

Atomic Habits — Behavior System Model

A practical execution model based on identity, environment, and repetition design.

What This Framework Is

This model looks at behavior change as a systems problem rather than a willpower problem. Instead of chasing an outcome directly, it works on three levers that sit underneath the outcome: who you're deciding to become, the environment that makes a behavior easy or hard to start, and the repetition pattern that turns an action into something automatic. Change any one of the three and the behavior shifts without needing more motivation.

The Core Mechanism

- 1. Identity, not outcome.** Behavior sticks longest when it's attached to a statement about who you are ("I'm someone who trains") rather than a goal you're chasing ("I want to lose 10 lbs"). Identity survives a bad week; a goal often doesn't.
- 2. Environment design.** Willpower is unreliable under load. Redesigning the physical or digital space so the wanted behavior is the visible, low-friction default (and the unwanted one requires extra steps) does more work than discipline does.
- 3. Repetition over intensity.** A small version of the behavior done consistently builds the pattern faster than an intense version done occasionally. The rep count matters more than the rep size in the early stage.

How to Apply This Week

1. Write one identity statement for the behavior you're building.
2. Pick one environmental cue to change, making the wanted action the easiest option in that space.
3. Define the smallest version of the habit you could still call a genuine rep.
4. Track whether the rep happened, not how good it was.

Where This Breaks Down

The most common failure isn't lack of motivation. It's setting the identity statement and the daily rep at mismatched sizes. An identity shift ("I'm a runner") paired with a rep so small it doesn't feel real (one lap) creates doubt instead of momentum, while a rep set too large to sustain (an hour a day from zero) collapses within two weeks. The rep size should be the smallest version you'd still be proud to log, not the smallest version possible.

Simple Tracker

Day	Rep Done?	Friction Removed?	Note
Mon			

Day	Rep Done?	Friction Removed?	Note
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			