



# The 66-day habit tracker

A grid sized to what the research actually found — and the six rules that decide whether you fill it in.

The '21 days to form a habit' number has no study behind it. The one that does — Lally and colleagues tracking 96 people building a daily habit — found that automaticity plateaued after a median of 66 days, with a range from 18 to 254. Simple habits in a stable context formed fastest; missing a single day made no difference; missing many did.

So this tracker is 66 days long, holds up to three habits, and puts the six findings that matter on the first page — small, anchored, planned, never missed twice, tracked, and started with a tick already in the box. The last page is a weekly reflection, because the tracker is not the habit; the habit is what you learn from the tracker.

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## Six rules the research supports

Read these before you write a habit in. The rule most people break is the first one.

- ☐ Make it smaller than you think. In the study, habits formed by repeating a simple action in a stable context; complex behaviours took far longer, and some never became automatic. <sup>[1][2]</sup>
- ☐ Attach it to something you already do — 'after I brush my teeth', 'when the kettle boils'. Habits are cued by context, not by willpower. <sup>[3]</sup>
- ☐ Write an if-then plan for the obstacle you can already predict. Implementation intentions have a medium-to-large effect on follow-through across nearly a hundred studies. <sup>[4]</sup>
- ☐ Never miss twice. A single missed day did not derail habit formation in the research; a string of them did. <sup>[1]</sup>
- ☐ Tick the box every day. Self-monitoring is one of the most consistent predictors of success in the weight-loss literature. <sup>[5]</sup>
- ☐ Start with today already ticked. People who are given visible progress toward a goal put in more effort to finish it. <sup>[6]</sup>

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## A menu of small habits

One from this list, or your own. Pick something you could do on your worst day.

- ☐ Write three lines about the day.
- ☐ Lights out at the same time.
- ☐ A ten-minute walk after lunch.
- ☐ Protein with breakfast.
- ☐ Kitchen closed after dinner — a 12-hour overnight fast.

☐ Five minutes of breathing or meditation.

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☐ Ten minutes of daylight before 10:00.

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☐ One message to someone you care about.

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# The 66-day grid

Write the habit as 'After I ..., I will ...'. Tick the day you did it. Day 1 is today — tick it now.

Habit 1 — after I ....., I will .....

|         |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |
|---------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Week 1  | 1 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 2 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 3 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 4 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 5 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 6 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 7 <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| Week 2  | 8 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 9 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 10 <input type="checkbox"/> | 11 <input type="checkbox"/> | 12 <input type="checkbox"/> | 13 <input type="checkbox"/> | 14 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 3  | 15 <input type="checkbox"/> | 16 <input type="checkbox"/> | 17 <input type="checkbox"/> | 18 <input type="checkbox"/> | 19 <input type="checkbox"/> | 20 <input type="checkbox"/> | 21 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 4  | 22 <input type="checkbox"/> | 23 <input type="checkbox"/> | 24 <input type="checkbox"/> | 25 <input type="checkbox"/> | 26 <input type="checkbox"/> | 27 <input type="checkbox"/> | 28 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 5  | 29 <input type="checkbox"/> | 30 <input type="checkbox"/> | 31 <input type="checkbox"/> | 32 <input type="checkbox"/> | 33 <input type="checkbox"/> | 34 <input type="checkbox"/> | 35 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 6  | 36 <input type="checkbox"/> | 37 <input type="checkbox"/> | 38 <input type="checkbox"/> | 39 <input type="checkbox"/> | 40 <input type="checkbox"/> | 41 <input type="checkbox"/> | 42 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 7  | 43 <input type="checkbox"/> | 44 <input type="checkbox"/> | 45 <input type="checkbox"/> | 46 <input type="checkbox"/> | 47 <input type="checkbox"/> | 48 <input type="checkbox"/> | 49 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 8  | 50 <input type="checkbox"/> | 51 <input type="checkbox"/> | 52 <input type="checkbox"/> | 53 <input type="checkbox"/> | 54 <input type="checkbox"/> | 55 <input type="checkbox"/> | 56 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 9  | 57 <input type="checkbox"/> | 58 <input type="checkbox"/> | 59 <input type="checkbox"/> | 60 <input type="checkbox"/> | 61 <input type="checkbox"/> | 62 <input type="checkbox"/> | 63 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 10 | 64 <input type="checkbox"/> | 65 <input type="checkbox"/> | 66 <input type="checkbox"/> |                             |                             |                             |                             |

Habit 2 — after I ....., I will .....

|         |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |
|---------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Week 1  | 1 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 2 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 3 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 4 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 5 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 6 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 7 <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| Week 2  | 8 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 9 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 10 <input type="checkbox"/> | 11 <input type="checkbox"/> | 12 <input type="checkbox"/> | 13 <input type="checkbox"/> | 14 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 3  | 15 <input type="checkbox"/> | 16 <input type="checkbox"/> | 17 <input type="checkbox"/> | 18 <input type="checkbox"/> | 19 <input type="checkbox"/> | 20 <input type="checkbox"/> | 21 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 4  | 22 <input type="checkbox"/> | 23 <input type="checkbox"/> | 24 <input type="checkbox"/> | 25 <input type="checkbox"/> | 26 <input type="checkbox"/> | 27 <input type="checkbox"/> | 28 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 5  | 29 <input type="checkbox"/> | 30 <input type="checkbox"/> | 31 <input type="checkbox"/> | 32 <input type="checkbox"/> | 33 <input type="checkbox"/> | 34 <input type="checkbox"/> | 35 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 6  | 36 <input type="checkbox"/> | 37 <input type="checkbox"/> | 38 <input type="checkbox"/> | 39 <input type="checkbox"/> | 40 <input type="checkbox"/> | 41 <input type="checkbox"/> | 42 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 7  | 43 <input type="checkbox"/> | 44 <input type="checkbox"/> | 45 <input type="checkbox"/> | 46 <input type="checkbox"/> | 47 <input type="checkbox"/> | 48 <input type="checkbox"/> | 49 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 8  | 50 <input type="checkbox"/> | 51 <input type="checkbox"/> | 52 <input type="checkbox"/> | 53 <input type="checkbox"/> | 54 <input type="checkbox"/> | 55 <input type="checkbox"/> | 56 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 9  | 57 <input type="checkbox"/> | 58 <input type="checkbox"/> | 59 <input type="checkbox"/> | 60 <input type="checkbox"/> | 61 <input type="checkbox"/> | 62 <input type="checkbox"/> | 63 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 10 | 64 <input type="checkbox"/> | 65 <input type="checkbox"/> | 66 <input type="checkbox"/> |                             |                             |                             |                             |

Habit 3 — after I ....., I will .....

|         |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |                             |
|---------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Week 1  | 1 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 2 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 3 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 4 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 5 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 6 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 7 <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| Week 2  | 8 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 9 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 10 <input type="checkbox"/> | 11 <input type="checkbox"/> | 12 <input type="checkbox"/> | 13 <input type="checkbox"/> | 14 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 3  | 15 <input type="checkbox"/> | 16 <input type="checkbox"/> | 17 <input type="checkbox"/> | 18 <input type="checkbox"/> | 19 <input type="checkbox"/> | 20 <input type="checkbox"/> | 21 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 4  | 22 <input type="checkbox"/> | 23 <input type="checkbox"/> | 24 <input type="checkbox"/> | 25 <input type="checkbox"/> | 26 <input type="checkbox"/> | 27 <input type="checkbox"/> | 28 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 5  | 29 <input type="checkbox"/> | 30 <input type="checkbox"/> | 31 <input type="checkbox"/> | 32 <input type="checkbox"/> | 33 <input type="checkbox"/> | 34 <input type="checkbox"/> | 35 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 6  | 36 <input type="checkbox"/> | 37 <input type="checkbox"/> | 38 <input type="checkbox"/> | 39 <input type="checkbox"/> | 40 <input type="checkbox"/> | 41 <input type="checkbox"/> | 42 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 7  | 43 <input type="checkbox"/> | 44 <input type="checkbox"/> | 45 <input type="checkbox"/> | 46 <input type="checkbox"/> | 47 <input type="checkbox"/> | 48 <input type="checkbox"/> | 49 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 8  | 50 <input type="checkbox"/> | 51 <input type="checkbox"/> | 52 <input type="checkbox"/> | 53 <input type="checkbox"/> | 54 <input type="checkbox"/> | 55 <input type="checkbox"/> | 56 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 9  | 57 <input type="checkbox"/> | 58 <input type="checkbox"/> | 59 <input type="checkbox"/> | 60 <input type="checkbox"/> | 61 <input type="checkbox"/> | 62 <input type="checkbox"/> | 63 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Week 10 | 64 <input type="checkbox"/> | 65 <input type="checkbox"/> | 66 <input type="checkbox"/> |                             |                             |                             |                             |

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## Weekly reflection

Two minutes on Sunday. The third column is the only one that has to be filled in.

|         | What made it easy? | What got in the way? | One change for next week |
|---------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Week 1  |                    |                      |                          |
| Week 2  |                    |                      |                          |
| Week 3  |                    |                      |                          |
| Week 4  |                    |                      |                          |
| Week 5  |                    |                      |                          |
| Week 6  |                    |                      |                          |
| Week 7  |                    |                      |                          |
| Week 8  |                    |                      |                          |
| Week 9  |                    |                      |                          |
| Week 10 |                    |                      |                          |

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## How to use it

- 1 Choose one to three habits — no more — and make each one smaller than feels worthwhile. 'Three lines', not 'journal'.
- 2 Write each as an anchor: after an existing routine, the tiny action. Then one if-then plan for the obstacle you already know about.
- 3 Tick day 1 now. Then tick every day; if you miss one, the only rule is not to miss the next.
- 4 Every Sunday, fill in the reflection row. The 'one change' column is where the tracker earns its keep.
- 5 In Lamplit, logging the same habit — a journal entry, a sleep, a walk, a fast — keeps the streak for you, unlocks achievements, and grows your Digital Twin. The app is the tracker that reminds you.

### Prefer your phone to paper?

The same habit streak is built into Lamplit, free: it logs the entries for you and keeps sleep, mood, food and training in one place. Web, iPhone, Android, Apple Watch and Wear OS.

**lamplit.ai — free account, no credit card**

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## Sources

Where an item rests on a specific source, the number in brackets points to it. Every source is linked.

1. Lally, P., van Jaarsveld, C.H.M., Potts, H.W.W. & Wardle, J. (2010). How are habits formed: modelling habit formation in the real world. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 40(6), 998–1009. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.674>

2. Gardner, B., Lally, P. & Wardle, J. (2012). Making health habitual: the psychology of 'habit-formation' and general practice. *British Journal of General Practice*, 62(605), 664–666. <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp12X659466>
3. Wood, W. & Neal, D.T. (2007). A new look at habits and the habit-goal interface. *Psychological Review*, 114(4), 843–863. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.114.4.843>
4. Gollwitzer, P.M. & Sheeran, P. (2006). Implementation intentions and goal achievement: a meta-analysis of effects and processes. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 38, 69–119. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(06\)38002-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(06)38002-1)
5. Burke, L.E., Wang, J. & Seivick, M.A. (2011). Self-monitoring in weight loss: a systematic review of the literature. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 111(1), 92–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jada.2010.10.008>
6. Nunes, J.C. & Drèze, X. (2006). The endowed progress effect: how artificial advancement increases effort. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(4), 504–512. <https://doi.org/10.1086/500480>

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This tracker supports everyday habits and is not a treatment for any condition. If a habit you are trying to build or break involves medication, disordered eating, or substance use, work with a clinician.