

Most of us have at least one bad habit. Some habits — like nail biting, throat clearing and knuckle cracking — are irritating to the people around you, while others — like smoking — can pose serious health risks.

It may seem nearly impossible, but you **CAN** break bad habits. All it takes is determination and willpower.

Step 1: Be conscious of what you're doing

Figure out when — and why — you bite your nails, crack your knuckles or engage in any other bad habit. If you are aware of when you do it and how you feel when you do it, you may be able to figure out why you are doing it — and be able to stop.

Step 2: Put it in writing

Keep a journal and note what is happening when you crack your knuckles, for example. Write down your emotions and what goes through your head while you do the bad habit. After a week, check to see if there are patterns that point to a trigger, such as **anxiety** or **boredom**.

Next, write a list of the pros and cons of this behaviour, and record how many times you do the behaviour.

Step 3: Bait and switch

Once you're aware when and why you engage in your bad habit, it's time to find a not-as-annoying temporary or permanent replacement for it:

- Chew gum instead of biting your nails
- Exhale slowly when you have the urge to clear your throat
- Doodle or stroke the fabric of your sleeves instead of cracking your knuckles

Don't give up! It takes time to break a bad habit, so be patient and keep trying.

TIP OF THE DAY:

**BREAKING BAD
{HABITS}**

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