5 Ways to Set Good Habits That Actually Stick

New routines and healthy habits don’t have to be an exercise in misery.

March 27, 2020 4 min read

Opinions expressed by *Entrepreneur* contributors are their own.

Having goals and actually pursuing goals is different. Most successful people are creatures of habit and daily routines. I definitely perform better when I have a routine. I wake up at the same time every day, work out early in the morning, come back to get kids and myself ready for work and school and so forth. A few months ago I stopped to think – What habits truly serve me? What habits do I simply do because, well, it’s *out of habit*, and what habits do I wish I would do more?

So for example:

I wish I could be more involved with my kids’ school day.

I wish I could build stronger glutes and legs.

I wish I would write more.

You can do all of those things and hit all of your goals, once you make them a habit.

While there has been a lot of talk about the habits of successful people and guidance on how to break bad habits, I’m most focused on setting new habits and actually sticking to them. So for example, some of my current daily habits include:

Wake up at the same time every day.

Don’t check social media and don’t respond to emails in the morning.

Exercise.

Ensure I have nourishing and healthy food options accessible.

Related: 17 Habits of Self-Made Millionaires Who Retired Early

These habits keep me organized, effective, healthy and, for the most part, happy. Most people who exercise every morning just do it, they don’t really think about it. And if you’re similar to most people, you feel better after a workout. No one ever regrets a workout (after it is over, at least.)

Here are five ways to turn that wishlist of habits into things that make you feel better every single day.

1. Practice your new habit at the same time every day.

Be it exercise, not checking social media first thing in the morning or preparing for tomorrow’s agenda the evening before, this kind of consistency is key.

2. Start small.

We can’t change or fix things overnight. Begin with small habits such as meal prepping for a few days, walking extra steps over the course of the day or deleting social media apps for just one week to eliminate the temptation. (Checking news updates on your computer or TV is a good way to stay informed without mindless scrolling on your phone taking over.)

3. Have a clear goal.

When are you going to do it, why and how? If there is any fogginess on any of these questions, you likely won't do it. So if you're trying to get more writing pieces in or more projects completed, schedule it into your calendar, and don't let distractions get in the way.

Related: 18 Destructive Habits Holding You Back From Success

4. Be consistent.

Repetition builds habits. Whether it's learning to play the piano or taking stretch breaks so that you are not sitting at your desk all day, it's important to set a time and be accountable. Ask your family and friends to encourage you and check in on you.

5. If you mess up, have a plan.

Don't judge yourself, and have a plan to get back on track quickly if you mess up. Be kind to yourself and make this your mantra: "Never miss twice."

Don't break your good habits habit!

Remember that this will not be easy. It's so simple to revert to bad habits and go back to what's comfortable – lying in bed scrolling social media, eating poorly, not exercising, I've done it so many times.

Related: Habits of the World's Wealthiest People (Infographic)

But get yourself in an uncomfortable zone, because that's where the magic and change happens. To meet my personal goals, I now do my best to limit distractions from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm so that I can be most efficient at work and able to spend

quality time with my kids after school. I hired a trainer to focus on single leg glute work, and she wrote out a routine I follow. For writing, I blocked out Friday as my creative day to write, and I do not schedule anything over it unless it’s crucial. We are what we do, and most important is doing what provides us with the healthiest and happiest lifestyles we can have.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/346906