

Examples of recipes for Tiny Habits

BJ Fogg, Ph.D. bjfogg@stanford.edu <http://bit.ly/tiny-examples> Updated: Feb 8, 2013

Follow this format to create your Tiny Habit recipes.

`"After I [existing habit/anchor], I will [new tiny behavior]"`

My list of Tiny Habits recipes below can help you to find a new behavior you want in your life. Don't limit yourself to what you see below. Let the list inspire you.

Once you identify a tiny behavior you want, you must then find where it fits in your life. Plan to do the new tiny behavior **after an extremely reliable habit** you have, what I call an "anchor."

Matching the new tiny behavior to an anchor routine is vital. You may not get this match right the first time. And that's okay. You can revise during the week until you find what works for you.

Read this list to spark ideas . . .

health routines

After I [your anchor], I will Floss one tooth (*BJ's #1 suggestion*)
After I [your anchor], I will Open my vitamin container
After I [your anchor], I will Put on one drop of sunscreen
After I [your anchor], I will Put in my retainer
After I [your anchor], I will Set out my vitamins
After I [your anchor], I will Put on my Fitbit
After I [your anchor], I will Turn off my Internet router at night

physical activity

After I [your anchor], I will Do two pushups
After I [your anchor], I will Put on my walking shoes
After I [your anchor], I will Do 3 crunches

nutrition

After I [your anchor], I will Drink a sip of water
After I [your anchor], I will Take a bite of a carrot
After I [your anchor], I will Fill a glass of water

After I [your anchor], I will Throw out one bad food item in my house
After I [your anchor], I will Write down *one* thing I ate
After I [your anchor], I will Put an apple in my bag
After I [your anchor], I will Write down one veggie I like to eat

calming / de-stressing

After I [your anchor], I will Stretch one part of my body briefly
After I [your anchor], I will Exhale and relax for 2 seconds
After I [your anchor], I will Do a quick sketch
After I [your anchor], I will Yawn to relax my jaw
After I [your anchor], I will Stretch my back
After I [your anchor], I will Turn off the ringer on my phone

learning & hobbies

After I [your anchor], I will Play 3 chords on the guitar
After I [your anchor], I will Read one sentence in a book
After I [your anchor], I will Sing a scale
After I [your anchor], I will Recite one line of poetry
After I [your anchor], I will Open my workbook

relationships

After I [your anchor], I will Kiss my wife
After I [your anchor], I will Think of one special person to call/text today
After I [your anchor], I will Text my mom
After I [your anchor], I will Get out my set of “thank you” notes
After I [your anchor], I will Give my spouse a hug

organizing

After I [your anchor], I will Set out my workout clothes
After I [your anchor], I will Think of one top priority for my day
After I [your anchor], I will Look at my to-do list
After I [your anchor], I will Plug mobile phone into charger
After I [your anchor], I will Turn on the ringer on my phone

cleaning & tidying

After I [your anchor], I will Hang up my coat
After I [your anchor], I will Wipe out sink
After I [your anchor], I will Tidy one thing in the house
After I [your anchor], I will Put dirty laundry in basket
After I [your anchor], I will Put my receipts in the basket
After I [your anchor], I will Wipe my bathroom mirror

After I [your anchor], I will Turn off lights in study
After I [your anchor], I will Clean one dish
After I [your anchor], I will Clear one item off my desk
After I [your anchor], I will Pull cover up on bed

writing

After I [your anchor], I will Write three words in my journal
After I [your anchor], I will Write one sentence

mindfulness & gratitude

After I [your anchor], I will Look up at the stars
After I [your anchor], I will Smile immediately
After I [your anchor], I will Think of one thing I'm grateful for
After I [your anchor], I will Say one thing I'm thankful for
After I [your anchor], I will Do one visualization
After I [your anchor], I will Read one verse of scripture
After I [your anchor], I will Meditate for 3 breaths
After I [your anchor], I will Do one sun salutation
After I [your anchor], I will Write down one positive word

Finding the best anchor

Hundreds of people have now told me this: ***The key to their new Tiny Habit recipes was finding an anchor that would logically trigger the new tiny behavior.***

During the week, you may need to revise your anchor. And that's okay. For now, here are pointers to help you:

1. Your anchor must be an extremely reliable habit.

I've said this, but it's here again for emphasis: Pick anchors you **always** do.

2. Your anchor must be a precise event.

A fuzzy anchor (like "after dinner" or "whenever I feel stress") doesn't work well. Make them precise: "after I close the dishwasher," "after I sit down on the train," "after I pour coffee," and so on.

3. Your anchor must match how often you want to do new tiny behavior.

If you want to do your new tiny behavior just once a day (like hanging up your coat at night), then sequence it after an anchor that happens just once a day.

If you want to do your new tiny behavior 4-7 times a day, then sequence it after an

anchor that happens 4-7 times a day in your life.

An example of twice a day

A few years ago, I decided to floss after I brush my teeth. I always brush twice a day, so now I floss twice a day. Yes, it's a bit much, but that's the habit. And I don't mind doing it twice a day. In fact, I now love flossing. (Weird, I know.)

4. Your anchor should relate to the new tiny behavior

A good anchor relates to the new behavior you want, both in theme and location. Brushing teeth is a good anchor for flossing. Both are about dental care, and both happen in the same location. In contrast, brushing your teeth would not be a good anchor for hanging up your jacket. The two behaviors don't relate in theme or in location.

To learn how to avoid common mistakes in forming recipes for Tiny Habits, see <http://bit.ly/tinyhabitreview>

Caution on exactly 30 seconds

Tiny behaviors done for exactly 30 seconds don't work well. It's too hard to time them. For example, avoid framing behaviors like this:

After I [. *your anchor* .], I will mediate for 30 seconds
better option: . . . I will meditate for 3 breaths

After I [. *your anchor* .], I will do pushups for 30 seconds
better option: . . . I will do 2 pushups

After I [. *your anchor* .], I will tidy my desk for 30 seconds
better option: . . . I will place my finger on one item that's out of place

If you've read this far, then you deserve a bonus example. My family cautioned me about sharing this example. Just too weird. But hey, let's see how it goes . . .

An example of 4-7 times per day

I wanted to do pushups throughout my day. So I formulated this Tiny Habit: **"After I pee, I will do 2 pushups."** For me, the sequence looked like this: pee, do pushups, wash hands (which was a solid habit already). This quickly became

automatic. Now I do lots more than 3 pushups after I pee. And each day I total 50 to 60 pushups, sometimes more (depending on how much water I drink!). All this was easy, thanks to finding a good anchor and slowly growing the tiny behavior.

(Um, let me know if this example is too weird . . . and I'll remove it.)