HealthyNaija

ATOMIC HABITS

Recommendations For Your New Health Habits

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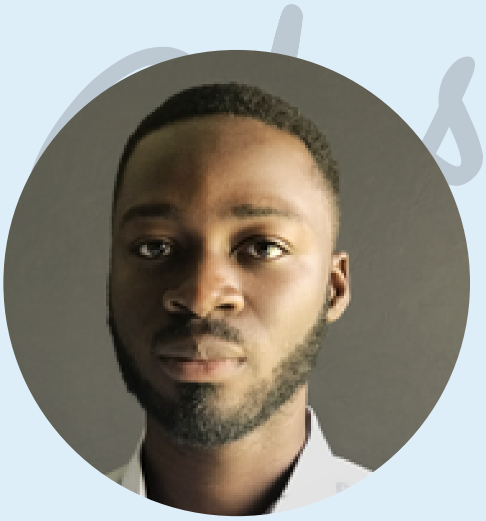

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Team Lead’s Note

We are truly excited about this year and the numerous projects we are working on all in a bid to multiply the brand value we offer to you. As a team, we have immersed ourselves in learning and gaining insights that help us get more productive.

New Habits are the life-wire of behavioural change and the book “Atomic Habits” sheds light on a lot in this regard especially how to bypass the inertia associated with imbibing better habits (Especially healthy ones)

This is the focus of our first publication this month. Do enjoy and share with those you care about.

Cheers to an awesome year!

What's Trending

The most common health goals people set at the beginning of the year revolve around weight loss and improved physical fitness. Most of the habits we seek to acquire have these goals, as the end game. Those who work in the fitness industry-especially gym operators will acknowledge that there is a spike in gym membership subscriptions in January but then a good number of such subscribers lose steam before the end of the 1st quarter.

AN OVERLOOKED AREA - MENTAL HEALTH

Does it seem strange that someone would set a mental health goal? Everyone is more aware of the importance of mental health but have we stepped up to the point of setting goals, on how we want our mental health to look like. Keep reading till the end for more

WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

At the beginning of the year a good number of people set goals and health goals usually find their ways somewhere in those grandiose plans. Goals are set for various reasons based on individual needs. For example someone who is obviously overweight would most likely want to set a weight loss goal. Interestingly what really makes such goals possible is the daily action in the form of habits.

Do you have some goals drawn up yet?

If not, now is a good time to do so. When you don't have a goal, how do you measure success?

In-house, to begin the year our team is currently reading the book "Atomic Habits" and there are numerous insights, many of them scientifically proven that are capable of making behaviour change through one good habit at a time.

5 Proven Hacks That Can Help You Integrate New Habits In Your Life

Habit Stacking

Here you pair your new habit with another habit you already do effortlessly for example just before I log on to twitter I will drink some water. You could even infuse a new habit in between two habits you already do effortlessly.

Make it Attractive

Find a way to reward yourself with something you naturally love to do for example, if I exercise consistently this week I will reward myself with a ticket to the movies or any money I would have used to buy an unhealthy meal I am addicted to is put aside in an account for a nice footwear (say I am a sucker for nice kicks).

Habit Tracking

As human beings we love to keep score and that makes us feel in charge, remember how fulfilling it feels to tick an item off our to-do list. This can apply to habits as well. For instance, any day I go without taking soda I tick it on my calendar. A streak of consistent ticks definitely feels good.

Make It Easy

Many times we underestimate the power of little incremental progress overtime, making it easy means starting with what we can easily do while increasing gradually and consistently. Rather than starting with 30 minutes of exercise, how about we start with 5 minutes and increase every week.

Accountability Partners

These people we share our journey of change with, they can be colleagues, friends, or family but they simply keep us in check. We surely will love them to see us as reliable and capable of keeping our word. Some people take extreme steps such as asking their accountability partners to take tangible money from them when they default.

Our Recommendations

When it comes to general health and well-being certain habits are bound to produce good results no matter what goal you have for your health:

- Drink water first thing in the morning
- Take at least one fruit a day
- Engage in some form of physical activity intentionally
- Eat breakfast before 8:00 AM
- Cut down drastically on soft drinks if you can't totally avoid them
- Meditate Daily (At least 15 Minutes)

Because we are being as practical as possible the following actions help make the habits listed above easier to follow.

- **Keeping a bottle of water by your bedside at night increases the odds that you will drink water first thing in the morning.**
- **Buying some fruits weekly and putting in your fridge will most likely make you take at least one daily.**
- **Parking your car, a distance from your office ensures you get some walk time before and after work especially if your job keeps you in one place. Spending your money on a bicycle will often and not encourage you to ride it.**
- **Planning your breakfast, the night before makes it easier to have a good breakfast early the next morning.**
- **Keeping your phone from the bedroom when about to sleep might just help you get that 15 mins of meditation daily you struggle to keep to.**

Back to Mental Health

A mental health goal seeks to ensure that we are at our best mentally at all times. That way we are productive on our jobs and able to enjoy social interaction with friends and family. Setting a mental health goal starts with some form of introspection.

What are the things that genuinely excite me?
Sports, outings, volunteering, writing/reading whatever it is

Who are the people that exude positive energy around me and vice versa?

What are the situations that weigh me down?

The goal is simple, Number 3 is a constant as there will always be situations as such but integrating number one and two sufficiently into your life is the buffer you need. Waiting till you are mentally down before seeking out the mood lifting activities or persons isn't effective. Rather embrace those positive interactions and relationships well enough that it becomes easier to continue them even when a bad situation pops up.

It's not news that more physical interaction and less social media is good for our mental health so incorporating that into your mental health goals is very effective but ensure you replace that social media time with activities that lift your spirits.

Mental Health Goals - Sample Habits

- Track my screen time and ensure not more than 2 hours on social media
- Incorporate at least one of the activities that genuinely excite me into my daily routine
- Ensure interaction with at least one of the people that exude positive energy around me
- Make someone’s day every single day.

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