Blue Cross
VIRTUAL WELL-BEING℠

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Breaking behaviors into tiny habits

When adding a new behavior, you may have more success if you break it into tiny habits. Then, find a current habit that will prompt you to do the new tiny habit. Eventually, you'll increase the tiny habit until you reach your original goal.

1. Identify the habit you want to develop.
2. Create a starter step that will remind you to do the activity.
3. Shrink the behavior into a habit that is manageable to do every day.
4. Attach it to a current habit.
5. Increase time, distance and amount, for example, until you're meeting the bigger habit.

Here are examples of how to break a habit into smaller habits and attach it to a current habit.

Habit to develop	Starter step	Scale back the habit	Current habit
Read 50 pages daily.	Place book next to favorite chair.	Read two pages a day.	I will read two pages before I watch the evening news.
Drink 48 ounces of water daily.	Fill a glass with water and place next to bed.	Drink a sip of water.	I will take a sip of water when I make my bed in the morning.
Meditate for ten minutes daily.	Take meditation pillow out.	Meditate for three minutes.	I will meditate for three minutes after I wash my face at night.
Wash dishes after every meal.	Open the dishwasher.	Clear the table after every meal.	I will put my dishes in the washer after I eat.
Take vitamins daily.	Put vitamins in a small bowl.	Take one vitamin.	I will take a vitamin after I brush my teeth in the morning.
Run three miles four times a week.	Place shoes by the door.	Walk for five minutes.	I will walk for five minutes when I get the mail.

Write your own habits in the table below and use the examples above to identify and write your starter step and tiny habit.

Habit to develop	Starter step	Scale back the habit	Current habit

Source: Tiny Habits: The Small Changes that Change Everything by BJ Fogg, PhD