How To Break Bad Habits: The Ultimate Checklist

☑ Ask yourself relevant questions regarding the frequency, nature and triggers of your bad habit, and write down the answers for greater clarity.

☑ Draw a simple habit tracker in your journal (a calendar will also do), and for a few weeks take note of how often you do your habit.

☑ Ask yourself the question “What do I feel that makes me do this habit?”, and answer with a feeling.

☑ Ask yourself the question “What need does my bad habit meet that alleviates this feeling?”, and answer with a need.

☑ After you have both answers, write down your conclusion: “I [do bad habit] because it brings me [need met] when I am [feeling]”. Keep it in your journal or somewhere you can see it every day.

☑ Replace your bad habit with a good habit that meets the same need, that you enjoy doing, that is easy, beneficial and measurable. Whenever you feel the urge to do the old habit, do the new one instead.

☑ Remove the cues in your environment that trigger your urge to do your bad habit—this will reduce the need for constant effort to resist temptation.

☑ Remove the craving for your bad habit by implementing regular tiny habits that help keep the need behind it met.

☑ Use the habit stacking method to make your tiny habits easier to implement.

☑ Get some support by finding an accountability partner, a “habit buddy”, or by getting professional help such as a coach or therapist.

☑ Answer the question “How will my life change when I quit this habit?”

☑ Keep the answers in your journal or on a poster on the wall and use them as your daily source of motivation when you feel discouraged.

☑ Use a habit tracker to measure your progress (track times you resisted an urge, replaced the old habit, or did healthy tiny habits)

☑ If you want, track other metrics such as your mood and energy levels to gather more data and make you more effective.

☑ Decrease the intensity of the rewarding feeling you get from your bad habit by repeating the negative consequences out loud before you do it—this will make you less likely to repeat it in the future.

☑ Practice meditation (start with 5 minutes a day) to increase emotional resilience, which will help you better resist cravings and stick with healthy habits.

☑ Remind yourself that, one day, you already lived without the bad habit. Therefore, you can do it again.

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