

Directions: In this section, you are going to read a passage with ten statements attached to it. Each statement contains information given in one of the paragraphs. Identify the paragraph from which the information is derived. You may choose a paragraph more than once. Each paragraph is marked with a letter. Answer the questions by marking the corresponding letter on **Answer Sheet 2**.

These are the habits to avoid if you want to make a behavior change

- A) According to recent research, behavioral change involves physical changes in the brain. In the past decade, researchers have shown that when it comes to the duration of making a new behavior a deep-rooted habit there is not a simple answer. Even for the most productive and disciplined among us, undoing something that has become an automatic part of who we are takes more than an overnight effort. Once we've successfully made that change, we then have to make other adjustments to our lives to ensure that we continue to maintain it, which is often a whole other challenge in itself.
- B) At its core, success in changing and maintaining a behavior rarely occurs without the introduction of some sort of system. When there isn't the right framework in place, we face a greater likelihood of derailing our hard-earned progress. To ensure success in changing and maintaining a behavior, we should stay away from some detrimental habits.
- C) The first one to avoid is relying on willpower. Think about the last time you vowed to resist a temptation. Perhaps you didn't want to check your phone every 15 minutes, or you were determined not to reach for a chocolate bar at 3 p. m. Think about how difficult it must have been not to glance at your phone when it was within reach, or not to walk to the vending machine when your afternoon slump hit.
- D) The research on whether we have finite or infinite willpower is inconclusive, but experts do generally agree that you can't change and sustain a habit if you rely on your willpower alone. The old military saying "You never rise to the occasion, you only sink to the level of training" also applies to behavior change. The idea is simple—you repeat something so many times that it becomes automatic.
- E) Think about what else you can change about your surrounding that makes it easier for you to perform this change on a daily basis. This is called your "cue." Basically, it's a trigger to perform that particular habit. If you don't want to reach for a sugary treat at 3 p. m. , have a box of herbal tea ready at your desk. When 3 p. m. comes around, that's your cue to pour yourself a cup of hot water and drink that tea, instead of walking to the vending machine.
- F) The second one to avoid is focusing on negative goals. Sometimes, it's not your process that lets you down, but the habit that you want to change in the first place. For starters, not eating chocolate to beat your afternoon slump is a harder goal than swapping chocolate for herbal tea when you reach the designated time. Your brain wants to find routines that have succeeded in the past and allow you to repeat those actions again in the future without having to think about them explicitly. However, this habit-learning system isn't so effective when it comes to learning not to do something. That's why rather than giving up something, think about introducing something in its place. Focus on actions you are going to take that will ultimately conflict with the behaviors you want to stop. When your attention is on doing something new, you give your habit system a chance to operate.

- G) The third one to avoid is using the same strategies in different circumstances. Because we are creatures of habit, it's natural to assume that when we do manage to adopt and sustain a desirable behavior, that same strategy will work when we want to make another behavior change. But that's not always the case. Sometimes, the system that got you to change one behavior might not work for another.
- H) Sometimes we become accustomed to relying on our guts when it comes to decision-making. This serves us well in certain situations, but can hinder us in others especially when we need to consider metrics and data, rather than letting our instinct override everything. For example, if you want to stop checking your email first thing in the morning, you might decide to substitute another activity in its place. But if you want to stop indulging in video games, simply deciding you will go for a run might not be as effective. You might need to introduce another reinforcement, such as meeting a friend and booking an exercise class together.
- I) The fourth one to avoid is not forgiving ourselves for slipping up. Of course, even the best-laid plans fail sometimes. You might have stuck to your screen-free nighttime routine for five days, and then a big project landed on your desk and you found yourself in bed with your laptop before you went to sleep. Or you prepared meals on Sunday and stuck to eating healthy dinners at home, but by Friday you found yourself so exhausted and opted to order greasy takeout. Life happens and even if your behavior change is small, every single day can prove pretty inflexible, and at some point your luck may run out, even if just for a day. The perfectionist in you might be screaming to abandon your goals altogether, but try to see it in the bigger picture. Just because you might have temporarily strayed off course doesn't mean you can't start afresh the next day.
- J) The final one to avoid is discounting small progress. There's a habit that many perfectionists tend to fall into when they try to establish a behavior change. They focus too much on the big goal and don't take the time to celebrate the small progress they make in the process. Your brain responds to rewards. The basal ganglia, the brain region linked to our performance of habits, is most active at the beginning of a behavior, when the habit is cued, and at the end, when it's rewarded. Say your goal is to run five miles three times a week, and this week you ran one mile on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Rather than focusing on how far you've gone toward your goal, think about how you can reward yourself for the progress you've made. It doesn't have to be big or expensive; it can be something as simple as making your favorite fruit juice after your run. Whatever your reward, it has to be more than just the activity itself to get you going.
- K) Initiating a new behavior usually seems like the hardest part of the process of change. However, people often fail to adequately prepare for maintaining it. One of the reasons for this is because we mistakenly believe the strategies we used to initiate the change will be equally effective in helping us continue the change. But they won't. Where changing a strongly deep-rooted habit requires changing our belief about that habit that penetrates deeply into our lives, continually manifesting that wisdom requires that we maintain a positive outlook. If our mood is low, the wisdom to behave differently seems to disappear and we go back to eating more and exercising less. The key, then, to maintaining new behaviors is to be happy! Which is why it's so hard to maintain new behaviors.
- L) Remember, overcoming the behavioral inertia that prevents us from implementing new changes, like eating a healthy diet or exercising, can benefit us in the long run and can improve our physical and mental health. No one was born with habits. They were all learned, and can all, therefore, be unlearned. The question is: how badly do you really want to change?
36. There is general consensus among experts that willpower alone cannot guarantee one's success in changing and maintaining a habit.

37. One need not abandon their goals completely just because they missed their target temporarily; they can start anew.
38. Research shows it is quite another challenge to maintain a behavioral change after you have initiated it.
39. It is wrong to assume the strategies we use to start a change of behavior will work equally well in helping maintain it.
40. Sometimes, it may not be successful to simply substitute one activity with another to effect a change of habit; you may need extra reinforcement.
41. One should introduce something new to replace an old habit instead of simply kicking it.
42. Perfectionists focus too much on their big target and neglect celebrating the small gains they make in the process.
43. It is of great benefit to us in the long term to conquer the inertia that stops us from making behavioral changes.
44. The strategy that successfully changed one of your behaviors may not work for some other behavior of yours.
45. Without a happy mood, it seems that our wisdom to adopt a different behavior vanishes.