-apps>

## **RECIPE FOR CHANGE**

Have an Open Mind  
Discipline/Accountability  
Initiative/Active Coping  
Attitude Change/Making Choices  
Readiness for Change/Timing  
Obstacles and Excuses

## **10 Rules of Change**

1. All behaviors are complex
  - a. Break down the behavior into smaller, self-contained parts
2. Change is frightening
  - a. Examine the consequences
  - b. Prepare your observers
  - c. Be realistic
3. Change must be positive
  - a. Enjoy the act
  - b. Admire the outcome
  - c. Reward yourself
4. Being is easier than Becoming
  - a. Take baby steps
  - b. Simplify the process
  - c. Reward yourself
5. Slower is better
  - a. Establish Calm
  - b. Appreciate the Path
6. Know more, Do Better
  - a. Monitor your behaviors
  - b. Request Feedback
  - c. Understand the Outcome

7. Change requires structure
  - a. Identify what works
  - b. Revisit your plans regularly
  - c. Logically sequence events
  
8. Practice is Necessary
  - a. Use helpers
  - b. Practice in many settings
  
9. New behaviors must be protected
  - a. Use helpers
  - b. Practice in many settings
  
10. Small successes are Big
  - a. Map your success
  - b. Reward yourself

<b>The FOUR STAGES of Behavior change</b>	CUE	Craving	Response	Reward
<b>The Four Steps to building healthy habits</b>	Step 1 Make it obvious	Step 2 Make it attractive	Step 3 Make it easy	Step 4 Make it satisfying
<b>Ideas to put this into action</b>	Make the cue really easy to see, hear, reach, etc.	Make the cue something you enjoy or use Temptation Bundling	Make doing the Habit easy – remove any friction or obstacles	Use positive reinforcements and celebrate each tiny step.
Example of how to use these steps to start stretching once an hour	Set an alarm on your phone to ring every hour	Tune into body awareness and feel that your muscles are tight and realize it would feel good to get stretched out and relieve tension.	The response is the habit you are trying to build! You can make it easy and only commit to a short time. Stand up and stretch for two minutes.	Aaahhhh... feels good to move and get that circulation going. Give yourself a HIGH FIVE to celebrate your success of taking the steps to build this healthy habit!

## Additional Tips to Set Yourself Up for Success

### **1. Visualization Exercise**

According to Andrew Huberman, neuroscience professor at Stanford, the beginning and end of every habit is an important marker in our brain for habit execution. In order to take advantage of this increased brain activity, we can use a visualization where you think about each step from start to finish AND you think about how you would feel before and after. The idea is to grab a hold of the timing before and after an action and associate positive feedback reward mechanism in your brain in that timeframe

### **2. Do more “Lynchpin Habits”**

These are habits you enjoy and are easy to execute. They also make other habits easier. For example, maybe you enjoy drinking tea. Drinking tea would be easy to do because you like doing it. In the process of drinking tea, you can also perform other habits like meditation and breathing exercises while drinking tea. Since drinking tea puts you in a more relaxed state, it becomes easier to perform other relaxation activities.

### **3. Habit stacking**

This is related to lynchpin habits. One of the best ways to build a new habit is to identify a current habit you already do each day and then stack your new behavior on top. This is called habit stacking. The habit stacking formula is:

After/Before [CURRENT HABIT], I will [NEW HABIT].

*For example:*

- After I pour my cup of coffee each morning, I will meditate for one minute.
- After I take off my work shoes, I will immediately change into my workout clothes.
- After I sit down to dinner, I will say one thing I'm grateful for that happened today.
- After I put on my running shoes, I will text a friend or family member where I am running and how long it will take.

Again, the reason habit stacking works so well is that your current habits are already built into your brain. You have patterns and behaviors that have been strengthened over years. By linking your new habits to a cycle that is already built into your brain, you make it more likely that you'll stick to the new behavior.

#### **4. Time and Environment**

When and where you choose to insert a habit into your daily routine can make a big difference. If you're trying to add meditation into your morning routine but mornings are chaotic and your kids keep running into the room, then that may be the wrong place and time. Consider when you are most likely to be successful. Don't ask yourself to do a habit when you're likely to be occupied with something else.

#### **5. Extra tip to break a habit**

You need to bring conscious awareness to the fact that you participated in the habit you are trying to break. Then, when you realize you did, you need to engage in positive behavior immediately afterward. The specific behavior is less important than the fact that it comes immediately after the habit you're trying to break and that it not be a negative behavior. Ten jumping jacks or three deep breaths are positive behaviors. Positive because they are good for us, not because we necessarily enjoy doing it.

### **Living with pain can affect all areas of your life. No one can do it alone.**

If you are experiencing a suicidal crisis or mental health related distress, please contact 988 via phone or text. This is free, confidential, and available 24 hours a day. You may also find information on their website [www.988lifeline.org](http://www.988lifeline.org)

If you are experiencing food or housing insecurity, and need access to mental health and other social services call 211. This free service will connect you with local organizations offering services. You may also find information on their website [www.211.org](http://www.211.org)