



How do I develop a new positive habit?

There is no secret formula for quickly changing or creating habits, if there were, smoking and overeating would be a thing of the past, along with the long list of other bad habits we as humans partake in. You can however use some guides that science has tried and tested, to help you build positive new habits that stick.

WHERE DO YOU START?

Wanting to create a new positive habit first starts with determining what is motivating you to create this new habit. Are you internally motivated to create the habit or are you doing it to avoid punishments or receive accolades? If your answer is the latter, you need to rethink the new habit you are trying to create. Studies around self-determination show us that intrinsic motivators (driven by internal rewards as opposed to external accolades) are key for making a new habit stick. For example, forming a new habit of choosing a healthier breakfast option in the morning is more likely to stick if you are wanting to do so because you know it makes you feel more energised throughout the day, not because you are worried about what people think about your weight.



GOALS AND DAILY QUOTAS

Dreaming big and wanting it now is a sure fire way to fail. Whilst dreaming big is good, you need to set yourself daily quotas to help you meet these goals over time and this is where habits come into play. Take flossing as an example, B.J. Fogg, a Psychologist from Stanford shares how he cracked this habit, *“For me, cracking the code on flossing was to put the floss right by the toothbrush, and to commit to myself that I would floss one tooth — only one tooth — every time after I brushed.”* He says this worked because his daily quota was small and manageable. As he was forming this new habit, he more often than not end up flossing them all, but the daily quota and commitment was only one.

TAP INTO YOUR CURRENT ROUTINES

Instead of relying purely on your willpower to create a new habit, cue your new habit with triggers that are already part of your routine. For example, if you are wanting to better organise your day, use drinking your morning coffee as a cue. When you sit down to drink it each morning pull out your note pad and write your to do list.

HOW DO I AVOID THROWING IN THE TOWEL?

No matter how good your intentions, motivation, and willpower is not enough to form a new positive habit. To avoid the ‘ah stuff it’ moments, take a look at the moment right before you start a new cycle of your habit and try to get an understanding as to what is triggering your internal struggle. Is it because going to the gym early in the morning is dragging you out of your warm cosy bed? Tackle this moment of weakness by changing the time you go to the gym. Link it in with a different routine, maybe you are more likely to go during your lunch break at work... leaving your desk for half an hour might be easier for you to do than giving up the extra half hour sleep.

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The Corporate Mental Health Alliance (CMHAA) is a group of Australian businesses dedicated to providing mentally healthy workplaces for their people.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:

Website: cmhaa.org.au

LinkedIn: [Corporate Mental Health Alliance Australia](https://www.linkedin.com/company/corporate-mental-health-alliance-australia)



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