

Happiness Habits

The

7-day kick start guide

MAKE HAPPY HABITS THAT STICK

adbra

Introduction

Are you sitting with one of our Happiness Habits jars, cards, or planners and looking for ways to boost your results?

Or maybe you're just interested in finding out how to start building healthy habits that stick?

Whatever the reason you're reading, in this kick-start guide, we'll be taking you through 7 techniques for habit-building success that you can try over the next 7 days.



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Look out for the  **Mindful Exercise** icon throughout for things you can try out.

So let's get started!

**Confidence is a
habit not a trait**

UNKNOWN

DAY 1. Start with Self-kindness



Have you ever felt a bit like a failure when you haven't managed to establish a new habit?

Chances are, you were trying to change things to feel better, be more productive or achieve a specific goal. When a new habit doesn't stick, it can feel bad in more ways than one.

When it comes to developing habits you may have thought some the following in the past:

"I don't have the patience for this"

"I've already failed"

"I'm never going to get there"

"It's too hard"

"I feel overwhelmed"

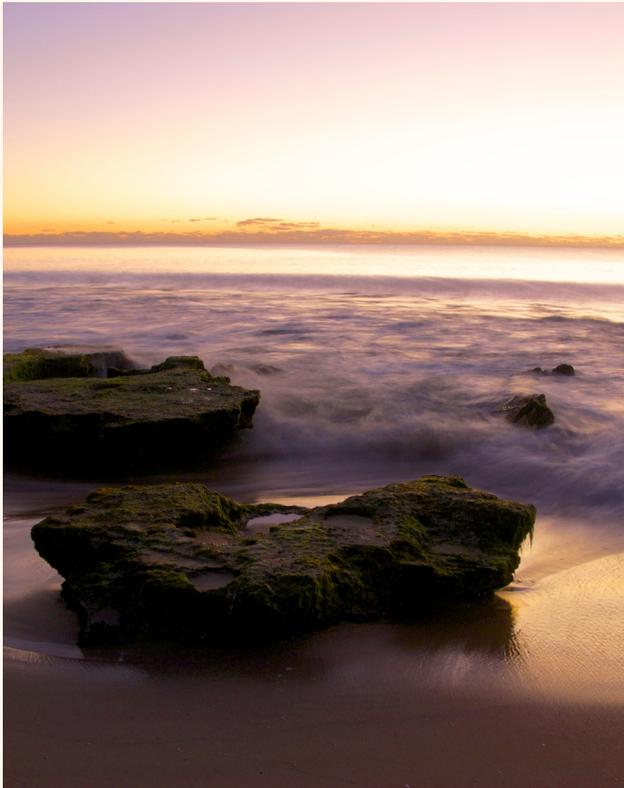
"I just can't do it"

"I may as well not bother"

Does this self-talk sound familiar?

Believe it or not, those inner voices are actually there to keep you safe. Some of these voices can be remnants from the past, things other people told us when we were younger. They were then reinforced by those around us, our

START WITH SELF-KINDNESS



circumstances or surroundings, and became recurring thoughts patterns.

The good news is that while these ingrained thoughts patterns can be hard to break, they are very common and there are several techniques that we can use to help make things easier for ourselves (cue our kick start guide!)

As you progress through the next few days and weeks, try to remember that these inner voices will probably try to interfere with your progress and pull you back when times get tough.

So, at adbra, we always start with self-kindness and self-compassion. This is all about bringing awareness to how we soothe and show kindness to ourselves like you would a close friend.



Mindful Exercise

Think about the words and actions of someone who has treated you with kindness in the past. Mimic these actions and say these kind words to yourself. Journal or voice record them and relay them when you are feeling low. The more you practice speaking to yourself with kindness, the more natural it will become.

It's natural to compare ourselves to others and ruminate about all the things we managed or didn't manage to achieve in our life yet. When this happens to you, try to remember that you are part of a wider, common humanity and to consider that there is no such thing as a 'perfect' life. There is nothing to 'fix' within you because nothing is broken, try to remind yourself that you deserve the kindness you would show to others, no matter what.



Mindful Exercise

Think about your last 'mistake' and try to remember how it made you feel. Take a moment to relive your reaction when things went wrong. Now, imagine what the kindest, nicest person you know would say to you in that situation if they were there?

We hope that throughout these next few days and weeks, you can bring some awareness to any negative voices you are carrying with you and to remember to be compassionate towards yourself. Awareness is a huge first step!

DAY 2. See the way



If you're trying to find your way to a new place, it can be difficult if you've not been there before. What you'd usually do, is check an app or a map for directions.

Think of developing new habits in a similar way. Would you start without checking where you're going or how you're going to get there?

It might sound like hard work but taking the time upfront to think about and visualise your plan, may be the difference between making progress or getting lost and giving up.

So some questions to ask yourself are:

What am I trying to achieve? What does that look like? What's the process of getting there? What does that look like? What are the milestones? When might they arise? What are the potential hurdles? How will I help keep myself on track?



Mindful Exercise

Close your eyes and think about how you would map out your journey based on the questions above. Are you able to sketch your habit map on a piece of paper? You can also write down the answers to the above to help you figure out the signposts to keep you on track.

DAY 3. Doubling-up



To start a new habit, the first thing to do is to dedicate solid time in your routine to practise it, right?

It turns out that allocating time on top of your existing routine might be the reason new habits don't tend to last. You may end up burning out and not only will you be unable to keep up the habit, it can also impact other parts of your life.

One BIG secret to building new habits is the 'STACKING' strategy or doubling-up. Doubling-up is all about combining a new habit with something already in your routine.

Here are some examples of what might be considered stacking:

- Using commuting time to read or listen to language learning material
- Flossing your teeth right after brushing them
- Meditating for the time it takes to boil an egg for breakfast
- Exercising whilst doing the housework
- Journalling once you've got into bed, before switching the lights out.

At first, it might not be immediately obvious where you can stack your new habit.



Mindful Exercise

Consider keeping a simple diary for the next few days to figure out what your current routine is and to identify potential doubling-up opportunities.

But let's take a moment...

Do you know how much time you actually need to practise this new habit of yours?

It may surprise you to realise that it's not about the amount of time you spend on your new habit... but the consistency in keeping it that will make it stick.

Take for example introducing a new meditation habit. It might be your dream to meditate daily for 30 minutes before starting work. Jumping right into a 30-minute meditation on day 1 is actually placing a pretty high expectation on yourself.

An alternative would be to start with a 3-minute meditation every other day, perhaps during your commute, then after a month, you can gradually increase this to a 10-minute meditation or perhaps stick with 3 minutes but do it daily.

A good way of looking at it is to assume that a 3-minute routine is going to be 10x easier to start implementing than a 30-minute one!

So keep in mind – double-up your new habit with a part of your existing routine and keep your expectations manageable to start with. It's a huge achievement to maintain a new habit, no matter how short you spend on it – consistency is your target.



DAY 4. Stay mindful



Having goals is a good thing. But planning too far ahead or not breaking down long-term objectives can cause us to lose sight of the here and now.

We can forget the steps we've taken to get where we are and all the things we've achieved along the way. Appreciating the present can help keep us going, especially when the road is long.

Mindfulness is the practice of noticing and bringing awareness to the present moment. It can also help to calm worrying thoughts about the past or future which we can experience when we're going through change or when we simply live our daily lives.

Being in the present can be difficult at first. You will encounter plenty of distractions like noise, sensations and runaway thoughts. When this happens, remember that it's part of the exercise, and persevere. The aim is to slowly try to be comfortable with 'being' rather than 'doing'.

 **Mindful Exercise**

Sit down for a few moments and close your eyes. Try to acknowledge your emotions without judgement. You may have the urge to suppress them, but try to be curious about them instead. Simply notice them being there and return to the present moment. Breathe and connect with your sense. Remember, there is nothing you need to do and nowhere you need to be for the next few minutes...



DAY 5. Try all the hats



So you've made a plan, started with manageable expectations, integrated a new habit into your daily routine but some of it is just not working for you.

Maybe you're not enjoying some part of it or finding some aspects too hard.

This is completely normal. Everyone's different and it's ok to adjust or change your plans. It might be a good chance to go back to your sketched habit map to look at your potential roadblocks, reflect and consider if there's an alternative.

Take journaling for example. You're just not enjoying writing down your thoughts every evening. You're exhausted and you just can't find the time or energy to do it.

Maybe you think 'I'm just not a journaling person' - that may be the case, but it may also be that the method of journaling you've been trying doesn't fit with your personality and what you enjoy.

There are other methods that you can try. Have you thought of audio journaling on your way home from work for example? What about voice recording whilst walking, driving or even cooking your evening meal?

TRY ALL THE HATS

There are usually several ways to adjust your practice to make it more enjoyable and more likely to stick.

Attempt the next exercise and see how many different hats you can try on.



Mindful Exercise

To consider different options you could put on some different hats. i.e. get into the mind of someone else and consider their perspective:

How would my grandparents have done it?

How would Apple or Google do it?

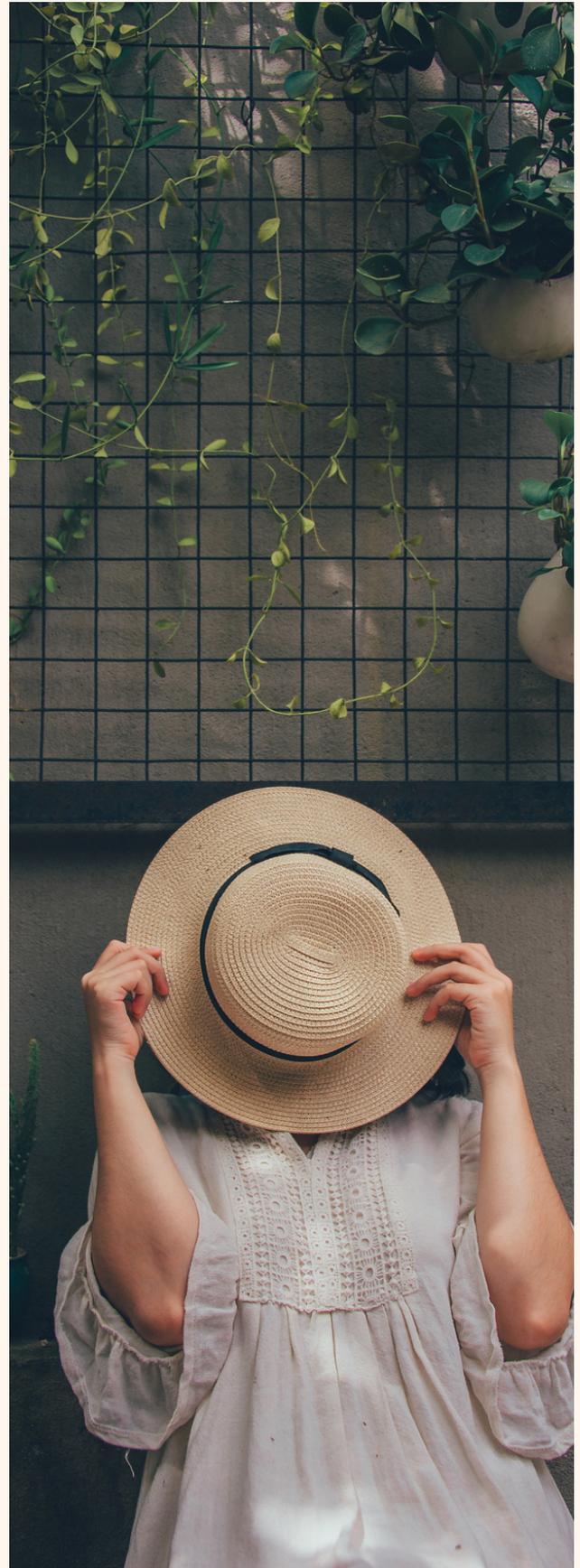
How would I do it if I had unlimited resources?

How would I do it if I had all the digital skills I could imagine?

How would I do it if I couldn't write, talk or see?

How would a child do it?

You might be surprised what different ideas you come up with...



DAY 6. Rewarding Steps



Linking habits to rewards is one of the best ways to keep them alive.

How are you planning to celebrate the small steps? Developing habits takes time and it's very likely that there won't be an 'end' to the journey. So how will you celebrate your successes and what can you look forward to along the way?

If it's a language you're learning, a reward for your progress may be attending a cultural event or meet-up related to your chosen language.

It could be something unrelated to your habit, like preparing your favourite meal or going to see a movie you've been looking forward to seeing.

Consider rewarding yourself after the first 7 days and every 7 days after that.

Small steps and small rewards work best and can become part of your self-kindness practice, recognising what you're achieving and encouraging yourself to keep going.

What's your first milestone and how are you going to celebrate it?

DAY 7. Sharing is caring



Have you ever had someone cheering you on in a race or competition? It makes you even more determined to reach the finish line, doesn't it?

Maybe you've had someone competing with you and the thrill of finishing together? Whether they're on the sidelines or right in it with you, sharing your experience with others can make all the difference.

Habits can be hard to stick and at times, persevering with them can feel lonely. Having someone with you, as a friend, supporter, champion or fan can push you towards your goal and also provide a feeling of reward.

Is there anyone who could be your self-care buddy? They could, for instance, send and receive messages from you to remind each other about your self-care commitments. This can be someone you live, work or spend time with, or even someone you don't know so well that could provide the support you both need, even if it's just being a shoulder during those difficult times.

You may find the support in communities or platforms online, where you can share your story and find others developing habits just like yours. One we've used ourselves in the past is [mentalhealthmates.co.uk](https://www.mentalhealthmates.co.uk).

Conclusion

How have you found the last 7 days? Do you feel a bit more equipped with some techniques and tools to help get cracking with that new habit of yours?

Here's a run-down of what we covered to help you as you go:

START WITH SELF-KINDNESS

- Bring awareness to your inner voice.

SEE THE WAY

- Map out your journey to visualise the process.

DOUBLING-UP

- Stack your habits with other parts of your daily routine.

STAY MINDFUL

- Notice the present moment and create space for your thoughts and feelings.

TRY ALL THE HATS

- Mix up your methods by considering doing things you may not have thought of.

REWARDING STEPS

- Link your small-step progress to rewards along the way.

SHARING IS CARING

- Share the experience with others for extra support.

CONCLUSION

Whatever your habit, pace, and progress – your experience and journey are unique. We are all different and we all have our own lives, personalities, and circumstances. Try not to be hard on yourself and remember – you're not alone. Team adbra are right here with you!

Happy Habit-ing!

Libby & Adel

We're Libby & Adel, the Founders of adbra Happiness Habits. After experiencing mental health challenges of our own, we decided to help others build resilience to life's ups and downs. We incorporated simple tools and techniques that worked for us into our range of jars, planners and cards to make building better habits easy.

We hope you've enjoyed our 7-day kick-start e-book!



7-day kick start guide

