



Habit Stacking: Unlocking the Secret to Building Lasting Habits

Habit stacking is a powerful technique that can help you build lasting habits. It's a simple, yet effective strategy that leverages the power of your existing habits to create new ones. The idea is to take advantage of the strong synaptic connections already present in your brain for your current habits. By linking the new habit to an established pattern, you increase the likelihood of remembering and performing the new behaviour with minimum mental effort.

Moreover, habit stacking provides a built-in reminder for the new habit, as the existing habit serves as a cue for the new one. This helps you maintain consistency and gradually turn the new behaviour into an automatic response, just like the original habit.

How to:

01 IDENTIFY YOUR EXISTING HABITS

Choose a habit that you already do consistently as your anchor habit. It could be something simple like brushing your teeth, making coffee in the morning, taking a shower, eating breakfast, or preparing your lunch.

02 CHOOSE A NEW HABIT

Next, decide on the new habit you want to adopt. Make sure it's specific, realistic, and achievable. Vague goals like "eat healthier" or "exercise more" won't work well in habit stacking. Instead, choose concrete actions, such as "eat a serving of vegetables with every meal" or "drink a glass of water" or "go for a walk in the morning".

03 FIND THE RIGHT TRIGGER

The key to successful habit stacking lies in selecting the right cue or trigger for your new habit. Your chosen cue should be associated with an existing habit, occur at the same frequency as the desired new habit, and allow for the new habit to be performed immediately after the cue.

For example, if you want to start going for a walk every morning, you could choose to do it right after brushing your teeth, as both habits share the same frequency and timing.

04 CREATE A HABIT STACK

Associate the new habit with the existing habit. Create a clear mental connection between the two actions.

For instance:

- After brushing my teeth in the morning, I will do ten minutes of yoga.
- Before turning off the lights at night, I will write down three things I'm grateful for.

Tips to Succeed:

- **Be specific and clear:** Ensure that your habit stack statement is precise and unambiguous. Vague cues or actions will make it harder to remember and perform the new habit.
- **Start small:** Focus on building one new habit at a time. Trying to stack too many habits at once can be overwhelming and may lead to failure.
- **Ensure compatibility:** Make sure the new habit aligns well with the existing habit in terms of frequency and timing. This will make it easier to integrate the new behaviour into your routine.
- **Practice consistency:** The more consistently you perform the new habit, the stronger the connection between the existing habit and the new one will become. This will make it easier for the new habit to stick in the long run.
- **Be patient and persistent:** The new habit may take some time to become automatic. Don't get discouraged if it doesn't stick immediately – keep practising, and adjust your habit stack if needed.

Habit Stacking Examples

- After pouring my morning coffee (existing habit), I will meditate for five minutes (new habit).
- After sitting down at my desk (existing habit), I will drink a glass of water (new habit).
- After turning off my computer at the end of the workday (existing habit), I will stretch for ten minutes (new habit).
- Before getting into bed (existing habit), I will read for 20 minutes (new habit).