



## **How to Create Good Habits (And Stick With Them)**

We all have our habits. Positive and negative.

Habits are like compound interest. They can be our best friend or our worst enemy.

So, how do you create positive habits? How do you get them to actually stick?  
Here is the most effective way to create and stick with new habits...

## **How Habits Are Created**

If you have enough good habits, you won't have time for bad habits.

Bad habits get in your way. They steal your time and trample your goals.

All habits, good and bad, are created the same way.

They start small.

Think about it. You know that's how it happens with bad habits...

- The alcoholic started with one drink
- The smoker started with one cigarette
- The gambler started with one game

You get the idea.

You can learn from this and use this technique to create positive habits. One small step at a time.

But how exactly do you do that?

## **How to Create New Habits**

Start small. And make small progress. And keep going.

Leo Babauta says "Make it so easy you can't say no". That's exactly what a new habit should be.

Want to start exercising? Start by running or walking one minute every day.

Want to make a habit of reading a good finance book everyday? Start by reading one page per day. It takes just a minute, but you are building the habit.

Identify yourself with the habit. You're becoming "someone who works out" or "someone who reads daily".



And you have to believe that you are exactly that. Prove it to yourself.

James Clear calls this “identity-based habits.” The key is doing the habit each day, even if you can only do part of it.

Make small increases everyday. Add a minute to your run. Add a page to your reading.

If it becomes difficult to do, you’re adding too much too quick. The goal is to keep it easy.

## How to Stay on Track

Add new habits gradually. One at a time.

If you have several habits that you want to add, add a new habit each week.

This is a slow, but effective way to build the discipline.

Remember this: **If you stumble, start where you left off, but keep going.**

What happens if you miss a day? Or a week? Or several weeks? You pick right back up. You keep going.

You’re not a failure for missing one time. You only fail when you decide to quit entirely.

To summarize, here is how you create a new habit, in 5 steps:

1. Start small
2. Increase each day
3. Increase by small intervals
4. Continue building until you're satisfied
5. Repeat the process with another new habit

It almost seems too easy, because it is easy. Really easy. But it works.

**Remember, while it's easy to do, it's just as easy not to do.**

You can always create a new habit. You just have to start small enough.

I'll leave you with a few ways to start some new habits that seem to be popular these days:

### **Reading**

Read one page, or one minute, per day. Increase by that amount daily or weekly.

### **Pushups/Situps**

Do one pushup or situp, every other day. Increase by one each day.

### **Weight Lifting**

Start all lifts with the bar. Increase by five pounds a week. Or just try Stronglifts.

### **Meditation**

Meditate for one minute a day. Each week, increase by one more minute each day.

### **Writing**

Write 100 words a day for a week. Each week, add 100 more words to your day.

### **Healthy Eating**

Track your meals. Eat only healthy meals one day a week. Increase by one day each week.

## **It's free to use**

Another free Divi layout from Divi Theme Examples for you to use on your next Divi website project.

## **Prayer**

Download the Echo app. Pray for one topic a day. Add one topic a day, each day.

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## **How to Change Every Part of Your Life With Tiny Habits**

[Watch this video by Dr. BJ Fogg about tiny habits. Tiny habits change everything.](#)

## **Goals Vs. Habits**

Do you have goals? Like real, written, actionable goals? Most people don't.

But I'm sure you do. Because you want to get the most out of your life.

But what if I told you that goals aren't as important as every self-help book says they are?

What if I told you that habits are the foundation to success?

Goals and habits actually work together, but goals are nothing without habits.

## **Goals**

We've all heard that we need goals. If we want to achieve anything in life, we need goals. Right?

Zig Ziglar says "if you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time." And he uses that to explain why you must set goals.

Practically every popular productivity author talks about goals. Most speak of SMART goals:

- **Specific:** Exactly and specifically what you want to accomplish.
- **Measurable:** A way to know when the goal is accomplished.
- **Attainable:** The goal must be something you can actually reach.
- **Realistic:** Be honest with yourself about your capabilities, but aim high!
- **Time-Bound:** There must be a date. A deadline.

Here's the truth: goals are important, but they aren't the most important thing. Let's talk about habits, and then tie them together. But I want you to know right now, goals are nothing without habits, and habits are much more important than goals.

## Habits

Goals are only necessary to help form habits. Habits are what gets you to your goal. Habits are action.

In other words, it's important to have goals *and* habits, but if you had to pick one, habits would be the best choice. Why? Because even actionable goals don't directly prompt you to do anything. Sure, they're a good starting place, but a goal in itself doesn't specify action, only outcome.

So what about these habits? How do they work and how do they relate to goals? Here's the process:

1. Set your goal. Make it SMART and write it down.
2. Find your action habit(s). This is what will get you to your goal.
3. Break it down. Figure out what you need to do each day to achieve your goal.
4. Build your habit(s). Take small steps towards your goal, and increase the steps regularly.

Here's what this looks like, very simplistically:

### **Set your goal:**

"I will weigh 175 pounds by October 16." *Let's assume a current weight of 195 and today is June 16.*

### **Find your action habit(s):**

“My action habits will be running and dieting.”

**Break it down:**

“I need to lose 20 pounds in 4 months, which is 5 pounds per month — roughly 0.16 pounds a day.”

**Build your habit(s):**

“I will start by running 0.25 miles 3x per week, and increase this by 0.25 each week until I get to two miles. I will diet 1 day per week and increase this by one day each week until I am dieting 6 days per week.”

It looks like Mr. Example would have a much better chance of achieving his goal with these last three steps added. You can't just set a goal and walk away; there must be action habits to follow. In fact, let me explain why you don't even need written goals, if you stick to your habits. But the “if you stick to your habits” part is much easier said than done.

## Goals Aren't Necessary If You Stick to Habits

I set goals. Personally, I think everyone should, because they show you where you're going, but it's true that you don't absolutely *need* goals. Habits are enough on their own. Before you unsubscribe and never come back to this blog again, let me explain:

In the example above, the action habits will most likely get Mr. Example to his goal, but even if he doesn't hit the “October 16” goal, he will lose the 20 pounds shortly after, if he sticks to his habits. **It's all about habits.**

If you decided you wanted to write a book, and you came up with an idea, decide which option would better serve you:

1. You write down a goal to write a book by January, 2018.
2. You implement the habit of writing 1,000 words per day.

You got it, the second one. Obviously these will work best together, but the problem is that goal setting can be hard, because you always either feel like the goal is too lofty, or not lofty enough, and this often leads people to forget their goals entirely. But it's easy to start writing 100 words per day, and increase it by 100 each week, until you reach 1,000 words per day.

In summary, goals and habits work best when formed together, but if you had to pick one, pick habits. Every time.

## A Word on “Visions”

I mentioned earlier that I set goals and build habits, but I also set a vision for every area of my life, and I feel like this is important, but don't take this step until you've consistently set goals and built habits. Here's how visions work, they're actually above goals and habits. Now for the process and examples:

1. Set a vision. “I will be a serious student of life. I will be a life learner.”
2. Set a goal. “I will read 100 books by my 30<sup>th</sup> birthday”
3. Set action habits. “Reading”
4. Break it down. “I will read 10 books per year”
5. Build the habit. “I will read for 5 minutes per day, increasing by 5 minutes per week, until I read for 1 hour per day.”

Why do you set the vision? Wouldn't the goal and the habits cover everything? Kind of, but here's the deal: you set a vision to keep you on track. You want to remember the whole reason you set the goal and built the habits in the first place, right? So set visions.

It's easy to set a goal, hit it and then set another goal, but once you've done that several times, you may realize that you're moving away from your vision. The takeaway here is this: remember why you set the goal(s) in the first place by using a vision statement.

I believe the ideal scenario is to take one area at a time, set a vision, create a goal out of your vision, and build habits based on your goal. It's a process that runs like a powerful machine once you get it down. The most powerful machine in the world.

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## How to Create New Habits When You're "Busy"

Are you intentional about creating new habits? You should be.

Building positive habits is one of the most powerful disciplines in the world.

Large results are created through the building of small, consistent habits.

But how do you build a new habit if you don't have any time to spare? You know, if you think you're "too busy".

Everyone is busy and most people think they are too busy to add something to their life. They're not. And you're not.

**Here's what has worked for me, and it has also worked for many influential leaders...**

### Become Your Habit

OK, I admit it. "Become your habit" sounds like something out of a motivational book designed to help you "live your best life".

This isn't about "being one" with your habit.

I'm actually talking about something much more practical. Let me explain...

When you're trying to build a new habit, your first priority is...drumroll please...building the habit.

You shouldn't be focused on doing as much as you possibly can or beating world records, you should be focused on actually creating the habit.

**Find your habit, determine how often you want to do it and simply do it. And become a person with that habit.**

In the beginning, it's not about how much or how many, it's about doing it.

That's what "become your habit" means. Identify yourself with the habit.

Let me give you some examples, to make this more clear:

- **End goal: *Becoming a daily reader.*** You will need to read everyday. That's it. Set a certain amount of pages or time to read each day. If you can't read the full number of pages or the full time, read what you can. One page is better than none. If you read one page each day, you are a daily reader.

Chances are, you will be able to get in more than one page on most days.

- **End goal: *Becoming a runner.*** You will need to run several days a week. That's it. Figure out which days you want to run and stick to those days. Sure, you can set a time for 20 or 30 minutes, but if you can't run for that long, run for what you can. Even if you just run for 2 minutes, you're building the habit of putting on your workout clothes and heading out the door.
- **End goal: *Becoming a daily writer.*** You will need to write everyday. That's it. Set a time that you write and do it. Perhaps you set aside an hour each day for writing, but you can only write for 5 minutes one day...you're still a writer. You still write daily. If you set down to write for 5 minutes, you will usually find yourself writing much longer, but the point is to do it, no matter how small.

It's all about seeing yourself as a reader, a writer or a runner. And these are just a few examples.

Most times, if you start the task, you will spend more time on it than you think you will.

Habits are created by repetition. Daily habits are created by repeating a task everyday, no matter how small.

## Lose the Time Excuse

The great thing about doing this is that you lose the excuse of not having enough time.

We live in a world where everyone is busy. Everyone! It's not just me. It's not just you.

If you want to create a new habit, you have to be flexible and understand that even though you're busy, you can still create a new habit.

You're never too busy to run for one minute, read one page or write one sentence.

## How to Become Unstoppable

Studies show it generally takes a minimum of 3 weeks to form a habit (usually much longer). And that's if you do it everyday.

Once you do it without thinking about it, you are the proud owner of a new

habit.

That's the point you want to be at. Then you can really start to grow.

Once you have your habit in place, start building on it by making slow, small progression.

Starting with 1 minute or 1 paragraph is great, but you don't want to stay there.

Your habit is now in place. Adding small increments is easy.

Just figure out where you want to start and begin to increase by a small amount.

Every. Single. Day.

Here are 5 easy steps to accomplishing everything we've been talking about:

1. Choose your habit
2. Practice it everyday, until it becomes second nature
3. Increase your habit by a small amount each day
4. Track all your progress and set goals
5. Become unstoppable

Wash. Rinse. Repeat.

This is an easy way to add a new habit to your busy schedule. There's really no more room for excuses.

Just remember: Start small. End big.

**Source:** Habit Formation Duration Studies

## **Do you really have to practice new habits every day?**

Every time I read about creating new habits, the term "daily habits" always pops up.

You've probably heard it before...

"You must do this habit *every day* to make it stick."

"Your new habit should be a *daily practice*."

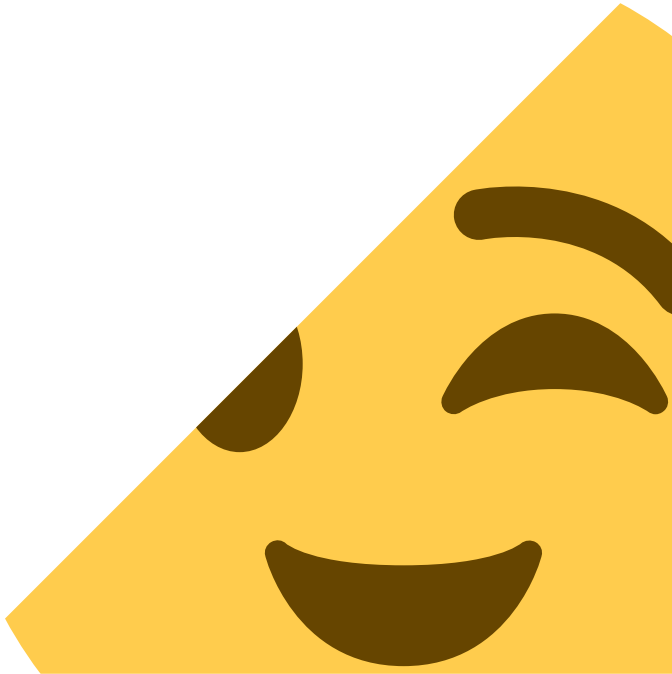
I always had the question: "Does that really mean every single day?" Even weekends and holidays?

I've finally figured out the best way to approach new "daily habits".

Let me share what I've learned...

### **Daily, But Tiny**

The short answer to the question behind this entire article is "yes", if you want a new habit to really stick, it needs to become a habit you practice every single day. Weekends and holidays included. You should even stick with it on vacations. (I know all of my UK friends are thinking: "On vacation? You already mentioned holidays!")



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It may seem overwhelming and possibly even undesirable to consider practicing a habit every single day of your life. If this is the case, your habit is too big!

The first step when creating a new habit is to make it small enough to be able to do it every day without interrupting your life significantly.

If you can't accomplish your habit on those days when your dog is sick, your kid has soccer practice and your in-laws just showed up for a surprise visit, your habit is not small enough.

If you have a million things going on, your habit should be small enough to be the 1,000,001 thing.

Here are some examples of how small your habit may need to be when you're first starting out:

- **Reading** - One page each day.
- **Writing** - Fifty words each day.
- **Running** - One minute each day.
- **Calisthenics** - Five reps each day.

Seems too small doesn't it? It's not, let me tell you why...

### **Tiny Habit, Large Time Slot**

I'm sure you realize that reading one page a day won't equate to much over time. That's why you schedule more time to read your one page than you need. If I schedule 15 minutes to read one page, it's likely that I'll be able to read much more...at least 2 pages, right?

The beauty of it all is that even if you really do only have time for one page or one minute, that's all you have to do. **That's the habit.**

If I schedule a one minute run every day, I'll make sure to schedule at least 30 minutes for that one minute run on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. So, those three days are my real running days, but all that is required is still just the one minute.

Once I put on my running shoes and head out the door, I can usually door more than a minute on the other days too. And anything over a minute is a bonus.

## Increasing the Habit

Remember, the key to creating new habits isn't just starting small, it's also gradually increasing the habit.

You should be increasing your habit gradually, but you don't have to increase your "everyday" habit. You build onto your daily habit, insofar as it makes sense for your schedule.

Your goal may be to run for one hour, 3 days a week. So, that means you should set aside an hour a few of the days each week to complete your small habit. You'll always be running for one minute per day, but you should be gradually increasing to run more on your "running days".

### **What does that look like?**

Week 1, you run for one minute each day. Week 2, you increase to two minutes per day on Mon, Wed and Fri, but you still continue to do one minute on the other days. You will be building up your 3x per week run, while maintaining the habit by just a minute each day. Once the habit of running three times each week sticks, you can get rid of the other days, as long as you stay disciplined.

You may have heard me talk about identity based habits before. That's what this is all about. Becoming a daily reader/writer/runner or a financial expert...one day at a time. Eventually, you may be running 5 or 10 miles several times each week, but we're not there yet...

I know, you're not going to read a million books by taking it one page a day, but you will become a daily reader. And that's the type of habit that will stick. There is always time to grow your habit. The important thing is starting it. And too often people don't grow their habits, because they never get started.

If you practice a habit every day, it will become an identity based habit. You will become a daily reader, a financial expert, a runner, a weight lifter, etc...

## The Most Important Thing

Nothing is more important than persistence.

What happens if you miss your habit for some reason? Absolutely nothing. You just pick up where you left off. You're supposed to be practicing your new habit

every day, but you're not a failure if you miss it.

Maybe you forgot or you were sick or you were too busy making an excuse of why you couldn't do it, so you didn't have time to actually do it. The point is that if you mess up, keep going.

A daily habit is the goal. You're on your way, but there will be setbacks since we're dealing with life here. Identify yourself with your new habit.

## **How your words affect your habits**

We all know that positive language provides better results than negative language, but we may be using negative language without realizing it.

As Zig Ziglar says "negative people call it an alarm clock, positive people call in an opportunity clock". Corny? Sure, but it's also true that your words can define your habits.

Let's take a look into some language that you may not realize is holding you back, and how to change it...

## **Defining Positive and Negative Language**

Negative language is pretty obvious...

- I will never have that
- I could never do that
- I will never be able to break this habit
- I will never be able to create this habit

...but it goes farther than that. Negative talk isn't just the obvious stuff - it's anything that is taking away from your goals due to the wording you're using. More on that in a moment.

So what does positive language look like?

- I will be able to have that
- I can do that
- I can break this habit
- I can create this habit



That's the obvious language, but again, it goes farther than that. Let me explain...

## Your Language and Your Habits

If you're trying to quit smoking and you say: "I will not smoke cigarettes", you may think about that as positive language, but it's really not. Why? Because the word cigarettes is in your statement. Every time you say what you're going to do, you think about cigarettes, and that's counterproductive.

So how do you make the switch to positive language? When you're trying to break a bad habit, you need to remove that habit from your vocabulary. We don't think in ticker-tape lines of information, we think in visual images. So every time you say "I will not smoke", your mind starts thinking about smoking. If you say: "I will stop looking at pornography", guess what your mind is thinking about?

As I've said before, and I know from personal experience, it's best to replace habits instead of simply breaking them. This carries over into your language.

Here are some practical examples...

## Templates to Follow

Here are some of the most common habits that people want to ditch or control, and here is some effective word-replacement to get you started:

- **Smoking** - Instead of "I am quitting smoking", try "I will only breathe fresh, pure air".
- **Pornography** - Instead of "I will not look at pornography", try "I will only look upon productive and good things".
- **Poor Diet** - Instead of "I will not eat junk food", try "I will only put healthy food in my body".
- **Alcohol** - Instead of "I will drink less alcohol", try "I will drink more water".

Stop using negative language and start using positive language.

Here's to replacing bad habits and bad language.

## Small choices make the difference when creating habits

You've always put cream and sugar in your coffee, but today is different.

You went to put that second spoonful of sugar, and you stopped halfway through. You only put one and a half today. You're not sure why, and you're not sure if it matters. It does.

It matters more than you would ever know. That half of a spoonful could change your life, if you let it.

## Small Choices

Habits are built by small choices. Small choices, practiced daily, turn into huge choices over time.

When it's a negative habit, we just brush it off as a bad habit that doesn't matter much, although we know what it will do to us over time. When it's a positive habit, we call it self discipline. And that's what we're going to talk about today.

How do you start a new habit? With a small decision to change. A small decision that turns into a large result.

You decide you want to be a runner, so you run around the block. You want to be a daily reader, so today you read one page. You want to start a new writing habit, so today you write 100 words, or just ten words. You start small, knowing it's going to snowball into a life-changing habit.

So yes, small choices matter. But they don't just matter, they're everything. And it's important to remember that.

When you're running and you decide to run to one more mailbox, after you planned on stopping, that decision matters. You just made a huge step towards becoming a successful runner, if you continue on that path. How many mailboxes would you run to over the course of a month, if you were constantly "just doing one more?"

It matters. It all matters. More than you know, or at least, more than you used to know. But honestly, you know each one of those decisions matter. That's why it bothers you when you planned on doing 10 reps and you only do nine. You know how it will compound. If you do nine today, it will be much easier mentally to do eight tomorrow. It's a downward spiral that happens faster than we think. Every time.

## Bad Small Choices, Good Small Choices

Don't fall for the "I might as well go all out mindset."

You know what I mean. You're on a diet, and it's going great. Until one day, you meet a friend at a Chinese buffet. You think:

"I'm going to cheat, so I might as well go all out. I'll have a Coke. And...I'll pack out my plate with fried food, before going back for a second plate of rice and noodles. Yeah, I'll have some soup too. And I can't forget the desert bar."

30 minutes later, you feel like you're going to die.

Sometimes we need that. Sometimes we need to go all out. But the key word is "sometimes."

You shouldn't go all out every time you cheat on your diet. You shouldn't do absolutely no exercise every time you miss your hour-long workout. You shouldn't wait until tomorrow to resume your daily reading habit, even if tomorrow is Monday. Read today.

Those small choices are important.

## Why Small Choices Are Everything

The British Journal of General Practice published a study on habit formation.

And it seems like every study says the same thing. Habits start small, you need a cue and you need a reward.

The Study published a tool for creating new habits. Here's their checklist:

1. Decide on a goal that you would like to achieve for your health.
2. **Choose a simple action** that will get you towards your goal which you can do on a daily basis.
3. Plan when and where you will do your chosen action. Be consistent: choose a time and place that you encounter every day of the week.
4. Every time you encounter that time and place, do the action.
5. It will get easier with time, and within 10 weeks you should find you are doing it automatically without even having to think about it.

6. Congratulations, you've made a healthy habit!

My goal (e.g. 'to eat more fruit and vegetables') \_\_\_\_\_

My plan (e.g. 'after I have lunch at home I will have a piece of fruit')

(When and where) \_\_\_\_\_ I will \_\_\_\_\_

The key phrase is "choose a simple action." If you start too big, you fail. If you start small, it's easier and you have nothing to lose.

This model is extremely effective. The problem is, we would rather read about how to do it, instead of just taking the first small step. I've been guilty of this and so have you.

## **It All Matters**

Every choice matters in some way. And that's good! Now you can feel good about each one.

When you go for that donut, and decide you don't need it, you just had a small win, and you know that's huge!

Small wins are all you need for huge success. You just have to have enough of them

Every decision you make has some sort of implication on your life. Remember that when you're happy, and when you're stressed. Remember that on the weekdays and the weekends. Remember that morning and night.

It makes "micro quotas" and "macro goals." That means using small habits to create huge results.

Everything you do matters. Take the word "just" out of your vocabulary, unless you use it for good. It's not "just" one more spoonful of sugar. It's not "just" one more piece of pizza. It's not "just" one day without completing your habit.

But it is "just" one more mailbox. It's "just" one more page. It's "just" 100 more words to write.

Flip your thinking. Stop making excuses for why you can do the bad, and start doing the good.

## **A brief guide to breaking bad habits**

A habit isn't bad or good on its own.

Positive habits are an absolute must for success in your health, finances...basically everything.

But negative habits, or bad habits, can combat your positive habits.

In fact, eliminating negative habits can be much more effective than starting new positive habits and often, it's easier to break a bad habit than it is to stick with a new good habit.

The truth is, you need good habits in your life, but let's break the bad ones first...

### **What is a Bad Habit?**

This is a pretty basic question, but it's worth asking. How do you define a bad habit?

When we first think of bad habits, the obvious things like smoking, overeating and alcoholism come to mind. I would simply put it like this: a bad habit is anything that takes away from achieving your goals without providing anything in return.

Most things are defined in your goals already. Let me explain...

I'll use video games as an example. Like I've said before, playing video games with your family could contribute to a family goal to spend time together. Playing video games alone everyday doesn't contribute to anything. Occasionally playing video games by yourself to relax however, could be perfectly fine.

Be honest with yourself. That's the most important thing here.

You know if something is blocking you from achieving your goals. You know if something doesn't provide benefit or value.

So once you've defined the habit, how do you break it?

### **Don't Just Break It, Replace It**

It's easier to replace a habit than it is to stop a habit completely out of the blue.

Want to stop smoking? Replace your smoke breaks with 10 minute walks.

Want to stop watching so much TV? Replace your tube time with reading.

Create the new habits of walking and reading as you stop the old habits of smoking and watching too much TV.

The important thing to remember before starting this process is that you must have the motivation or it won't happen.

## **What's Your Motivation?**

You need to really find some motivation to quit. Think of all the reasons you should break the habit and try to use them as motivation. If one reason doesn't do it for you, use another.

Let's go back to smoking, since it makes an easy example...

You may want to quit smoking because the second hand smoke harms your family, whether directly or on your clothes.

Don't have a family? Think about the fact that you likely spend over \$2,000/year on cigarettes if you smoke a pack a day.

Money not an issue? Think about the fact that you may spend over 1,000 hours each year smoking. What else could you do with that time?

If you're a smoker, you've heard about lung cancer so much that you're likely numb to that reason. So find a different one.

Keep going down the list until you find motivation that works for you.

Remember, anything is better than nothing in a situation like this. For example, you could try an alternative to smoking, such as vaping. The addiction is still there, but it's a step in the right direction, and you're avoiding many of the negative effects of smoking, such as secondhand smoke and smelling like a smoker.

## **Your Environment Determines Your Success**

Vietnam was a tough place for a lot of reasons in the 1970s, but one of the little-known issues with American soldiers was heroin addictions. Upon the return of our troops, it was discovered that 2/5 of the returning soldiers had tried heroin in Vietnam and 1/5 of them were addicted to it.



Typically, with heroin addicts, there is a 90% re-addiction rate. With these returning soldiers, there was only a 5% re-addiction rate. So what was the difference between these soldiers and other heroin addicts?

Environment.

Most of the heroin addicts that typically come into clinics are coming from a “drug lifestyle”. Once they break their addiction at the clinic, they head back to their old house, with their old friends and they get right into their old habits.

If you’re trying to quit smoking, stay away from the smoke pit. Don’t go out to the smoky bars with your smoker friends. If you’re trying to create a healthier lifestyle, stay away from the office with the candy bowl. Remove the junk from your cabinets.

## Break a Bad Habit in 4 Steps

1. Define the habit.
2. Find a replacement.
3. Find your motivation.
4. Change your environment.

That's it. It's all about self-discipline from here, but these steps will make it as easy as possible. Once you've laid out your plan for breaking the habit with the above steps, it really doesn't stand a chance. You've got this.

## 10 steps to breaking bad habits

There aren't many of us who don't have some bad habit we'd like to quit: smoking, sweets, shopping, nail-biting, porn, excessive checking of phones or social media, other distractions ...

The problem is that we think we don't have the willpower, faced with past evidence of failure after failure when we've tried to quit before.

We don't think we can quit, so we don't even try. Or if we do try, we give ourselves an "out," and don't fully commit ourselves.

Let me tell you this: quitting a bad habit takes everything you've got.

It's hard, but doable — if you put your entire being into it.

But if you're ready to finally quit something, here's a short guide to doing just that.

## 10-Steps — Just as Good as the 12-Step Folk

You don't actually need to follow every single one of these steps to quit a habit, but the more of them you do, the higher your chances. I recommend all of them if you want to be all in.

1. **Have a big motivation.** Lots of times people quit things because it sounds nice: "It would be nice to quit caffeine." But that's a weak motivation. What you really want is strong motivation: I quit smoking because I knew it was killing me, and I knew my kids would smoke as adults if I didn't quit. Know



your Why, and connect with it throughout your quit. Write it down at the top of a document called your “Quit Plan.”

2. **Make a big commitment.** Now that you know your motivation, be fully committed. A common mistake is say, “I’ll do this today,” but then letting yourself off the hook when the urges get strong. Instead, tell everyone about it. Ask for their help. Give them regular updates and be accountable. Have a support partner you can call on when you need help. Ask people not to let you off the hook. Be all in.
3. **Be aware of your triggers.** What events trigger your bad habit? The habit doesn’t just happen, but is triggered by something else: you smoke when other people smoke, or you shop when you’re stressed out, or you eat junk food when you’re bored, or you watch porn when you’re lonely, or you check your social media when you feel the need to fill space in your day. Watch yourself for a few days and notice what triggers your habit, make a list of triggers on your Quit Plan, and then develop an awareness of when those triggers happen.
4. **Know what need the habit is meeting.** We have bad habits for a reason — they meet some kind of need. For every trigger you wrote down, look at what need the habit might be meeting in that case. The habit might be helping you cope with stress. For some of the other triggers, it might help you to socialize, or cope with sadness, boredom, loneliness, feeling bad about yourself, being sick, dealing with a crisis, needing a break or treat or comfort. Write these needs down on your Quit Plan, and think of other ways you might cope with them.
5. **Have a replacement habit for each trigger.** So what will you do when you face the trigger of stress? You can’t just *not do* your old bad habit — it will leave an unfilled need, a hole that you will fill with your old bad habit if you don’t meet the need somehow. So have a good habit to do when you get stressed, or when someone gets angry at you, etc. Make a list of all your triggers on your Quit Plan, with a new habit for each one (one new, good habit can serve multiple triggers if you like).
6. **Watch the urges, and delay.** You will get urges to do your bad habit, when the triggers happen. These urges are dangerous if you just act on them without thinking. Learn to recognize them as they happen, and just sit there watch the urge rise and get stronger, and then and fall. Delay yourself, if you

really want to act on the urge. Breathe. Drink some water. Call someone for help. Go for a walk. Get out of the situation. The urge will go away, if you just delay.

7. **Do the new habit each time the trigger happens.** This will take a lot of conscious effort — be very aware of when the trigger happens, and very aware of doing the new habit instead of the old automatic one. If you mess up, forgive yourself, but you need to be very conscious of being consistent here, so the new habit will start to become automatic. This is one reason it's difficult to start with bad habits — if there are multiple triggers that happen randomly throughout the day, it means you need to be conscious of your habit change all day, every day, for weeks or more.
8. **Be aware of your thinking.** We justify bad habits with thinking. You have to watch your thoughts and realize when you're making excuses for doing your old bad habit, or when you start feeling like giving up instead of sticking to your change. Don't believe your rationalizations.
9. **Quit gradually.** Until recently, I was a fan of the Quit Cold Turkey philosophy, but I now believe you can quit gradually. That means cut back from 20 cigarettes to 15, then 10, then 5, then zero. If you do this a week at a time, it won't seem so difficult, and you might have a better chance of succeeding.
10. **Learn from mistakes.** We all mess up sometimes — if you do, be forgiving, and don't let one mistake derail you. See what happened, accept it, figure out a better plan for next time. Write this on your Quit Plan. Your plan will get better and better as you continually improve it. In this way, mistakes are helping you improve the method.

I'm not saying this is an easy method, but many people have failed because they ignored the ideas here. Don't be one of them. Put yourself all into this effort, find your motivation, and replace your habit with a better habit for each trigger. You got this.

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## About the Author

My name is Kalen Bruce, and I am the founder of [MoneyMiniBlog](#). I'm really trying to start a revolution here with all this "mini blog" talk. I think mini blogging will become more popular as our days seem to get busier and our attention spans get shorter. Whether your attention span is short or not, mini blogs are much more convenient to fit into your life than full length blogs.

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