

HABIT STACKING CHALLENGE

Experts have found a beneficial way to introduce a new healthy habit is to participate in “Habit Stacking.” Our brains build a strong network of neurons to support our current behaviors – the more we do something, the stronger and more efficient the connection becomes. When we want to implement a new, healthy behavior it is suggested to identify a current habit we already practice daily and “stack” the new behavior or habit with it.



CURRENT HABIT	→	DESIRED NEW HABIT
Coffee is brewing	→	Prepare healthy snacks
Take off work shoes	→	Change into workout clothes
Sit down for dinner	→	Say one thing you're grateful for that day
After dinner	→	Meditate for one minute

HABIT TRACKER

*Check off each day that you successfully complete your desired new habit.
 At the end of the month, see how far you've come!*

YOUR DESIRED NEW HABIT: _____

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 8	DAY 9	DAY 10	DAY 11	DAY 12	DAY 13	DAY 14
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 15	DAY 16	DAY 17	DAY 18	DAY 19	DAY 20	DAY 21
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY 22	DAY 23	DAY 24	DAY 25	DAY 26	DAY 27	DAY 28
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
DAY 29	DAY 30	DAY 31				

HABIT STACKING 101

Steps for Building a Habit Stacking Routine

(from *Habit Stacking: 97 Small Life Changes That Take Five Minutes or Less* by S.J. Scott):

1. **Start with a Five-Minute Block** – set a simple goal to keep it simple and set-up for success.
2. **Focus on Small Wins** – focus on easy tasks at first to experience “small wins”.
3. **Pick a Time and Location** – anchor your new habit to a specific location, time of day or combination of both.
4. **Anchor Your Stack to a Trigger** – focus on positive triggers. Examples of this is something you do every day already (showering, brushing your teeth, sitting at your desk), a specific time of day (waking up, eating lunch, driving home).
5. **Create a Logical Checklist** – includes the sequence of the actions, how long it takes to complete each one and where you will do them.
6. **Have an Accountability Plan** – suggest having an accountability partner, coach, or group to share breakthroughs, challenges and future plans.
7. **Create Small, Enjoyable Rewards** – can help to act as a motivator. Suggestions: watching your favorite TV show, taking 5 minutes to relax etc.
8. **Focus on Repetition.**
9. **Don't Break the Chain** – mark activity on calendar or journal.
10. **Expect Setbacks** – setbacks can be a good thing and teach resilience.
11. **Schedule the Frequency of a Stack** – daily, weekly, monthly.
12. **Scale Up Your Stack** – evaluate how you are doing and add time and handful of actions as able.
13. **Build One Routine at a Time** – research has found conflicting information for how long it takes to form a habit. Anywhere from 18 to 254 days with the average of 66 days being found. It is suggested to not start a new habit until you have stopped thinking about a habit as a habit and are doing it everyday without thought.



The **purpose** of habit stacking is to create a simple and repeatable routine. **Habit stacking** allows you to leverage your stronger habits that you participate in daily to build new healthy habits and behaviors. The goal of creating a new habit is **consistency**. If you think about it, there are many habits you participate in now on a very consistent basis. For example, brushing your teeth, taking a shower, getting dressed, making a meal. Some habits you have participated in since you were very young and some you may have implemented more recently such as going for a walk, calling a loved one, practicing daily meditation. It can be hard to implement a new health behavior on a consistent basis, so why not use something you already know and practice daily to use as a trigger for the new behavior. You can also use this practice to **eliminate or replace** an unhealthy behavior.

8 Elements of Habit Stacking

(from *Habit Stacking: 97 Small Life Changes That Take Five Minutes or Less* by S.J. Scott):

- Each habit takes less than five minutes to complete
 - It's a complete habit
 - It improves your life
 - It is simple to complete
- The entire routine takes less than 30 minutes
 - It follows a logical process
 - It follows a checklist
 - It fits your life



Suggested Reading

- *Habit Stacking: 97 Small Life Changes That Take Five Minutes or Less* by S.J. Scott
- *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones* by James Clear
- *Mini Habits: Smaller Habits, Bigger Results* by Stephen Guise