



CREATING ENDURING HABITS

A Worked Example:

GOAL	To exercise more during the week – I enjoy running		
REALITY	I never make enough time. I get caught up in having to do so much for others. I feel low in energy and in mood.		
OPTIONS	I am a “night owl” so I prefer to exercise later in the day. I could exercise straight from work.		
WILL	I want to change this pattern. I have a low mood and I want to support myself.		
IF - THEN STATEMENT	<p>If I make the time to exercise, then I will feel that I am doing something for me and my own wellbeing.</p> <p>If I start to exercise once a week, then I will feel that I am making progress. (I can start at a weekend)</p> <p>If I start to exercise once at the weekend and once during the week, then I will feel more motivated to do more.</p> <p>If I start to exercise more, then I will feel better in my body and my mind.</p>		
HELPFUL HABITS	PRIMING — GETTING READY	NUDGING — EXTERNAL CUES TO SUPPORT	ANCHORING — BEING MINDFUL; FEELING THE BENEFITS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Buy new kit. · Download running app. · Timetable myself for run on Sunday afternoon. · Enter myself for a 5k in a few months’ time – clear goal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sunday morning – check app and decide on goal for afternoon run 2miles? 3miles? Or is km better? · Sunday – after lunch, get into kit and get body and mind on going this run. · Look at photograph of self from before when I used to run regularly. · Tuesday run – get into kit at work and drive to park to do run 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · During the run, I want to feel relaxed and that I am enjoying this experience. · No pressure to be fast, just enjoy being outside and moving my body. · Enjoy breathing in fresh air. · Focus on the feeling of enjoyment, as endorphins flood my body when I finish my goal today.
VISUALISING	Every night, before going to bed or to sleep, remember the run from the week. Focus on when I felt relaxed, full of energy and how good it felt to complete my goal. Re-run the route in my head. Then run the route again but going just a little further next time.		
INFLECTION POINTS	When I feel tired and can’t be bothered, have alarm set to remind me of how good I feel after the run. When I feel that I can’t be bothered, tell myself that I will go and that I will do what I can today – no pressure and see where the run takes me. Better to have tried than not gone at all.		



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Focus on how you feel and how it will feel to achieve this goal. Habits are not broken in the mind; they are replaced when we feel the changes in our bodies. Therefore, by visualising and anchoring these good feelings in our minds and bodies we will effectively change how we behave. We may vacillate when making changes, but by staying focused on how good the change of habit makes us feel, then we have a greater chance of maintaining a “good-feeling” momentum to carry us forward.

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