

HELPING STUDENTS

BREAK BAD HABITS



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Bad habits are common, and most people have at least one, while many have multiple. A bad habit is any repeated behaviour that results in a negative or unwanted outcome. Common ones for students include procrastination and needing to sleep more. Study shows that many students are aware of their most serious bad habits, but few understand the relationships between them.

Getting rid of or replacing a bad habit can be a challenging task. On average, it takes roughly about 66 days to form a new habit. The time it takes to form a new habit may vary depending on the severity of the old bad habit and how long they have had it. Any improvement in lifestyle leads to an improvement in the quality of life. Here are several tips for identifying and breaking bad habits for your students:

Don't break the bad habit right away

You may be eager to break free of the bad habit, but you shouldn't go after it immediately. Instead, take 2 to 4 weeks to gather all the information you can about the bad habit, such as: What triggers it? When does it happen the most? Does it happen in some places more than in others? It is important that you get a deep understanding of the bad habit and what brings them to do it so you can fully address it. Having unknown triggers may hinder or completely stop you from kicking the habit without realising it.

Make small changes

The best way to go about breaking bad habits is to tackle them a little bit at a time. If the habit is spending too much time on their phone in class, don't try to reduce their phone usage to zero from one day to the next. Doing so will make it harder to break the habit and increases their chances of slipping back into it. Instead, try reducing the time you allow them to spend on their phone every now and then. Setting many attainable small goals will improve the chances of success.

Structure a plan

One of the most important steps to breaking bad habits is creating a plan ahead of time of what you will do when getting the urge to carry out the undesired behaviour.

Replacing the negative behaviour with a positive one makes it easier to kick the bad habit than just doing nothing. Consider the analogy of the bad habit of eating junk snacks. When you get the urge to eat junk food because you are hungry, grab a healthy snack instead of just going hungry. Simply not eating junk food will not change the fact that you are hungry, but by replacing the type of food, you eat, you eliminate the negative aspect of the behaviour while still satisfying your craving. Your positive substitute may not fully satisfy you, but having one decreases the chances of you slipping back into your bad habit.

Change the environment

When taking 2 to 4 weeks to learn about the habit and what triggers it, you get an understanding of environmental factors that contribute to it as well. Maybe they procrastinate only when at home. Once these environmental triggers are identified, you should introduce any lifestyle modifications necessary to reduce their exposure to them as best as you can. It may be difficult at first, but you will find it easier to kick bad habits when you instil have fewer urges.

Partner up

We all know that when embarking on any self-improvement journey, it is always best to have some company. Most people have bad habits and tendencies they want to change. You should partner up with your student to get rid of their bad habit. You can help them achieve their goals by supporting and keeping them in check, besides being an extra pair of eyes, making sure that they keep in line. You will also get the chance to build a relationship with that student.

Plan for missteps

Bad habits are not always easy to eliminate or replace, so you should understand beforehand that they may have slip-ups. If they occur, it is important not to lose hope. If there is a slip-up, learn from it. Ask questions such as: What triggered it? How could you have avoided the trigger? Use that information to help you in the future.

Summary

- Identify the habit
- Recognise the triggers
- Develop a plan
- Use positive talk
- Get support
- Be patient
- Reward

Source: