

Habit Building & Behaviour Change — Workbook

This workbook turns the science of habits into one concrete plan you actually carry out. Each section maps to a course module, moving from understanding the habit loop, to starting new behaviours tiny and well-planned, to engineering your environment, to breaking unwanted habits and surviving the inevitable lapses. Work through it slowly and use the included spreadsheets to track your habits, diagnose the loops you want to break, and run your weekly review. The aim is not a burst of motivation but a small, well-designed action you repeat until compounding does the work.

How Habits Actually Work

Diagnose your real habit loops and choose the one or two changes worth focusing on before you try to change anything.

Exercise: Map One of Your Own Habit Loops

Pick a real habit you do automatically, good or bad, and break it into its three parts without judging yourself. The goal is to see the loop clearly, because you cannot redesign a loop you have not identified.

- What is the exact CUE that triggers it (a time, a place, an emotion, certain people, or an action that comes just before)?

- What is the ROUTINE, the actual behaviour, described specifically?

- What is the REWARD you truly get from it (relief, energy, distraction, connection, pleasure)? Look past the obvious answer.

- Now do the same for a habit you WANT to build: what cue, routine, and reward could it use?

Worksheet: Choose Your Target Behaviours

Resist the urge to change ten things at once. Pick at most one habit to build and one to break for this round, and write down why each matters to you, since a clear reason helps you push through the plateau later.

One new habit I want to BUILD (in plain words)

Why this habit matters to me / the identity it supports

One habit I want to BREAK

What this bad habit currently costs me

Which one I will focus on FIRST if I can only manage one

Checklist: Foundations Readiness Check

- I can name the three parts of the habit loop: cue, routine, and reward
- I understand that roughly 40 percent of daily actions are habits, so changing habits changes a large share of my life
- I accept that willpower and motivation are unreliable, and that I will rely on design instead
- I can recite the four laws for building a habit: make it obvious, attractive, easy, and satisfying
- I can recite the inverse four laws for breaking one: make it invisible, unattractive, difficult, and unsatisfying
- I have chosen at most one habit to build and one to break for this round

Starting New Habits That Stick

Shrink your new habit, plan the exact moment it happens, and anchor it to a routine you already do every day.

Worksheet: Shrink It to Two Minutes

Take the new habit you chose and cut it down until it is almost impossible to fail. The tiny version is your guaranteed daily floor; you can always do more, but the floor must be tiny enough to survive your worst day. My full-size habit (the eventual goal)

The two-minute / under-30-second version I will actually start with

Proof it is small enough: could I do this even on my most tired, least motivated day? (Yes / No)

How I will let myself do MORE on good days while protecting the tiny floor

Exercise: Write Your Implementation Intention and Habit Stack

Convert your habit from a vague wish into a triggered plan using the two research-backed formats. Specificity is what roughly doubles follow-through, so be exact about time, place, and anchor.

- Write it as an implementation intention: I will [TINY BEHAVIOUR] at [EXACT TIME] in [LOCATION].

- Write it as a habit stack: After [EXISTING DAILY HABIT], I will [TINY BEHAVIOUR].

- What small celebration will I do right after, to wire in the reward (smile, say yes, fist pump)?

- Write one if-then coping plan: If [PREDICTABLE OBSTACLE] happens, then I will [BACKUP RESPONSE].

Checklist: Strong-Start Quality Check

- My habit is shrunk to a two-minute (or smaller) starting version
- My implementation intention names an exact time OR an exact trigger, not a vague window
- My habit stack anchors to something I already do every single day without thinking
- The anchor matches the frequency and location of the new habit
- I have at least one if-then plan written for my most likely obstacle
- I have a small immediate celebration planned to follow the behaviour

Designing Your Environment for Change

Re-engineer the friction, cues, identity, and people around you so the right behaviour becomes the easy, normal one.

Exercise: Run a Friction Audit

For your build habit, find steps to remove; for your break habit, find steps to add. Friction works on your worst days because, unlike motivation, it does not depend on how you feel.

- What are the steps between me and my GOOD habit right now, and which one can I remove or prepare in advance?

- What is one thing I can lay out, pre-set, or make the default so the good habit needs fewer decisions?

- What are the steps to my BAD habit, and how can I ADD friction (log out, delete the app, remove it from the house)?

- What deliberate delay (e.g. wait 10 minutes, write down why) could I insert before the unwanted habit?

Worksheet: Cue and Environment Redesign

Decide the specific physical and digital changes that will make good cues obvious and bad cues invisible. Be concrete: a cue you actually move or hide beats a good intention.

One object I will make VISIBLE to cue my good habit, and where I will put it

One cue for my bad habit I will hide, move, or remove entirely

One dedicated space I will assign to one behaviour (e.g. bedroom for sleep only, desk for work only)

Digital change: which notification I will turn off or which app I will bury or delete

One change to my home screen so the first apps I see support my goals

Worksheet: Identity and Social Circle

Anchor the habit to who you want to become and put yourself around people for whom the behaviour is already normal. Every action is a vote for an identity, so name the identity and pick your company on purpose. The identity behind my habit, phrased as I am someone who...

What that person would do in the small daily choices I face

One group, community, or culture where my desired behaviour is already the norm that I could join

One accountability partner or person I will tell about this habit

One cue, place, or situation tied to my BAD habit I will spend less time around, especially early on

Checklist: Environment-Set Check

- I have removed at least one step of friction from my good habit
- I have added at least one step of friction to my bad habit
- A visible cue for my good habit is now in place where I will meet it
- At least one cue for my bad habit has been hidden, moved, or removed
- I have stated my habit in identity terms (I am someone who...) rather than I am trying to...
- I have at least one person or group that makes the behaviour feel normal or keeps me accountable

Breaking Bad Habits and Making Change Last

Dismantle an unwanted habit at its cue and reward, set up tracking, and plan your recovery so a slip never becomes a quit.

Exercise: Diagnose and Replace the Bad Habit Loop

Apply the golden rule of habit change: keep the cue and the reward, but swap the routine. Experiment to find the TRUE reward, because it is often not what you assume (a snack run may really be about a break, not hunger).

- What consistently triggers my bad habit (time, place, emotion, people, preceding action)?

- What is the real reward I am chasing? Test it: next time, try a different action and see if the craving is satisfied.

- What substitute ROUTINE could deliver a similar reward but cost me less?

- Write the swap as a plan: If [CUE] happens, then I will do [NEW ROUTINE] instead.

Worksheet: Set Up Tracking and the Never-Miss-Twice Rule

Decide exactly how you will track the habit and how you will respond to a missed day. The tracker supplies the satisfying daily reward; the rule protects you from the all-or-nothing collapse.

How I will track this habit (wall calendar X, app, the included tracker sheet)

When exactly I will mark it, ideally right after doing the habit

My never-miss-twice commitment, written out (one miss is fine; two in a row is not)

My if-then recovery plan: If I miss, then I will [restart next scheduled time, no punishment, no make-up]

Exercise: Plan for the Plateau and the Long Game

Progress is often delayed during the Plateau of Latent Potential, which is where most people quit. Decide in advance how you will judge yourself and when you will review your system, so a flat stretch does not end the effort.

- How will I judge progress by the PROCESS (did I show up?) rather than only the outcome (the number)?

- What will I tell myself when results feel invisible but I am still doing the habit?

- When will I review and tweak my system (e.g. weekly) instead of blaming my willpower?

- What is my honest plan if a lapse happens, to avoid the what-the-hell spiral of one slip becoming total abandonment?

Checklist: Lasting-Change Check

- I have diagnosed my bad habit's cue and true reward, not just the routine
- I have chosen a substitute routine that scratches the same itch
- I have weakened or removed the cue for my bad habit where possible
- A tracking method is set up and I know exactly when I will mark it
- I have written my never-miss-twice rule and an if-then recovery plan
- I expect delayed results and have decided to judge myself by the process during the plateau

Your Action Plan

1. Map the cue, routine, and reward for one habit you want to build and one you want to break, then commit to just those two for this round.
2. Shrink your new habit to a two-minute (or smaller) version that survives your worst day, and keep that tiny floor permanent.
3. Write your habit as both an implementation intention (I will X at TIME in PLACE) and a habit stack (after EXISTING HABIT, I will X).
4. Add a small celebration right after the behaviour, and write one if-then plan for your most likely obstacle.
5. Run a friction audit: remove one step from the good habit and add one step to the bad habit today.
6. Redesign cues: make one good-habit cue visible and hide or remove one bad-habit cue, including a digital change like a notification or home screen.
7. Name the identity behind your habit (I am someone who...) and join or contact one group or person who makes the behaviour normal.
8. Diagnose your bad habit's true reward by experimenting, then choose a substitute routine that delivers a similar payoff.
9. Set up your habit tracker, mark it immediately after each rep, and commit in writing to the never-miss-twice rule.
10. Schedule a weekly review to mark progress, judge yourself by the process during the plateau, and tweak the system instead of relying on willpower.

