

7 Tiny Habits That Lead To Huge Results

Each of these things added up over long periods of time can have a tremendous impact on who you are.



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IMAGE: Getty Images



The way I think about personal development and designing the life I want to live is very similar to investing.

Imagine that every choice you make in life is associated to a "bucket." Brushing your teeth goes in the "personal hygiene bucket." Working on your novel goes in the "writing" or "creativity" bucket. Going to the gym goes in the "health" bucket. And so you have these five or six or ten primary buckets that make up how you live your life: Work, Creativity, Health, Sleep, Social Life, Family, etc.

Whenever you spend time doing something, anything, that is time you are investing into that "bucket." This is a very simple way to visualize the concept of practice time and the "10,000 hours it takes to master something." The more time you put into a bucket, the more you are investing. The more you invest, the more you "have." And in theory, the more you have of that skill, the better you are.

Where a lot of people go wrong, whether it be with their own goals or even the menial tasks that tend to occupy a workplace, is they feel like the penny doesn't matter. We think that the tiniest of tasks or habits don't matter.

But just like investing, over time those pennies add up.

Every little choice does matter, because every choice is time (money) in a "bucket."

If you want to make big changes in your life, or accomplish big goals, or do big things, then you have to realize the importance of the tiny details along the way. After all, a journey is comprised of a 1,000 little steps.

Habit #1: Wake Up When You Say You're Going To Wake Up

Setting the alarm is only half the battle. The real purpose of setting an alarm and then getting out of bed when it goes off is to keep that first promise of the day. When you set that alarm the night before, you are making a promise that you will get up at that time. If you then wake up and ignore it, you are starting your day already on the wrong foot. You broke the first promise to yourself.

This isn't about getting up on time. This is about practicing the habit of doing what you say you're going to do. And what better way to practice than first thing every morning?

Habit #2: Write Down 10 Ideas Per Day

This is a habit I stole from [James Altucher](#) on Quora. Since implementing it into my life, I now have the tough challenge of choosing from *too many* ideas.

Coming up with great ideas is a muscle, and the act of creating actionable ideas stretches and flexes that muscle in a way that keeps it healthy and fresh. Carry a journal with you, or make use of the notepad on your phone and throughout the day jot down ideas that come to mind. There is something about writing it down that makes the brain feel like the idea was acknowledged.

Do this for a couple days and you'll see. You'll be swimming in great ideas.

Habit #3: Eat A Healthy Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

I can't stress this enough. There is always time to eat, and if there isn't time to eat then something is out of balance and you've got bigger problems coming. The reason why making time to eat is so important is because personal health comes above everything. If you don't, then at some point you're going to have to play damage control and that's going to be even more of a challenge. It's a lot easier to be preventative with your health rather than reactionary.

During breakfast, use that time to read. During lunch, use that time to catch up with someone, maybe make it a business lunch. During dinner, see your loved ones, your friends and family. It isn't that big of a time investment, but it goes a long way to keeping you healthy and free of stress.

Habit #4: Read For 30 Minutes Every Day

People vastly underestimate how quickly you can get through a book. 20-30 minutes of reading per day can get you through an average length book in about two weeks. That's two books per month, 24 books in a year. Imagine how much more you would know if you read 24 more books in a year!

30 minutes is not a lot of time. You could do that on the train. You could do that while waiting in line at the grocery store. Maybe you have to piecemeal ten minutes here and twenty minutes there, but 30 minutes of reading per day is essential to keeping your brain fresh and the knowledge flowing. After all, if you're ever stuck on a project, creative or not, the first question I would ask is, "What are you reading?"

Always be studying. Make time to read.

Habit #5: Get Back In Your Body

Physical health is crucial to maintaining a clear head and an open mind. Especially if your work involves staring at a screen for eight to ten hours per day, it is essential that you take at least thirty minutes to an hour to get back in your body--whether that's through yoga, the gym, boxing, running, a long walk, etc.

This goes back to the idea that doing a little bit each day to prevent any health concerns from arising is a far more effective strategy than having to fix everything once you're already off the deep end.

And if you need proof, well: "Those who exercise regularly are better at creative thinking. This result was determined by Leiden cognitive psychologist, Lorenza Colzato. She determined that regular exercisers fared better on creativity tests than did non-exercisers."

Habit #6: Meditate For 15 Minutes

Call this whatever you'd like, whether it be meditation or sitting quietly or journaling. The point is, you need to make time to get in touch with your thoughts.

Aside from the fact that we know meditation is a popular habit among the outrageously successful, I can tell you first hand that no daily habit has had a bigger impact on my life than meditation.

The point of this habit is to be aware of what is bothering you, or what you're feeling good about, or what needs to be addressed, so that you can get a clear sense of what you need to do next. It's almost like seeing into the future. If you can address the problem before it spirals out of control, you've saved yourself a lot of time and energy. Or, if you find yourself feeling great and overly ambitious, now might be a good time to take more risks.

Check in with yourself. 15 minutes each day isn't asking that much, is it?

Habit #7: Reflect Before Bed

This is my favorite habit, because you can see its impact the very next day.

Each night before bed, take five minutes to reflect. Jot down in a journal (writing here is important) a few things that went particularly well, and then write down a few things you'd like to do differently tomorrow.

The reason why this is so effective is it really keeps you honest with yourself. It allows you to take a moment and pat yourself on the back for the most immediate accomplishment, and it also keeps you on a growth edge, always looking for the next way to improve.

Without reflection, you have no real direction as to where to head next.

5 minutes before bed is all you need.

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