

Map out your habit

The first step to breaking a habit is to figure out your triggers. If the habit is procrastination or stress eating at work, for example, pay attention to the circumstances surrounding you when you do those things. Do you have a big project you're trying to avoid? Do you have too much on your plate to manage?

Once you know your triggers, try to identify the behaviours you engage in when you are acting out. Do you check social media instead of doing work? Do you snack on sweets during challenging assignments?

Choose the right approach

Will you quit that bad habit all at once, or slowly over time? Make sure that you pick the approach that works best for you.

Create a plan

Studies suggest that conscious planning can make it easier to overcome bad habits. Work on one bad habit at a time, incorporate it into your personal goals and keep track of – and celebrate – your progress.

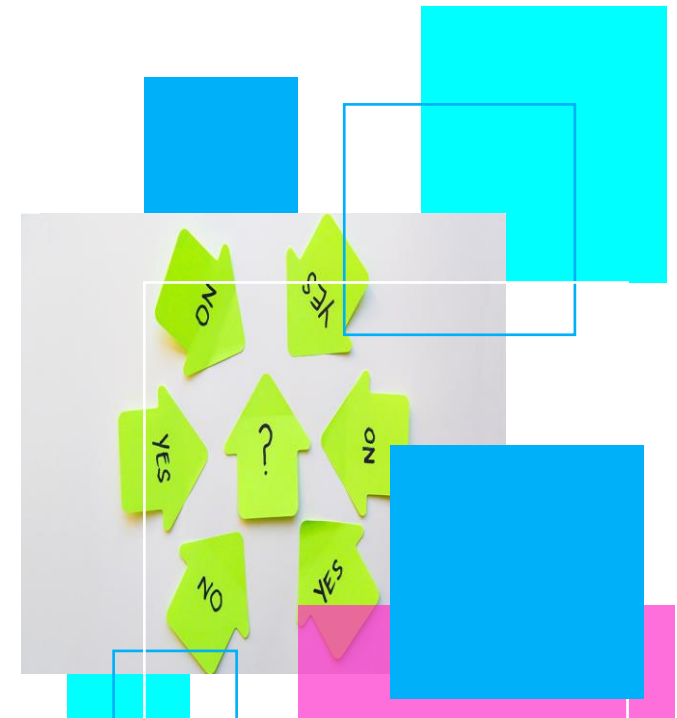
Pay a Fine for Every Bad Habit

Fines can add up, and they can hurt! Paying a self-imposed fine is one of the ways you can make bad habits painful. Perhaps, if you are willing to pay a monthly fee for a credit card, you can similarly fine yourself at home for habits you fail to break.

Breaking bad habits - start small, make small progress and keep going.

Habit: *'something that you do often or regularly, often without thinking about it'*
MacMillan dictionary

We all have a bad habit or two that, ideally, we'd like to break free from. Bad habits can hold you back, both personally and professionally. But it doesn't have to be that way. With a little planning, time and patience, you can shed your bad habits, and gain good ones instead.



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Put obstacles between you and your bad habit

For example, if you check social media when you should be working, use applications that block access to the internet.

Also avoid the people, places or situations that trigger your bad habit.

Be persistent and patient

That's the name of the game, of course: realising that it will take time for the new brain connections to kick in, for the old brain-firings to calm down, for new patterns to replace the old. Don't beat yourself up for slip-ups or use them as rationales for quitting. Take it one day at the time.

Involve others

Share your goals with family members, friends and colleagues and ask them to tell you if you go back to your old ways.

Don't let slipups derail you

Don't be too hard on yourself if you slip up... keep going and don't give up!

Remind yourself regularly why you want to break the habit and remember: it took time for your bad habit to form and it will take time to break it.

Engage in positive behaviours

Replace bad habits with positive behaviours.

For example, if you want to stop criticising, make a conscious effort to praise instead.



“You cannot change your future; but you can change your habits, and surely your habits...will change your future.”

Dr. Abdul Kalam

Change Your Passwords

Puzzled? It helps to change your passwords to commands that remind you of the change in the habit you are trying to achieve. For example, if you want to stop smoking, change your password to “quit smoking”. It is believed that every time you type out this instruction, you are reinforcing the need for change in your brain, making it slightly easier to achieve your goal.

Reward yourself

As you start to beat your habit, give yourself a little treat once in a while so that you feel good about the progress you're making.

Choose something that you truly want and will enjoy. Over time, your brain can start to associate your new, positive behaviour with the reward, and this will reinforce your new "good" habit.