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THINK SMART, LOOK AMAZING

Five Ways To Break A Bad Habit

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You've got the best intentions, and more notebooks/kit/resolve than you've ever had before. And yet, breaking bad habits, and replacing them with more fulfilling ones seems to be a sticking point for so many of us, myself included.

That's why I went along to [The School Of Life](#) to see what I could learn from their workshop on Creating Good Habits, led by **psychology and happiness expert Susanna Halonen, aka The Happyologist**. These are just six of the ways she says we can replace our bad habits with awesome new ones.

1. Wake up early and get moving

We're at our most cognitively powerful in the morning, so it's the ideal time to tackle a big project, or do anything that needs an extra dose of willpower and stamina – like working out. Chances are if you're struggling to hit the gym, you'll be even less inclined come lunch, or evening. Do it in the morning when you're much more likely to follow through.

2. Harness your inner autopilot

The benefit of having good habits is that they become your default, which in time means that you'll use less mental energy doing them because they'll just become part of a routine (it's how athletes stay so motivated to eat well and train hard.) Right now you may struggle to ditch the fries with your lunch (I hear ya!), but after a while (habits form in an average of 21 days, but can take longer) that choice will become second nature. In short, stick with changing those habits, because once they click you'll be sorted – and your brain will thank you.

3. Pinpoint a good habit you already have

One of the best ways to ditch a bad habit, is to add the new good habit you want to form to an existing good habit you already have. The example Halonen uses is replacing a morning coffee with a hot water, lemon and ginger. That's replacing the bad coffee habit with a new good habit. Once that's in place, she added in 15 minutes of yoga with her hot drink, so they both become one solid daily habit. Link the habits up, so they form one positive action.

3. Write it down

We all have great intentions, but committing those to paper makes us more accountable. Halonen advises against using smart phones to do this though – it's too easy to delete a cyber note. Actually write down the bad habit and how you'll change it in ink, because then it's a statement of intent - to yourself.

4. Cope with excuses before they come up

Ok, so you've got a bad habit. The ways you regularly justify this bad habit will be what stops you from adopting a new good habit instead. So back to our coffee analogy, if you wake up sleepy and need a coffee, your justification might be that you've had a hard week, or that you'll only have it today and you'll go back to being good tomorrow (fyi, tomorrow never comes). So work around that and say that you'll have a tea that day instead. Just don't go back to the old habit, because we never forget them, they're always there, lurking in our neurological background waiting to re-emerge. But just doing a little towards making your good habit stick is better going back to your old bad habit. The same works with fitness, can't commit to your 7am spin class? Get up at 7.30 instead and do 10 mins of an internet HIIT class – it's better than nothing and keeps you motivated and positive.

5. Create visual cues

It's easy to forget our new habits. After all, there's a reason the bad habits stuck in the first place, and that's because we've done them time and time again. For example, if you need to remember to floss in the morning, put a post it note next to your mirror to remind you. If you want to go to the gym in the morning put your kit right next to your bed, or, wear it to bed (I've done this FYI, it's awesome - don't judge) so it reminds you of the habit you want to cultivate. In time, they'll just become second nature.

For more info about all the awesome classes The School Of Life run, [click here](#).

Got any great habits you want to share? Or more tips for ditching a bad habit? We want to know! Tweet us @marieclaireuk @itsmeanitab

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