

ADHD and Creating Habits

Key Concepts

Habits

- Habits are routines that we perform automatically, often without even realizing it.
- Developing good habits is important for personal growth and authentic happiness.
- We can use habits to help align our actions with our values and strengths.
- Good habits can also help streamline our daily tasks.
- We can create habits to replace the old coping skills that no longer serve us, like perfectionism, hiding, masking, and silencing ourselves.
- It's also important to recognize and address unhelpful habits that might hold us back.
- By fostering good habits, we can create a structured framework for success and personal growth, allowing us to thrive and lead fulfilling lives.
- Habits can reduce executive functioning stress by automating choices and decisions and preserving your resources for more complex tasks.

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Key Definitions.

- **Motivation:** This represents the internal or external forces that drive you to achieve your goals. ADHD women struggle with motivation because of brain-based differences. You don't need motivation to create habits.
- **Willpower** refers to the ability to resist short-term temptations and impulses to achieve long-term goals. It involves self-control, discipline, and the ability to make conscious decisions. You don't need willpower to create habits. Good habits eliminate the need for willpower.
- **Mini Habits:** These are small, manageable actions or routines that can be seamlessly integrated into your daily life as stepping stones towards achieving grander objectives without the accompanying stress.

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What is Self Efficacy, and what does it have to do with habits?

Self-efficacy is the belief in one's own capabilities to perform tasks and achieve goals.

Society's lack of support for different neurotypes can lower self-efficacy.

False beliefs about forming habits can discourage you from making changes, contributing to feeling bad about yourself.

Better habit systems can increase your sense of self-efficacy and **self-trust**.

Mistakes ADHD Women Often Unknowingly Make when trying to create habits

One of the most common pitfalls ADHD women encounter when fostering good habits is overly thinking they must rely on concepts like **motivation, willpower, and executive functioning**.

Relying on motivation and willpower leads to feelings of shame and inadequacy. They won't work in helping you create habits. Let's learn why.

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Mini and Tiny Habits.

Mini and tiny habits have been discussed in two books on habit science: "Mini Habits" by Stephen Guise and "Tiny Habits" by BJ Fogg. I like these approaches because they:

1. Align with our flourishing model: Aligning habits with personal values enhances enjoyment and motivation. It promotes self-praise and self-compassion and ensures self-awareness before escalating the habit, checking for its automaticity and comfort level.
2. Reduce dependency on motivation and willpower: Mini habits foster consistent, value-driven progress, sidestepping the pitfalls of erratic motivation and overwhelming efforts.



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Why Small Habits?

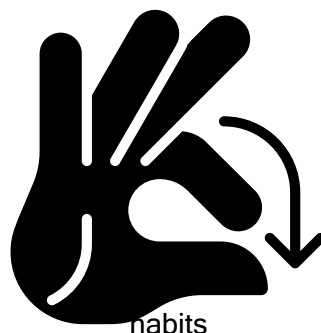
By making tasks seem easier with mini habits, you can still progress because you can create very small habits without overcoming these problems. Once habits become automatic, you don't need to use these things anymore to do them.

Starting small with habits helps with obstacles such as :

- shame
- procrastination
- executive functioning issues
- willpower and motivation fluctuation

Mini habits can help build your confidence in your ability to achieve goals. This is because the simplicity and achievable nature of mini-habits allow you to build a track record of consistent success.

Breaking down big goals into smaller, manageable tasks helps conserve mental energy. This approach transforms challenges into achievable steps, fostering a sense of daily accomplishment and a positive mindset.



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Habits should be so small that they are nearly impossible to fail at, helping you build a track record of success and boosting your confidence in moving you towards a life consistent with your values and strengths.

HOW MINI HABITS WORK

The mini habits model is perfect for adhd women. According to the creator of mini habits, these are the key concepts:

1. Starting Small
2. Consistency Over Intensity
3. Low Pressure
4. Scaling Up
5. Brain Rewiring
6. Avoiding Burnout
7. Building Confidence

Let's look at how to build one.



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You pick your habit.

Take your target habit goal and make it 'stupid small.'

If you find it ridiculous when you verbalize a habit, then you've stumbled upon a mini habit.

For instance, imagine aiming to complete 100 sit-ups every day, but instead, you reduce it to just 1 sit-up. Similarly, if your goal is to clean your house weekly, you can simplify cleaning just one small part of one room. Meditating for an entire hour can be scaled down to just 1 minute or a day.

If you're curious to explore more mini habits, Stephen has compiled an extensive list at minihabits.com.

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How to Create Your Own Mini Habit

WRITE YOUR OWN

✓ Now, let's talk about a target goal. What habit do you want to cultivate? And how can you make it more manageable?

✓ My target habit goal is: _____.

✓ Here's my simplified version: _____.

"TOO SMALL TOO FAIL"

Our aim is to make the habit "too small to fail" by establishing a solid foundation of CONSISTENCY before gradually increasing the intensity.



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Tiny Habits

Tiny Habits: A Brief Overview

Tiny Habits use the same concepts as mini habits but are more specific about how to do it. Let's look at this model.

The Structure of Tiny Habits

1. Anchor Moment: A current routine that triggers your new tiny habit.
2. New Tiny Behavior: A simplified version of a new habit you aim to develop.
3. Instant Celebration: A quick self-congratulation after performing the tiny behavior.
4. Behavior = Motivation + Ability + Prompt (MAP)

Creating a habit is easier when the behavior is simple, motivated, and prompted.



HABITS

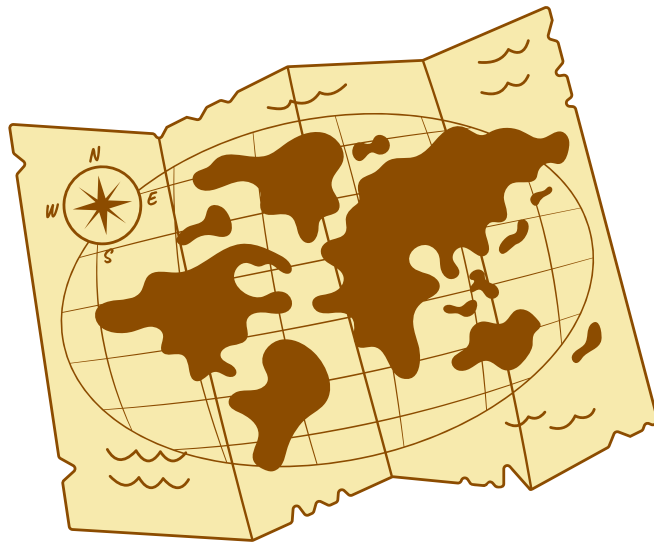
habits

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The tiny habit approach to habit formation Habit = MAP encourages you to manipulate prompts (triggers) and ability (ease) to create a habit.

This approach fully recognizes that motivation is not reliable.

By manipulating prompts and ability effectively, you can set yourself up for success in habit formation, making the desired behavior more automatic and less reliant on sheer willpower or high motivation levels.



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Manipulating Prompts (Triggers):

Please remind you to do the behavior. We can also refer to them as triggers or cues.

1. Selection: Choose a prompt that naturally fits into your routine. For instance, if you want to do morning stretches, you can use the act of getting out of bed as your prompt.
2. Consistency: Use the same prompt every time for the desired behavior. This consistency helps in reinforcing the connection between the prompt and the action.
3. Immediate Action: Ensure that the action follows the prompt immediately. The shorter the time between the prompt and the action, the stronger the association becomes.
4. Visible Reminders: Place physical reminders in locations where you'll see them. For example, if you want to take vitamins daily, place them next to your toothbrush.
5. Technology: Use alarms, apps, or notifications as prompts. For instance, could you set a phone reminder to drink water every hour?
6. Environment Design: Arrange your environment to guide you toward the desired behavior naturally. Keep a book on your bedside table if you want to read more.

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Manipulating Ability:

Ability is your capacity to do the behavior. We want to increase it.

1. **Start Small:** Begin with an incredibly easy version of the behavior. If you want to start running, walk for just five minutes daily.
2. **Resource Availability:** Ensure you have all the necessary resources at hand. Stock your kitchen with healthy foods if you're trying to eat healthier.
3. **Reduce Friction:** Make the desired behavior as easy as possible. If you want to go to the gym in the morning, prepare your gym clothes the night before.
4. **Increase Friction for Undesired Behaviors:** Make unwanted behaviors difficult. To reduce screen time, keep your phone in another room when working.
5. **Routine Integration:** Integrate the new behavior into an existing routine. If you want to practice gratitude, do it while having your morning coffee.
6. **Gradual Increase:** As the behavior becomes more automatic, you can gradually increase its complexity or duration. After walking for a week, add short intervals of jogging.

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Instructions to Implement Tiny Habits

To start with the Tiny Habits method, follow these steps:

- ✓ Identify a Routine: Choose an existing routine in your day where you can anchor your new tiny habit.
- ✓ Select a Tiny Habit: Decide on a small action that you can easily do
- ✓ Anchor the Habit: Attach your tiny habit to the identified routine. This means doing the tiny habit immediately after the routine.
- ✓ Celebrate: After you perform the tiny habit, celebrate it. This could be a small self-congratulatory gesture or word, fostering a sense of accomplishment.

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Creating a Habit of Doing One Sit-Up: A Walkthrough

Let's walk through the process of creating a habit of doing one sit-up daily using the Tiny Habits method:

1. Identify a Routine: Choose a part of your daily routine to anchor your new habit, such as after brushing your teeth in the morning.
2. Select a Tiny Habit: Your tiny habit here is doing one sit-up. It's a small, achievable goal that requires little time or effort.
3. Anchor the Habit: Incorporate the sit-up into your routine. For instance, right after you brush your teeth in the morning, do one sit-up.
4. Celebrate: After you do your sit-up, celebrate your achievement. It could be a simple "Well done!" or a pat on your back. This celebration reinforces the positive behavior, making it more likely to stick.
5. Progress Gradually: As days go by, if you feel comfortable, you can gradually increase the number of sit-ups. But remember, the goal is to focus on consistency, not intensity.

HOORAY!



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Important and Helpful Ideas from Atomic Habits

What are They?

- **Habits and Systems:** James Clear emphasizes that the problem with changing habits often lies in the systems we have in place. Bad habits persist because of flawed systems, not a lack of desire to change. To achieve meaningful change, focus on improving your systems rather than fixating on singular goals.
- **Atomic Habits:** Atomic habits are small, incremental changes in a larger system. Similar to how atoms are the building blocks of molecules, these tiny habits are fundamental units that contribute to overall improvement. They may appear initially insignificant but compound over time to yield substantial results.
- **Compound Growth:** Small improvements, even just 1 percent better each day, can lead to remarkable outcomes when compounded over time. Clear provides mathematical examples to illustrate how consistent progress can result in significant improvements.
- **Plateau of Latent Potential:** Many people give up on their efforts to change habits because they expect immediate results. Clear introduces the concept of the Plateau of Latent Potential, where significant change often occurs after consistent effort over time. The most potent outcomes are delayed but worth the wait.

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Important and Helpful Ideas from Atomic Habits

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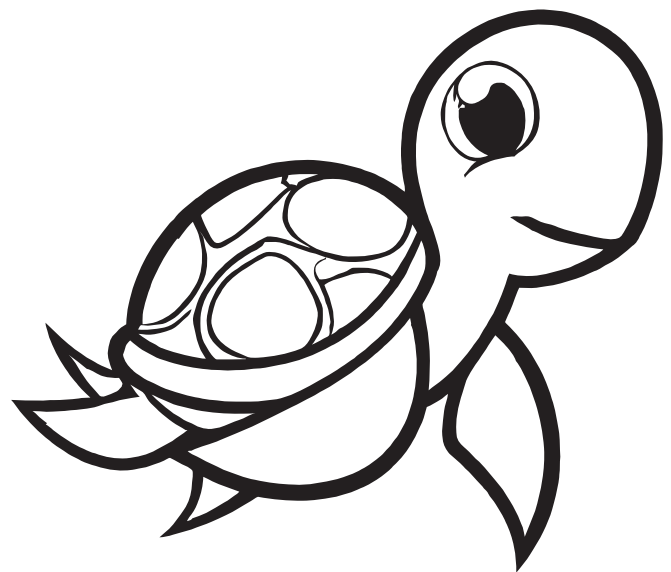
- Identity Change: Clear argues that identity change is fundamental to habit change. To build better habits, identify the person you want to become. Your habits shape your identity, and by repeating desired behaviors, you reinforce the identity associated with those behaviors.
- The 4 Laws of Behavior Change: Clear introduces four laws that govern habit formation: making it obvious, making it attractive, making it easy, and making it satisfying. These laws guide the process of building new habits and breaking bad ones.
- Sorites Paradox: The Sorites Paradox challenges our understanding of gradual change by questioning at what point a series of small additions, like grains of sand, collectively transition from being considered "not a heap" to being recognized as "a heap."

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Time Blindness and Masking and Habit Formation

Impatience: Impatience is a common mistake when trying to change habits. Many expect immediate results and give up when they don't see instant changes. Clear emphasizes the importance of persevering through the Plateau of Latent Potential. Time Blindness can make habit formation difficult.

SLOW
AND
STEADY



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The Importance of The Environment: Cue-Based Reminders

In simple terms, this method involves associating a task with a distinctive cue in your environment that will catch your attention when the opportunity to perform the task arises. These cues are designed to be more noticeable than regular stimuli, reminding you to complete the task.

Research suggests that these cue-based reminders can more effectively grab your attention and prompt you to act. Double up on your cues! Leave yourself lots of them like notes or messages.



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Habit: Drinking more water throughout the day. Cue: Set a bright-colored water bottle on your desk. Explanation: The bright color of the water bottle serves as a visual cue that can capture attention and remind individuals to drink water regularly throughout the day.

Habit: Feeding a pet in the evening. Cue: Place the pet food container near the TV remote. Explanation: If watching TV is a regular evening habit, placing the pet food container near the TV remote creates a noticeable cue that reminds individuals to feed their pets when they reach for the remote.

Task: Going for a walk or exercising in the afternoon. Cue: Place a pair of sneakers near the front door. Explanation: The sneakers near the door are a visual reminder to go for a walk or exercise whenever they are about to leave the house or arrive home.



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Habit: Remember to buy groceries on the way home from work. Cue: Attach a grocery list to the car keys. Explanation: Associating the grocery list with the car keys creates a cue that captures attention right when individuals are about to drive home, reminding them to stop by the grocery store.

Task: Practicing a musical instrument in the evening. Cue: Place the instrument case next to a favorite chair or sofa. Explanation: The instrument case acts as a visual cue that captures attention and reminds individuals to practice when they sit down to relax in their favorite spot.

Remember, the cues should be **distinctive** and **unusual** compared to other environmental stimuli to effectively capture attention and prompt action.

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Make the Easy Hard and the Hard Easy.

"Make the easy hard and the hard easy" is like setting up your space and routine so it's easier to do the good stuff and trickier to do the not-so-good stuff.

Make the Easy Hard: If there's something you're trying to avoid, like mindless scrolling on your phone, make it a bit tougher. Move your social media apps into a folder or log out after each session. This tiny bit of friction might make you think twice before diving in.

Make the Hard Easy: Make it super simple for things you want to do more of, like reading or meditating. Have a book or meditation cushion always in sight, so you're reminded and don't have to search for them.



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The Flourish Model For Habit

Let's sum it up:

🎯 Aim for super small habits – too tiny to fail. Follow these guidelines to make it work:

1 Habit Stacking: Anchor your new habits to existing routines. For instance, commit to reading for just 5 minutes post-dinner daily if you're keen on reading. Pairing the new with the familiar makes it stick!



2 Environment is Key: Set yourself up for success. Make it supremely **easy** to follow through on desired behaviors and **hard** to fall into undesired ones. If you're trying to eat healthier, keep fruits visible and junk food out of reach! 🍏❌🍪

3 Visual Cues: Use tangible reminders to keep your habit front and center. This could be a sticky note on your fridge, a timely phone alert, or even an object like a book placed prominently to remind you of your reading goal. Out of sight, out of mind, so keep it visible! 👁️📖

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The Flourish Model For Habit

Let's sum it up:

4 Reward System: Every time you complete your habit, treat yourself. This makes the process enjoyable, but over time, the habit becomes its own reward. It could be as simple as a special treat or 5 minutes of relaxation. 🎁🌈

5 Value Alignment: Ensure your habits align with your core values and strengths. A habit rooted in authenticity is far more likely to thrive. Plus, if it helps you acquire a new skill, that's a double win! 🌟💡

6 . Embrace the Bumps: Perfection isn't the goal; persistence is. If you skip a day, don't beat yourself up. Instead, focus on the bigger picture and return with self-compassion. 🌅❤️

Always remember: The key to sustainable habits is creating systems and environments that encourage desired behaviors while discouraging the undesired. Not Motivation or willpower. Your habit will become automated with time, consistency, and the right strategy. 💪🔄

