

# Summary of *Tiny Habits* by BJ Fogg, PhD

Do you want to know the universal formula for human behavior?

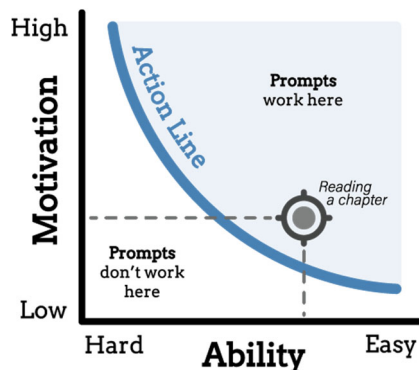
**B = MAP** (a **behavior** happens when **motivation**, **ability**, and a **prompt** converge at the same moment).

If you're developing a new habit (like reading a book every night before bed), you will perform the habit if your motivation (desire to read) matches the ability required to read (access to a book and time needed to hit your daily reading goal) the moment you receive a prompt to read (get a reminder on your phone or see a book on your nightstand).

Author and behavioral scientist BJ Fogg has found a way to hack the universal behavior model so that you can consistently perform a desired behavior and make significant life changes. The hack is called the "Tiny Habits Method" and includes three parts.

## Part #1: Shrink the Behavior

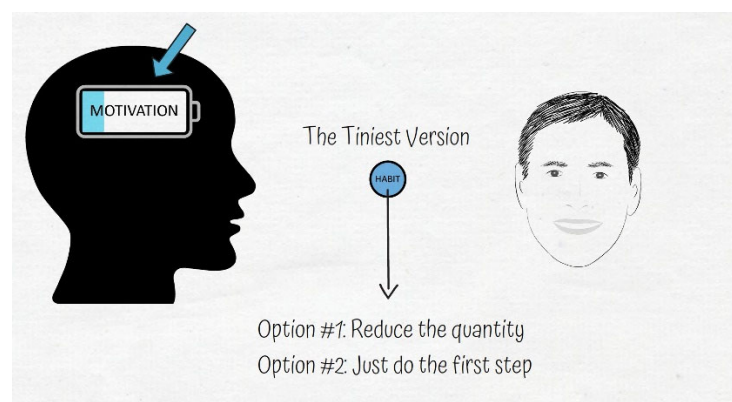
Fogg provides the following chart (from BehaviorModel.org) to explain the relationship between motivation and ability:



If a task is too hard, then you need high levels of motivation to rise above the action line and complete the task. Rescuing your child from a burning building is a hard thing to do, but high motivation rises you above the action line and compels you to enter the burning building.

Conversely, if a task is easy to do, you need very little motivation to rise above the action line and complete the task. Brushing your teeth is easy to do. It doesn't matter if you're exhausted when you get the prompt to do it; you do it anyway.

BJ Fogg suggests shrinking every new habit to the tiniest possible version, so you don't need to rely on motivation.



You can find the tiniest version of your desired habit by either reducing the quantity or doing just the first step. For example:

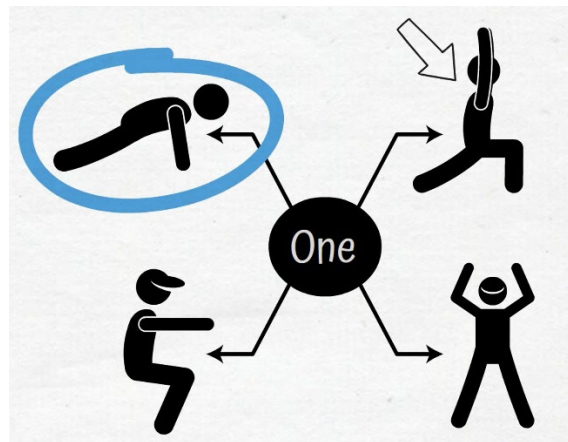
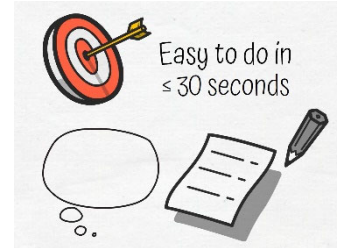
- The tiniest version of a sixty-minute meditation practice is a one-breath-meditation.

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- The tiniest version of a daily planning routine is writing down one to-do item on an index card and putting the index card in your pocket.

Your goal is to find a behavior that you can easily do in thirty seconds or less.

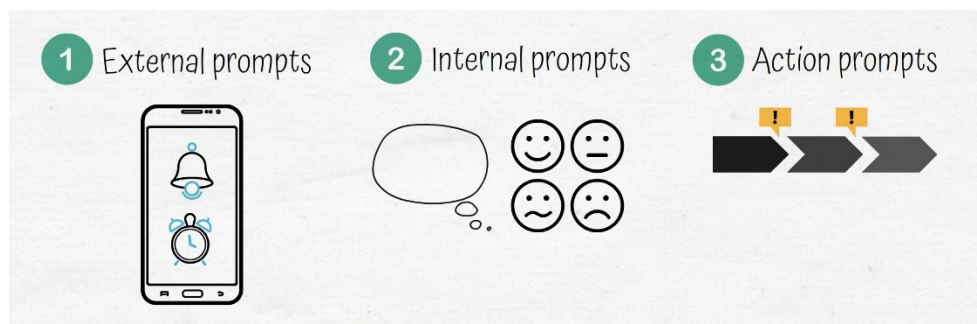
Think of a habit you want to form and list three or more tiny versions of that habit. For example, if you aspire to work out more, the tiniest workout you could perform might be one pushup, one squat, one yoga pose, or one jumping jack. Experiment with one or two tiny behaviors and see which one feels like a small win. Different behaviors impact people in different ways.



## Part 2: Identify an Action Prompt

There are three types of habit prompts (habit reminders):

1. External/context prompts: cues from your environment like post-it notes, phone notifications, and alarms.
2. Internal prompts (also known as personal prompts): thoughts and sensations that remind you to act, like a grumbling stomach.
3. Action prompts: the completion of one behavior reminds you to start the next behavior. Loading the dishwasher can be a prompt to clean the kitchen countertops.

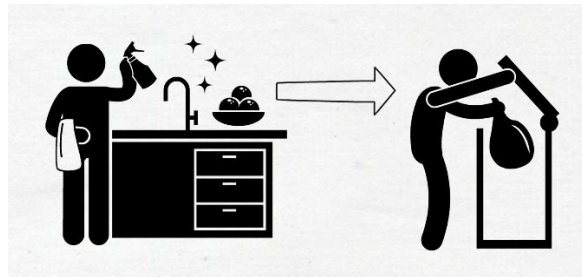


# Summary of *Tiny Habits* by BJ Fogg, PhD

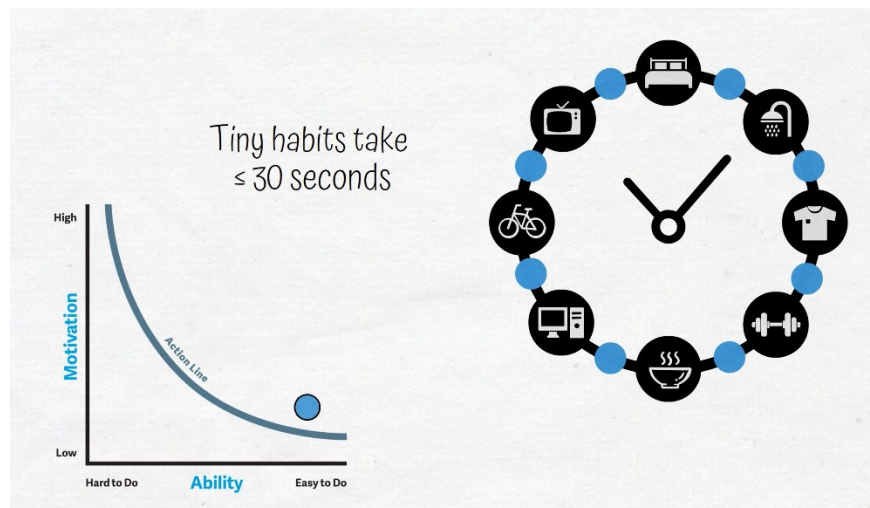
Most people use external and internal prompts to trigger a new habit. And that is why most people fail to develop a new habit.

External and internal prompts are too easy to ignore. You can hit the snooze on an alarm or ignore a feeling. External and internal prompts are also distracting and de-motivating. If an alarm goes off reminding you to take out the garbage while you're watching a movie, you'll need to pause the movie and get out of your relaxing chair to go outside.

When you use an action prompt, you use the momentum of one behavior to do another behavior. If cleaning your kitchen countertop prompts you to take out the garbage, you're already on your feet, so taking the trash outside is far easier than getting off the couch to do it.



Since tiny habits can be completed in thirty seconds or less, you can place them after most routines during the day.



For example, you can execute a one-breath-meditation habit after checking your phone, picking up the TV remote, turning off a light, or washing your hands.

Here are action prompts BJ Fogg uses:

- After I start my morning coffee, I will set out my vitamins.
- After I walk in the door from work, I will get out my gym clothes.
- After I sit down on the train, I will open my sketchbook.
- After I put my head on my pillow, I will think of one good thing.

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Now go back to your tiny habit and set up an action prompt by completing the sentence. *After I \_\_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_\_.*

## Part 3: Grow Your Habit with Some *Shine*

Developing a habit is like growing a small tree. You start with something tiny and let it take root in your life. With enough time and “Shine,” the habit naturally grows into something huge. For example, your sentence-a-day habit may grow to be a three-chapters-a-day habit.

“Shine” is a term BJ Fogg created to explain the feeling you get after an accomplishment. The closest thing in English language is **authentic pride**.

To get an idea of what *Shine* feels like, imagine the following:

*You've just gone through three rounds of intense interviews for a job you really want at a company you really like. You wait and wait for the email from the hiring manager. And then finally, a week later, you see an email in your inbox from the hiring manager. You open the email and read, "Congratulations, we have awarded you the position!"*



**What does your celebration look like and feel like?**

Or imagine:

*You have worked hard on a school project and your favorite teacher walks up to you and puts his or her hand on your shoulder and says, "Great job."*

**How do you celebrate at that moment?**

The feeling you experience after either of these visualizations is the feeling you must generate after executing a tiny habit.

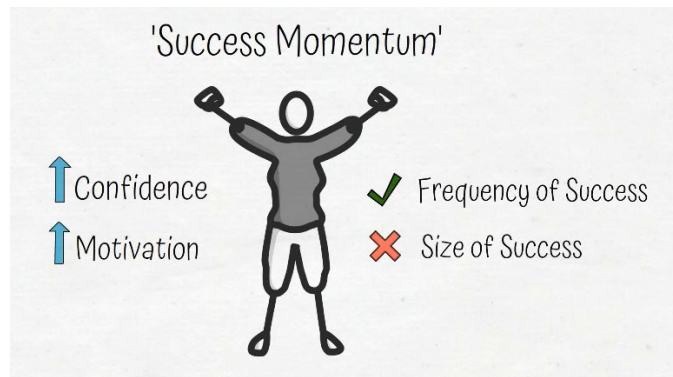


It may sound ridiculous to feel pride and success after doing one pushup or flossing one tooth but learning to celebrate tiny wins is the most critical component of habit development (based on BJ Fogg's extensive habit develop research).

Think of yourself as part dog trainer and part dog; your inner dog performs a behavior, and your inner dog trainer decides to deliver a treat or not. Most people tend to hold back treats because they believe they should only celebrate significant successes; but that's a huge mistake.

**“When you feel successful at something, even if it's tiny, your confidence grows quickly, and your motivation increases to do that habit again and perform related behaviors. I call this success momentum. Surprisingly enough, this gets created by the frequency of your successes, not by the size.”**

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When you give yourself a steady dose of *Shine* after doing the tiniest version of a habit, your motivation will steadily grow. When your motivation increases, you move higher up the action line and can tackle harder habits. Soon your one-breath-meditation turns into a 5-minute meditation and eventually a 60-minute meditation you look forward to every day.

**“You that you can resist learning to celebrate (small completions), but be aware that you’re choosing not to be as good as you could be at creating habits. For most people, the effort of learning to celebrate is a small price to pay for becoming a Habit Ninja.”**

## Takeaway

Use BJ Fogg's “Tiny Habits Method” to hack the B=MAP behavior model.

1. Shrink a new habit to the tiniest version (a behavior you can complete in thirty seconds or less).
2. Use an action prompt to trigger your tiny habit to start with momentum.
3. Always celebrate small behaviors. The more you celebrate, the faster you’ll grow your habit.

Never force yourself to do more than the tiniest version of a habit. Give yourself the flexibility to do more, but permission to do the tiniest behavior. Never be ashamed of doing a tiny behavior.

**“While small might not be sexy, it is successful and sustainable. When it comes to most life changes that people want to make, big bold moves actually don’t work as well as small stealthy ones.”**

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## Key Quotes

*“Behavior is behavior; it’s always a result of motivation, ability, and a prompt coming together at the same moment.”*

*“I’ve found that there are only three things we can do that will create lasting change: Have an epiphany, change our environment, or change our habits in tiny ways.”*

*“Here’s a related insight that might begin to transform your life (it transformed mine): The easier a behavior is to do, the more likely the behavior will become habit.”*

*“The essence of Tiny Habits is this: Take a behavior you want, make it tiny, find where it fits naturally in your life, and nurture its growth.”*

*“Keeping changes small and expectations low is how you design around fair-weather friends like motivation and willpower. When something is tiny, it’s easy to do—which means you don’t need to rely on the unreliable nature of motivation.”*

*“Let me set the record straight: information alone does not reliably change behavior. This is a common mistake people make, even well-meaning professionals. The assumption is this: If we give people the right information, it will change their attitudes, which in turn will change their behaviors. I call this the ‘Information-Action Fallacy.’”*

*“In order to design successful habits and change your behaviors, you should do three things. Stop judging yourself. Take your aspirations and break them down into tiny behaviors. Embrace mistakes as discoveries and use them to move forward.”*

*“Once you remove any hint of judgment, your behavior becomes a science experiment. A sense of exploration and discovery is a prerequisite to success, not just an added bonus.”*

*“One tiny action, one small bite, might feel insignificant at first, but it allows you to gain the momentum you need to ramp up to bigger challenges and faster progress.”*

*“Write this phrase on a small piece of paper: I change best by feeling good, not by feeling bad... Tape the paper to your bathroom mirror or anywhere you will frequently see it.”*

*“You can disrupt a behavior you don’t want by removing the prompt. This isn’t always easy, but removing the prompt is your best first move to stop a behavior from happening.”*

Quotes by author BJ Fogg