

The Better Habits Guide



Habit:
**Getting
better at
habits**

I realized early on in my practice as an Ayurvedic Practitioner that much of my job was to help people determine which habit changes were going to improve their health the fastest... and for the long haul.

My holistic wellness training in Ayurveda helped me identify and prioritize the specific habits that were the most aggravating and which habits, foods, and herbs would help them thrive. My holistic wellness training in Ayurveda didn't teach me how to help people actually break down the process of supporting my clients to successfully implement better habits.

After years of working with yoga students and teachers one on one I realized that my work wasn't nearly as effective as I had hoped. My students and clients knew what would help them. The knowledge wasn't enough. Something else was just as important as the really good information they were getting from me.

That was when I realized that as humans we naturally evolve together - not on our own. I created a 9 month course, the Living Ayurveda Course, to help people change their habits, informed by the deep body/mind/spirit wisdom of Ayurveda. At the end of this first course I realized that something had happened that had never happened in my 1-1 work. The wellness transformations had happened much faster - and they were sticking.

What I realized is that I had created a better system, including a support system for my members to improve their habits along with their cognitive learning of Ayurveda. This realization sparked me to simplify the deep wisdom of Ayurveda into simple and specific better habits that stimulate enlightened longevity.

Yoga Health Coaching was born. In developing the coaching course to certify Yoga Health Coaches, I discovered we needed some serious support tools for how to implement better habits for the long haul. The Better Habits Guide is a series of worksheets to support you in getting better habits into your daily life.

Let me know what works.

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Look for the other Worksheets and Charts in our member's library under [Accountability Charts](#):

- Monthly Better Habits Chart
- Weekly Meal Planning Chart
- Weekly Exercise Chart
- Weekly Food Journal

Advice from the Habit Pros

If you plant the right seed in the right spot, it will grow without further coaxing. I believe this is the best metaphor for creating habits. The "right seed" is the tiny behavior that you choose. The "right spot" is the sequencing — what it comes after. The "coaxing" part is amping up motivation, which I think has nothing to do with creating habits. In fact, focusing on motivation as the key to habits is exactly wrong.

Let me be more explicit: If you pick the right small behavior and sequence it right, then you won't have to motivate yourself to have it grow. It will just happen naturally, like a good seed planted in a good spot.—[BJ Fogg](#)

*Make it so easy you can't say no.
—[Leo Babauta](#)*

*Your audacious life goals are fabulous. We're proud of you for having them. But it's possible that those goals are designed to distract you from the thing that's really frightening you—the shift in daily habits that would mean a re-invention of how you see yourself.
—[Seth Godin](#)*

If you want to be the type of person who accomplishes things on a consistent basis, then give yourself a schedule to follow, not a deadline to race towards.—[James Clear](#)

"You might have to experiment before you find the right cue that reminds you to start a new habit. You might have to think a bit before figuring out how to make your new habit so easy that you can't say no. And rewarding yourself with positive self-talk can take some getting used to if you're not someone who typically does that." [James Clear](#)

"The most common mistake that people make is setting their sights on an event, a transformation, an overnight success they want to achieve – rather than focusing on their habits and routines." [James Clear](#)

Habit-Changing Support Links:

BJ Fogg has excellent material on habit formation. [Tiny Habits](#), is a free e-course [Watch his 20 minute video on Motivation Waves and Health Behavior](#)

[Leo Babauta](#) often writes very useful posts on habits

Charles Duhigg's [book](#) is a good summary of a lot of habit formation research

[Identity Based Habits by James Clear](#)

[Watch this TEDTalk by Matt Cutts—"Try Something New for 30 Days."](#)

[Read this article by Charles Duhigg on Lifehacker](#)

How to make a better habit

To become healthier we need to design our daily life around the habits that build a healthier body, a healthier spirit, healthier relationships, and healthier mental habits.

The first part of this process is to get clear that we are going to need to change some habits and let go of outdated patterns. Many of the patterns are unconscious. The process of making the unconscious conscious and purposeful is the practice of yoga.

Learning how to build better habits into your daily routines is a good time investment and guarantees your success in becoming healthier.

The science and strategy behind habit change can give us the tools to become the kind of person who has the habits of the person we want to become!

Let's get started.

A habit has 3 parts:

1. Reminder (cue, trigger that initiates the habit)
2. Routine (the habit itself)
3. Reward (the benefit from the habit)

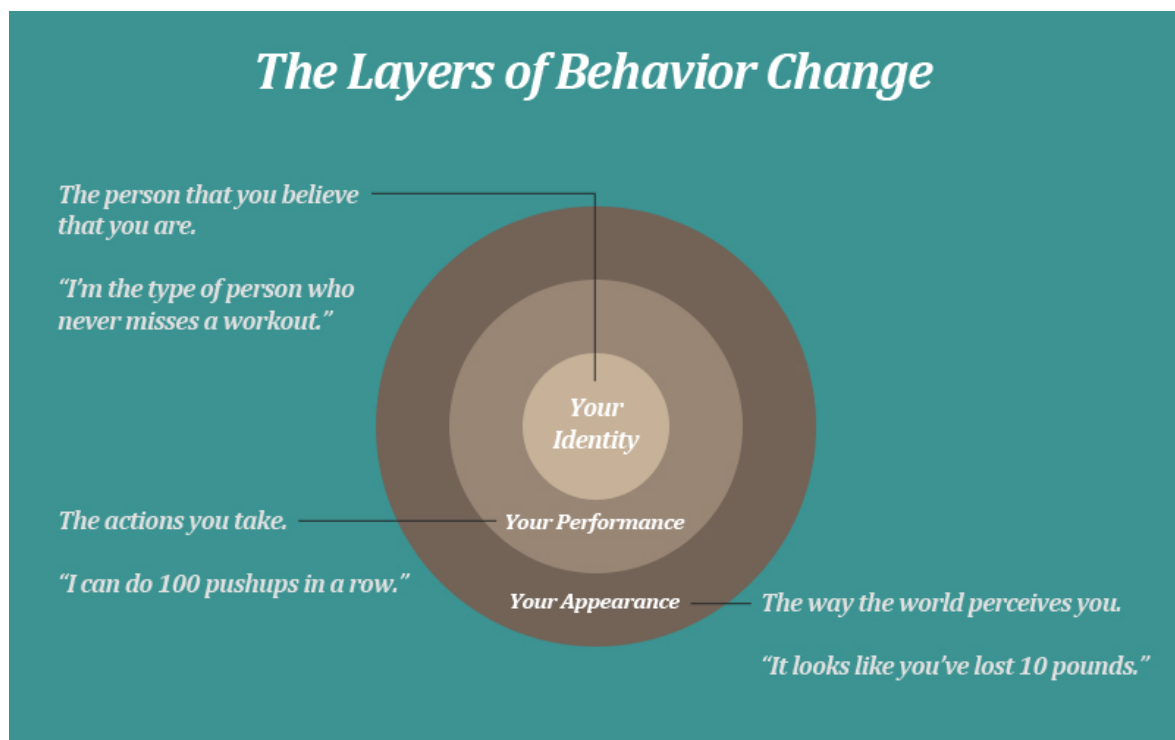


All habits form by the same 3-step process. Here's an example: the traffic light turns green, you drive through the intersection, you make it closer to your destination. Reminder, routine, reward. (Graphic based on Charles Duhigg's "Habit Loop" in *The Power of Habit*. Created by [James Clear](#).)

Your Habits Reflect Who You Are

“The key to building lasting habits is focusing on creating a new identity first. Your current behaviors are simply a reflection of your current identity. What you do now is a mirror image of the type of person you believe that you are (either consciously or subconsciously).

To change your behavior for good, you need to start believing new things about yourself.” James Clear



with permission from: <http://jamesclear.com/identity-based-habits>

Identity Evolving Worksheet

When we change our habits we ... change! This change is a fundamental change to our identity. If we don't know who we're desiring to become, we are much less able to change our habits. We become much less able to sustain the habits of the person we are desiring to evolve into.

Use this worksheet to drop deeply into who you are becoming.

What kind of person do you want to become?

I want to become the kind of person who

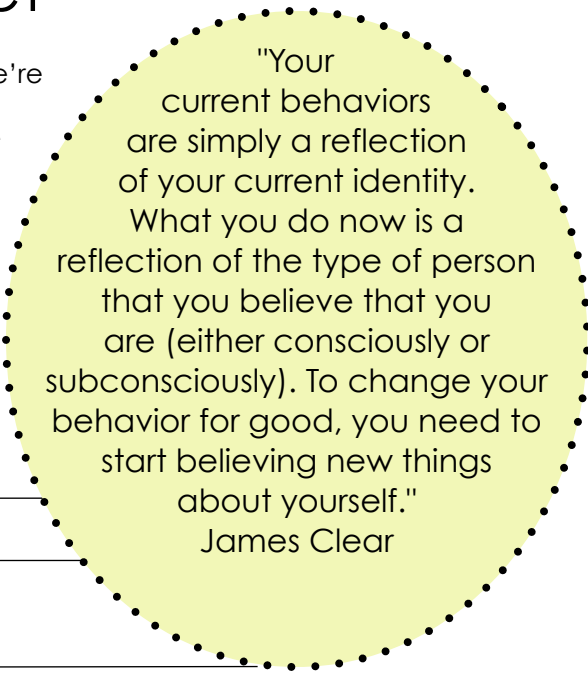
I want to become the kind of person who

I want to become the kind of person who

I want to become the kind of person who

Who is like the person you are describing? (real person, historical or fictional characters)

Once you've filled out this worksheet, put it somewhere you will see it regularly. Remind yourself of who you are becoming.



Identify Your Habits

Purpose: to start to recognize our triggers, our habits, and our rewards. There are 5 trigger categories: an emotion, a prior action, the presence of other specific people, a time, and a place. Use this worksheet to start to break down your habit patterns (good or bad).

5 Habit Triggers	Ex. trigger	Ex. Routine	Ex. Reward
Emotional	Feel frustrated or excited at work.	Get up and eat a piece of chocolate.	The relaxed expanded feeling from chocolate.
Prior Action	After I workout I make a green smoothie.	Make a green smoothie.	The feeling of feeding myself good nutrients.
Other People	Daughter asks me to read a bedtime story.	Read a bedtime story.	Have a cozy time together.
Specific Time	Waking up.	Drinking water + pooping.	Get to do yoga.
Specific Place	Sitting at computer.	Check my email.	Feel connected and on top of things.

5 Habit Triggers	Ex. trigger	Ex. Routine	Ex. Reward
Emotional			
Prior Action			
Other People			
Specific Time			
Specific Place			

Sample Habit Trigger Table

The point is to identify triggers you can use as reminders or cues to trigger a new habit. Once you know what you do each day without fail, and what happens to you each day without fail, **you can select one to add a new habit. Only focus on one habit change at a time. (I selected the one in orange)**

Things you do each day without fail	New Habit to add (Circle the trigger on the left)	Things that happen to you each day without fail, including emotions you feel, or people you interact with.	New Habit to add (Circle the trigger on the left)
Wake up.	tongue scrape	Get asked to make food by kid.	
Make green smoothie.	add 1 new green plant a week to my smoothies	Feel frustrated or excited at work.	Eat celery and raisins (instead of chocolate) as a break.
Check email.	Do eye palming	Get email.	
Eat chocolate.	Take a deep breath and experience gratitude	I watch the kids at the pool	Do pool abdominal workout exercises
Read bedtime story.		Feel a desire for more time.	
Stare at the ocean.	Relax my eyes.		

New Habit Trigger Worksheet

The point is to identify triggers you can use as reminders or cues to trigger a new habit. Once you know what you do each day without fail, and what happens to you each day without fail, you can select one to add a new habit. Circle the Trigger and the new habit.

Things you do each day without fail	New Habit to add (Circle the trigger on the left)	Things that happen to you each day without fail	New Habit to add (Circle the trigger on the left)

Keystone Habit Worksheet

A keystone habit is a behavior or routine that naturally pulls the rest of your life in order.

Examples of keystone habits:

- exercise
- food journaling
- meditation

One reason the Yoga Health Coaching program is so effective in helping people take their health to the next level is that it incorporates 3 proven keystone habits.

Think about your current habits - good and bad.

Identify 1 habit that sets a better choices in motion:

(Ex. when I get up and go for a run, I always choose to drink a green smoothie after. I'm more alert at work and I sleep better that night.)

Name your keystone habit:

List the benefits set in motion:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

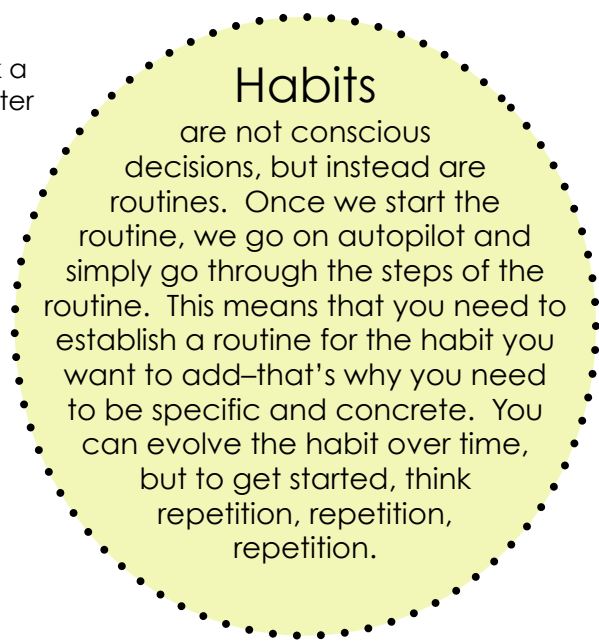
Identify 1 habit that sets a poor choices in motion:

(Ex. when I check email early in the morning, I may get hungry and eat a banana before I exercise. I cut my exercise short so that I can get to work. All day I'm more restless at my desk and I don't sleep as well that night.)

Name your bad keystone habit:

List the benefits set in motion:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



What is Your Trigger/Reward Worksheet

When we're changing from a bad habit (eating too many cookies) to a better habit (eating foods that make our body feel good) we need to find out what we're getting out of the "bad" habit. What we're getting out of it is called the reward.

There is a process of discovery around it - and replacing a better habit that has the same, deeper reward built it.

To figure out what the reward is, figure out your triggers:

When do I do this?

Where do I do this?

Who do I do this with?

What kinds of things are happening when I do this?

Why do I do this?

How do I feel before I do this?

How do I feel after I do this?

Answer these questions over at least a few days. Get super aware of the trigger. Most bad habits our response to stress and boredom. You can't break a bad habit. You can substitute good habit for a bad habit. You'll need to get the benefit of the bad habit without doing the behavior or routine of it.

Eventually, you'll figure out the reward you were after... and be able to design a new habit to get you that in a better, more intelligent way.

What reward am I really after?

What habit/behavior/routine will give me this reward in a better way?

Trading Bad for Better Worksheet 1

"Most bad habits are caused by stress or boredom." James Clear

Name 1 bad habit you would love to dissipate:

Track the habit for 3 days.

How many times do you do it? _____

What time(s) of day? _____

What are the triggers:

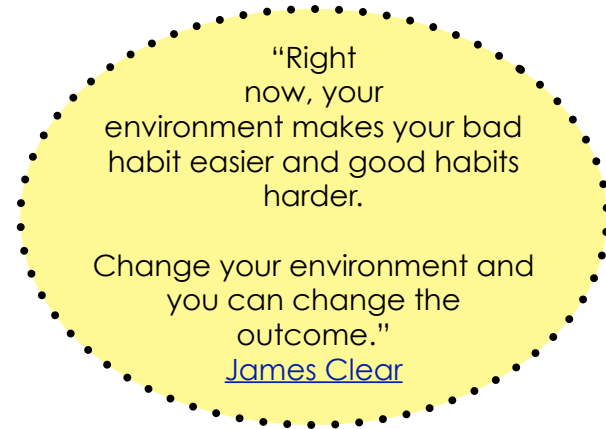
(Think of what actions or habits precede the undesired behavior.) For example: When I get frustrated on the computer due to technology or bad news, I eat a small piece of dark chocolate.

Trigger 1:

Trigger 2:

Trigger 3:

How does your environment make your bad habit easier and your good habit harder? For example: Having dark chocolate stash in my house makes it easy to eat it.



How can you change your environment to change your habit?

Environment Change 1:

Environment Change 2:

Environment Change 3:

What better habit would you like to replace your bad habit with? Remember to make it very easy.

What is your Reward?

Who do you know would also like to dissipate this habit? _____

Call them and see if you can commit to being accountability partners.

Changing Bad to Better Habit Worksheet 2

Review the 5 habit triggers on the table on the left.

Use the blank boxes on the table on the right to design a better habit. Then, schedule your habit in your calendar for the next month or two to ensure your success.

The 5 Habit Triggers
Emotional
Prior Action
Other People
Specific Time
Specific Place

Bad habit you want to change	Identified Trigger (Which of the 5 triggers?)	Identified Reward	Better Habit
ex. Eating chocolate to take a break from work.	Emotional trigger when I feel frustration or excitement.	Emotional pacification due to chocolate (sweet taste)	ex. Eat celery and raisins

Peer Support Worksheet

When we change our habits we ... change! Yet, often we go looking for support for the person we are becoming from the same people who are used to us being a person with our old habits.

Two possibilities for peer support exist.

1. Identify people who already have this better habit.
2. Ask your peeps (friends, family) to support you by helping reinforce your new identity.



Use this worksheet to mobilize peer support for your better habits.

1. Who already has this better habit? (You don't need to know them personally)
2. Who do I know personally who already has this better habit?
3. Who in my daily life does not have this better habit?
4. Which people in my daily life should I inform of the better habit I am trying to implement?
5. Who might be able to easily support me in implementing this better habit?
6. How might they be able to support me (write 1 specific way with each support person)
7. List 2 actions you will take to engage peer support, based on this exercise.
 - 1.
 - 2.

Remember - trying to engage better habits alone isn't the easiest, fastest way. Reach out... and others will soon reach out to you for support on their wellness path.

Low or High Motivation Worksheet

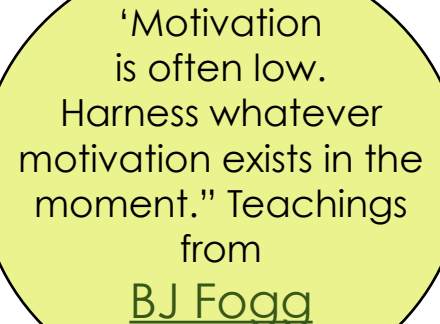
Teachings from BJ Fogg on facilitating, *not motivating* behavior change!

When Motivation is High:

Do the hard things:

Here are 3 hard things to do when motivation is high:

1. Do hard things that STRUCTURE future behavior
You want to make it hard not to do the new behavior.
Set a new default that will be challenging not to follow.
Ex. Want to lose weight. Get shoes. Get a trainer.
Schedule the trainer everyday for a week - prepaid.
2. Do hard things that reduce barriers to future behavior.
Ex: Buy fruits and vegetables. Bring home and wash them. Cut and put in fridge - right in the front.
3. Do hard things that increase people's capability.
Ex. Learn a new recipe. It's hard the first time - easy after that.



'Motivation is often low. Harness whatever motivation exists in the moment.' Teachings from BJ Fogg

When Motivation is Low:

Do the easy things:

1. Trigger an easy structured behavior change.
Do the super easy thing that is the smallest step - predetermined for the regular reality of low motivation moments/days.
2. "Tiny Habits"
Ex: The one minute meditation.
3. Baby Steps for longterm change
Make steady progress in the tiny habits. Tiny habits grow naturally.

Core Strategies to Change Habits:

If you're stuck and not able to change a habit - use this checklist to find unlock another part of the puzzle. It's all part of the process - and not a problem. Just keep looking for the next smallest thing that could work and you'll cultivate healthier habits that lead to a healthier life.

- Change Your Identity to Change a Habit
- Identify Your Keystone Habit
- Transfer habit to an existing habit (pick a trigger)
- Batch your habits
- Make it ridiculously achievable to guarantee your success (start small)
- Schedule better habits... don't set goals (Put it on a calendar)
- Focus on the practice - not the performance.
- Replace bad habits with better habits
- Kaizen Approach to Habit Change - small incremental improvements
- Surrender into the process - not the outcome
- Figure out the "other" rewards you get from a bad habit. Rewire those rewards into your "new" habit.
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