

Four weeks. Three habits. *The smallest honest version of each.*

Summer takes the routine apart: the training slides, bedtime drifts an hour and never comes back. This is the rebuild — one addition per week, in an order where each step makes the next one cheaper. It is on paper because paper does not need an account.

WEEK

1

A fixed wake time — including weekends

Everything downstream gets easier or harder depending on this one. It is also the only one that costs nothing but discomfort.

WEEK

2

Movement, at an embarrassingly small size

Ten minutes daily beats three gym sessions you will abandon. Walking and jogging have decent evidence behind them for mood, which is what week two needs.

WEEK

3

One thing you actually enjoy

Reading, an instrument, a friend you have not called. A reset made entirely of obligations is a punishment schedule, and people quit those.

WEEK

4

The admin you have been avoiding

The dentist, the form, the conversation. Leave it until now — it is the least urgent and the most draining.

Four rules that decide whether this survives

WEEK TWO IS WHERE RESETS DIE

1 Three habits or fewer.

The number that feels right in the first week of September is roughly four times the number that survives to October.

2 The smallest honest version of each.

Not "run 5k" but "put the shoes on and go outside". Not "read more" but "one page". You can raise the target in a month.

3 Schedule only the days you genuinely control.

Three scheduled days you keep beat seven aspirational ones you miss. Shift work, small children and travel all call for the same fix.

4 Decide the two-minute fallback in advance.

Write it down now, while it is cheap — not at 22:40 on a bad Tuesday, while feeling guilty.

WHEN YOU MISS A DAY

Do the two-minute version, or nothing, and carry on the next day. Missing one day does not undo the progress — missing the return does.

Sources. Lally, van Jaarsveld, Potts & Wardle, *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 2010 (n=96): the median time to automaticity was 66 days, range 18–254 — and missing a single opportunity did not measurably harm the eventual habit. Four weeks is therefore not the finish line; it is the part where you find out which three are real. · Dai, Milkman & Riis, *Management Science*, 2014: real-world goal behaviour spikes right after calendar landmarks — a new month is enough — and the spike is short, which is the argument for starting small rather than starting big.

Your three habits

FILL THIS IN BEFORE MONDAY

Write the reason next to each habit. In week four, when the enthusiasm has gone, the reason is the only thing still holding it up — and the two-minute version is the only thing standing between a bad day and quitting.

HABIT ONE

WHY IT IS ON THE LIST

THE TWO-MINUTE VERSION

DAYS I ACTUALLY CONTROL ☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

HABIT TWO

WHY IT IS ON THE LIST

THE TWO-MINUTE VERSION

DAYS I ACTUALLY CONTROL ☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

HABIT THREE

WHY IT IS ON THE LIST

THE TWO-MINUTE VERSION

DAYS I ACTUALLY CONTROL ☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

Before you start

FIVE TICKS, THEN BEGIN

- ☐ I have picked three habits or fewer
- ☐ I have made each one small enough to do on my worst day this month
- ☐ I have scheduled them only on days I actually control
- ☐ I know what the two-minute version of each one looks like
- ☐ I have written down why each one is on the list

Four weeks, by hand

A BLANK BOX IS DATA, NOT A VERDICT

Week 1 the fixed wake time goes in first — nothing else is added

week of _____

HABIT	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

Week 2 add movement — the smallest version, not the ambitious one

week of _____

HABIT	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

Week 3 add the thing you enjoy — it is load-bearing, not a reward

week of _____

HABIT	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

Week 4 keep the three running, and book the thing you have been avoiding

week of _____

HABIT	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

THE ADMIN I HAVE BEEN AVOIDING _____

This is paper on purpose. It works without an account, without a subscription and without a phone on the table — and nothing you write here is sent anywhere. If you would rather keep the record on a screen once the four weeks are up, Life Tracker does that. The planner is complete without it.

 MADE BY
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