How to Change Your Life

in 8 Steps

Creating healthy habits does not have to be overwhelming or boring. One of the best ways to build consistent habits is through habit stacking, linking a new habit to something you already do.

1 What Is Habit Stacking?

Habit stacking is when you add a new habit right before or after something you already do every day.

For example, say you want to move your body daily. You would say, "After I brush my teeth, I will stretch."

2 Start with a Trigger

Pick something that already happens daily—like brushing your teeth, eating breakfast, plugging in your phone, or getting home from school.

For example, "When I plug in my phone to charge, I will do 10 squats."

3 Keep It Short and Simple

The smaller the habit, the easier it is to stick with. You can always build on it later, so do not feel pressured to start big!

For example, "When I get home from school, instead of scrolling, I will go for a 10-minute walk."

4 Make It Make Sense

Choose habit pairs that naturally fit together and do not try to force it.

For example, it does not make sense to do a workout right before bed. If you want to make time for more movement, do a 15-minute workout circuit before showering.

5 Use Positive Self-Talk

Talk to yourself in a way that motivates you. You are more likely to be consistent with a habit when you keep it positive. Instead of saying, "Ugh, I have to exercise," try, "Exercising helps me clear my head. Even 10 minutes is better than nothing!"

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6 Track Your Progress

Use a calendar, app, or checklist to see how often you complete your habit stack. Progress is more important than perfection! As you build your new habit, celebrate the progress you have made rather than beat yourself up about the days when you could have done better.

7 Adjust If Needed

If your stack is not working, swap in a different trigger or simplify your new habit.

For example, if you are too tired to lift weights after school, try yoga or a low-impact bike ride. If the weather is too bad to go outside, modify your workout to be done inside. If you are too full after dinner, move your movement time to before dinner to make it easier to stick with.

8 Stack with Friends

If you want to be consistent and make it fun, build your new habits with a friend.

For example, you and a friend can play a round of tennis together or keep each other accountable with your daily exercises by sending a selfie when you are done.

Habit stacking helps you fit healthy routines into your daily life without needing a complete lifestyle makeover. You can use these steps with any new habit you would like to create – drinking water, reading a book, or meditation. Start small, stay consistent, and build momentum one step at a time! Be sure to celebrate your wins as you go!

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