

The Top 5 Self-Change Tools That Will Help You Start & Stick With Change



Develop will power instead of relying on motivation

Sorry to break this to you, but... **'I want' never goes away**, so you best learn to manage it! Given the choice your brain will always choose immediate gratification over long term reward. Whether this be the easiest, fastest, sweetest or fattiest option, **your brain is a sucker** for wanting to choose the path of least resistance, especially if that path has an instant reward. Sure, 'being motivated' helps to manage the constant stream of temptations but as you know it's near impossible to always be motivated. Therefore if you rely solely on being motivated to do things (or not do things) then you'll never be able to consistently act in a way that will lead to long term change. The answer then is **developing the will power to 'do it anyway'**, regardless of your level of motivation. By performing small but regular willpower challenges you can gradually improve your self-control and wean yourself off 'having to be motivated' to act. This is the only way you'll be able to act consistently in order to build the habits needed to make a long term change.
Check out the next tip to learn how you can do this.

Build will power by habitually doing one small thing every day

As I'm sure you know the **first step is ALWAYS the hardest** step to take. Often we don't even take this step as the enormity of the task ahead (an hour long gym session, changing EVERYTHING you eat, losing 20lbs etc.) puts us off taking ANY steps. By lowering the bar to a ridiculously low level you are **more likely to start and continue taking action**.

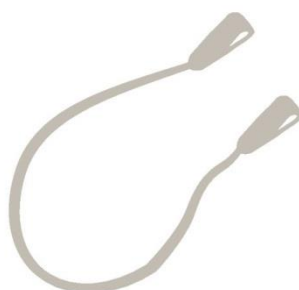
Once you build a bit of will power and the habit is engrained you can then start to add more... You'll be surprised how organically this happens once you have the first step under your belt. For example you may decide that instead of setting a hefty goal of going to the gym three times a week, you will simply aim for 5 air squats every day. Two things to remember here... First, it's much better to do something little and often than it is to go all out then quit. And second, the smaller and more ridiculous the goal the better, as this means you won't be put off doing it, and as a result... You'll do it!

Other ideas...

- Doing 5 get ups (lie on the floor then get up), crunches or push ups
- Eating 1 extra piece of (insert vegetable) with lunch or dinner
 - Drinking 1 extra glass of water
 - Taking the stairs once a day

If you can... Do it in the morning

You may or may not know that **will power is a finite resource**, meaning it runs out. Think of it like a fuel gauge. It's at its peak in the morning then gradually diminishes as you clock up miles and the day progresses. This explains why in the morning you are 'absolutely positive' you'll go for that run after work, but when after work arrives you aren't so enthusiastic. This doesn't mean everything has to be done in the morning. It simply means that the earlier you plan to do something the **higher the probability is that you will do it**. In the fight against unhealthy habits, everything helps right? Done!



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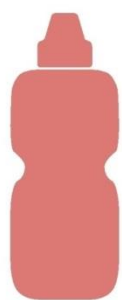
Put a rubber band on it (My odd but wildly successful strategy)

You may be surprised to know that up to 42% of what you do every day is done while you're on autopilot.

This means that despite best intentions e.g. "I'm gonna go for a run after work" you'll most likely get home, walk in the door like a zombie, and before you realise what has happened you'll be sitting on the couch with a beer watching T.V. One way to get around your autopilot setting is to use rubber bands (or other tactile objects e.g. blu tack, bumpy stickers etc.) to snap you out of your daze and regain your self-control. **When we touch something unfamiliar it sends a strong signal to the brain that 'something is different'**. You can use this signal as a reminder to do whatever it is that you were intending to do. For example a rubber band placed strategically on the front door handle will snap you out of autopilot before you get the chance to do your couch-drink-T.V. combo. As a result the first thing you will do (hopefully) is put your running gear on and head straight out for a run.

Other ideas...

- Putting a rubber band around the T.V. remote, fridge handle or (insert food you don't want to eat)
- Put a bumpy sticker or small piece of blu tack on your computer mouse, smart phone or laptop
- Put a marble or something similar in your pants pocket or in those slippers you automatically put on when you walk in the door



Trying to change by changing everything will result in not changing

Don' bite off more than you can chew

Do you ever overcommit yourself to responsibilities and later find yourself overwhelmed? What was it that made you think you could go from doing nothing to going to the gym 5 times per week? **I guess many of us just assume when we decide to do it we will just do it. WRONG!**

The phenomenon of overestimating what our future selves can, and will do is caused by our inability to imagine the future clearly. **We don't see our future selves in the same way we see our current selves** and, as a result we tend to overestimate what we are capable of. Because of this we often set unrealistic goals that we think our future selves will be able to achieve. We say "Yeah! I'm gonna do it this time! Not right now but next week (starting Monday) when I'm not as tired". But... Guess what? When Monday arrives you're going to be feeling just the same which means you are either going to forget the idea altogether, or... you guessed it, set another unrealistic goal that you intend to start next Monday. A vicious cycle indeed.

So how do we get around this? **It pretty much comes down to setting realistic goals.** What realistic you ask? Just think to yourself... If I am not willing to do it right now, then it probably won't happen on the date that I've set. It's that simple.