



JAMES CLEAR

Building Habits to Be the Most Efficient, Effective You

Twitter: [@JamesClear](https://twitter.com/JamesClear)

Website: JamesClear.com

Instagram: instagram.com/james_clear

Book: [Atomic Habits](#)

A little bit about James

- ❑ Author of Atomic Habits
- ❑ Creator of the Habits Academy
- ❑ A travel photographer in over 30 countries

What is a habit and what role does it serve?

- A habit is a behavior that has been repeated so that it happens without thinking.
- Can also be framed as the recurring solutions to the problems you face again and again.
- **Habits are useful because it allows your brain to solve a problem that you often face while freeing up your mind to think of other things. Like “mental shortcuts”.**
 - Stage 1 is the cue that prompts you to take an action.
 - Stage 2 is the craving where your brain makes a prediction about the problem it needs to solve.
 - Stage 3 is the response is where you actually do the action.
 - Stage 4 is the reward or the satisfaction you get from performing the habit. The reward can be the relief you get from performing the action.
- These stages begin to form a feedback loop.

The four laws of behavior change to begin a habit.

- **If you want to build good habits then you need to make the cue obvious.**
 - For example to floss more just keep the dental floss accessible so that you see it right after brushing your teeth.
 - In the classroom, we can color code items to help students see the visual cues that will help them remember to perform an action.
 - You can also do this in our digital environment by using the icons on our devices to either create or break a habit.
 - To break the habit make the cue invisible.

- **The more attractive the habit is the more likely you are to follow through on it.**
 - Use temptation bundling to pair a behavior that you want to do with one that you need to do. For example, you can ONLY get a pedicure if you answer your unread email.
 - In the classroom, we can pair activities students want to do with those we need to do.
 - Utilize your social environment to help you reinforce habits. We do certain things because the tribes that we belong to have expectations that we adhere to.
 - Join a group or tribe where the behavior you want to perform is the norm.
 - As children age, they begin to shift their imitations from their parents to their peers.
 - Students can become members of clubs or programs where their desired behavior, or the desired behavior of the peers they want to imitate, is the norm. For example, a robotics club where students build and learn to program robots.
 - **“People like us do things like this.”**
 - Parents can influence their children’s behavior by the environment they live in. What town they live in and what school they go to.
 - As teachers, we can help shape our classroom’s tribe by gamifying the environment to create sub-tribes.
 - Harry Potter “house” example to create tribes around a certain quality that you want to magnify.
 - To break the habit make it unattractive.
- **Make it easy to perform the behavior.**
 - This is the best place to start to try to build habits.
 - The two-minute rule means that you take that habit down to something you can do in two minutes. For example, do yoga four times a week begins with just taking out your yoga mat.
 - A habit has to be established before it can be improved.
 - You need to become the person who doesn’t miss performing the habit. For example, just showing up to the gym each day helps to build the habit even if it just means doing 5 pushups.
 - If it’s easy to do the more likely it is to occur.
 - The people who seem like they have the most self-control are the ones who are tempted the least.
 - To break the habit make it difficult. The more friction there is between you and the bad behavior then less likely you are to do it.
- **Make the reward satisfying so that you want to perform the action.**
 - Have some sort of pleasure or enjoyment follow the behavior.
 - Businesses do this all the time to market their product.
 - Utilize tracking and measurement to record when you perform the behavior.

- A simple x marking on the calendar can work. **“Don’t break the chain and keep going.”**
- At some point, the chain WILL be broken. Keep in mind the mantra **“never miss twice”**. Don’t let a single mistake turn into breaking the habit and derail you. The spiral of repeated mistakes is what makes you break the streak.
 - If you want your kids to brush their teeth have a marble jar with two different colored marbles in the jar. If they pull out a red one they get a verbal “good job” but if they pull out a blue one they get some sort of reward.
- To break the habit make it unsatisfying.

How can we create good habits in the classroom?

- **Ask yourself “Are there things I can do in the classroom to create good habits without actually reminding them?”**
- Think about how your classroom is designed and try to make it easier for you and your students to create good habits.
- If we want our students to be less dependent on us then we need to provide them with the opportunity to be reminded of what to do by environment design.
- Give students the toolkit to create their own environment that will help them build the habits that they want.
- The “Goldilocks rule” states that we are motivated most in our just right level of difficulty.
 - The key to learning is the ability to be curious.
 - Keep our students in the Goldilocks zone to keep them curious and engaged.
 - We can utilize technology in the classroom to keep each student in their own Goldilocks zone.
 - Video games do this by providing feedback based on how you are doing in the game.
 - This doesn’t mean that we turn an educational app into a video game. Instead, we use what makes a video game so engaging and exciting and apply that to education.
 - Examples of game-based learning apps.
 - [Classcraft](#)
 - [Poptropica](#)
 - [Prodigy](#)

Resources:

- [The Goldilocks Rule: How to Stay Motivated in Life and Business](#)
- [The Habits Guide: How to Build Good Habits and Break Bad Ones](#)
- All articles from James organized by subject jamesclear.com/articles

Related posts on the Ditch That Textbook blog:

- [Gamification: How Clash of Clans changed my class](#)