



MEMBER UPDATE

ReFresh

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Happy New Year!

Tiny Steps to Positive Change

We wanted to start the 2022 ReFresh series with **an essential topic** that helps you incorporate any of the health and wellness behaviours you have read about in ReFresh that you want to incorporate into your daily life. Our tip for 2022 is: the practice of **micro-behaviours**.

For those of you who prefer to listen versus read, check out [this podcast](#) with great tips on how to establish micro-habits. This podcast features **BJ Fogg**, a behavior scientist at Stanford University and author of the book [*Tiny Habits: The Small Changes That Change Everything*](#).

What are Micro Behaviours?

New Year resolutions often fizzle out due to lofty goals; they are too hard to achieve or frustrating to maintain, leading us to run out of steam and motivation.

A micro-behaviour (or micro-habit) is a small, simple action that doesn't require much motivation, but will help build up to achieving a larger goal. This happens because of an interesting psychological phenomenon called **behavioral momentum**.

Once you start practicing a new behaviour or habit, behavioural momentum compels your mind to continue the behaviour because there is a reinforcing outcome. This can be a good or a bad habit; you can keep moving down a bad path (like overeating) just like you can stay on a good one (like flossing daily).

You can use micro-habits to build toward a bigger goal and use behavioral momentum to your advantage. Small 'feel good' successes are the core motivator to ongoing behaviour change. It is these **positive emotions** that have the biggest influence on **rewiring your brain to sustain good habits!** Include your micro habit(s) into your **daily** schedule so they become part of your 'brain muscle' memory.

The best part – it takes significantly less mental effort to commit to the micro-habit than it does for the larger behavioural goal.

Key Takeaways from BJ Fogg's Podcast

We need **3 things** to occur at the same time for a new behaviour to happen:

1. **Motivation** to do the behaviour
2. **Ability** to do behaviour
3. **A prompt** that reminds you to perform the behaviour.

Keep the Micro-Habit as Simple and Tiny as Possible

The challenge is that the harder the behaviour, the more motivation you need. Therefore, the trick is to make the behaviour as easy as possible, so it does not require the same level of motivation as a big, aspirational goal.

Any new habit you seek to adopt can be scaled back into tiny micro habits. e.g.

- Simply tidy up one item, instead of a goal to tidy the entire house.
- Start meditating for 30 – 60 seconds a day, instead of meditating 30 minutes a day.
- Modify your goal of reading more each week to reading a paragraph or page a day.

Do the habit where it seems to fit best in your routine.

- Piggy-back on a daily task such meditating for your 30 – 60 seconds while you wait for your coffee to brew in the morning.
- Read your paragraph or page a day when you brush your teeth.

- You can meditate or read more than you want – but simply set the daily habit to be tiny. This makes it easier to have success.

Link a Positive Emotion to the Habit

This is **CRITICAL** for behavioural momentum to work.

e.g. When you perform the desired habit, associate it with a positive emotion; have a small celebration. It could be a thumbs up to yourself, a verbal “Yippee”, or happy song or sound, whatever feels good to you.

Some of us may find this celebration difficult because we are more likely to beat ourselves up over poor habits or missed behaviours. Don’t we deserve to be positive when we actually perform the habit? Find some small celebration you can do after you perform the habit. This is the key to success! Why? As BJ Fogg says:

“Strength of habit correlates with repetition, but repetition does not cause habit to form. It is the emotion your brain connects with the behaviour that creates change.”

You can always track your progress but keep it simple. Use a “yes list” where you write down the desired micro habit, and under each date simply note a Y or N to indicate if you completed the task. Once you’ve accrued several weeks of Ys, you can increase your micro-habit by a small increment, say 10%. Continue these small adjustments until the new habit is part of your muscle memory.

Start small, even tiny, and soon you will see that you are progressing to achieve big results!

Sources

Change Becomes You | [Using Micro-Behaviors to Promote Our Personal Growth](#)

Harvard Business Review | [Focus on “Microhabits” to Change Your Behavior](#)

Make Use Of | [How to Use Micro Habits and Spark Massive Personal Change](#)

Ving | [3 Methods you can Apply Today to Improve Your Natural Micro-Behaviours](#)

For a good read on celebrating organizational progress, check out the book: *The Progress Principle: Using Small Wins to Ignite Joy, Engagement, and Creativity at Work* by Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer.