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Building New Habits

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Establishing a nightly routine, morning routine, as well as making some changes to your lifestyle, are the things you've learned to do so far. We're aware that all of this is easier said than done. That's why it's fitting to discuss how to form new habits and what it takes to do so.

Certainly, you've heard that it takes 21 days to form a new habit, right? Well, that's a myth. This famous saying has been refuted several times by scientific studies, and, in fact, some studies suggest that the habit-making mark is around two months.

However, there's no absolute truth when it comes to forming a new habit. The time it takes for you to perform an activity automatically, depend largely on the activity itself, as well as on your personal traits.

The banner features the Explorable logo and the text "Quiz Time!". Below the logo are three quiz cards:

- Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2** (Image: Roller skates)
- Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2** (Image: Colored pencils)
- Quiz: Flags in Europe** (Image: Ferris wheel)

[See all quizzes =>](#)

Choose Your Goals Wisely

From a psychological standpoint, it is vastly different to set a goal to exercise 15 minutes a day, compared to the goal of running a 5K every morning; or to drink a glass of water upon waking up, compared to 2-3 liters per day. If you set realistic goals and break them up into a small step that doesn't overwhelm you, you'll stay motivated.

Setting goals that seem possible will help you keep your resolutions and, eventually, build new habits. That way you won't feel defeated, and your willpower will become strengthened.

The logic behind this is very simple: it's still better to take small steps towards a bigger goal than set a great goal and not move towards it at all.

In Regards to Sleep

The changes and new habits you've learned about here, have been designed to help you cope with your sleep disorder in a healthy way. Collectively, they're an intense solution that requires your focus, time, and determination. You have to gather a lot of willpower and make substantial changes to your life, for your dysfunctional sleep patterns to become healthy.

We strongly recommend that you do your best to push through at least a month of the practices you've learned. After that, you can choose the techniques that helped you the most and incorporated them into your life permanently.

Not everything is equally useful for everybody. If applying progressive muscle relaxation works wonders for you, a friend of yours may benefit more from avoiding electronics around bedtime. After at least a month has passed, extract what works best for you personally.

Be Prepared

When you start out something new, make sure you are mentally prepared. There's really not much to explain here, just remember not to self-sabotage by making excuses, such as "I was going to start my new routine today but I've got a party so I won't be able to wake up early tomorrow" or "I'll follow this guide, but I won't do the part about turning my computer off at night...I need to check my accounts".

Remember that the only person you are doing this for is yourself. It is up to you whether you want to live a better life or not – parties and accounts will still be there when you sleep better, and you'd be able to enjoy them significantly more.

Keep Track of Your Progress

You can do this with the help of the Sleep Journal, a file on your computer, a chart, or whatever else you find visually appealing and effective. If you have a visual representation of the days you've taken steps towards your ultimate goal, you're more likely to feel motivated and not break your chain of progress.

One of the most beneficial aspects of tracking your progress is that after a while you will be able to go back and find the cognitive and behavioral patterns, standing between you and a good night's sleep. Once you have identified those, you won't have to repeat the same mistakes again.

Celebrate!

No matter how small you think your goals or achievements may be - celebrate your accomplishments and remind yourself that things are as dire as they once seemed. It is crucial to celebrate with behaviors that endorse your newly learned habits, rather than challenge them.

For instance, a fabulous way to celebrate would be to enroll in yoga class, get a new piece of clothing, treat yourself to a trip or a new sport, etc. However, a counterproductive way to celebrate would be to stay out all night, consuming a lot of alcohol, or to indulge in unhealthy foods, since these behaviors go against what you've learned you should do to cope with your sleep disorder.

Manage your goals one step a time, celebrate even the smallest of achievements, while still striving for more - that is plenty.

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