Break Up With Your Bad Habits

Habits can be hard to break. Make it easier with these great tools for change.

A habit is an action that you have performed so often that it becomes almost an involuntary response. You don’t even think about doing it! If you consider this habit to be undesirable then it may labeled as a "bad habit." Changing “bad habits” can be hard work, but your goal can be achieved by thinking about your actions and gaining the ability to make better choices.

Step 1: What’s the Payoff?
Determine why the bad habit is so appealing. Think about what you’re gaining by performing your habit. Example: I buy fast food on my way home from work. The payoff is that I’ll have all evening to watch TV.

"Bad habits are like a comfortable bed, easy to get into, but hard to get out of." - Anonymous

Step 2: What’s the Trade Off?
Think about what you’re losing by engaging in your bad habit. Example: Because I eat fast food for dinner all the time, I’ve gained a lot of weight and my cholesterol has increased. In order to have more time to watch TV, I have become unhealthy and unhappy. I have lost my good health.

Step 3: Time to Make a Change
Which do you value more... the Pay Off or the Trade Off? The action is no longer unconscious so you have the power to make a better choice. Example: I value my health more than watching TV.
**Step 4: Substitute Better Behaviors**

Substitute a new, healthier behavior for your old, bad habit. You will feel better about yourself when you choose the healthier behavior.

**Example:** Plan ahead so you can cook dinner instead of buying fast food every night. If you plan ahead, you can cook dinner quickly and still be able to watch TV.

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**Step 5: Stick With It**

Going back to your bad habit will only make you feel guilty. Each time you think about sinking back into your old ways, you’ll remember that you are trading that behavior for a better one. You will be forced to make a decision that makes you feel good or one that makes you feel bad.

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**The 3 C’s of Busting Bad Habits**

**Clarity:** Be extremely clear about the what, why and how of your intended change.

**Commitment:** Without commitment there is doubt, dithering, and hesitation.

**Consistency:** Throughout each step of your behavior change, choose the healthy option.

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**Are you ready to break a bad habit?**

One of my bad habits is ________________________________

I’m gaining ________________________________ by performing my bad habit.

A consequence for performing my bad habit is ________________________________ ________________________________

Which is more important to me? ________________________________

I can ________________________________ instead of perform my bad habit.