

How to Design a Winning Sleep Habit 2021



THE SLEEP SCIENTIST
Sleep and performance science unlocked

Welcome

Happy New Year!

Thanks so much for reading this guide, which aims to help you set yourself up for **success** in 2021. If you've tried to lose weight, quit smoking, or get fitter in the past with limited success, it's time for a different approach.

Sleeping well is a shortcut to feeling **happier**, **healthier** and more **resilient**. A small change in your sleep habits could help you find more energy, focus, self control and support from others – a **catalyst** to reaching your 2021 goals.

“No matter what it is that you want to achieve, prioritising sleep is a valuable first step on the path to better health, happiness and peak performance.”

This toolkit is all about how to work out which habits to focus on, and how to make them stick. **Reading it is a good start, but completing the exercises is even better.** You might find it helpful to print out p5, 7 & 8.

Very best of luck!

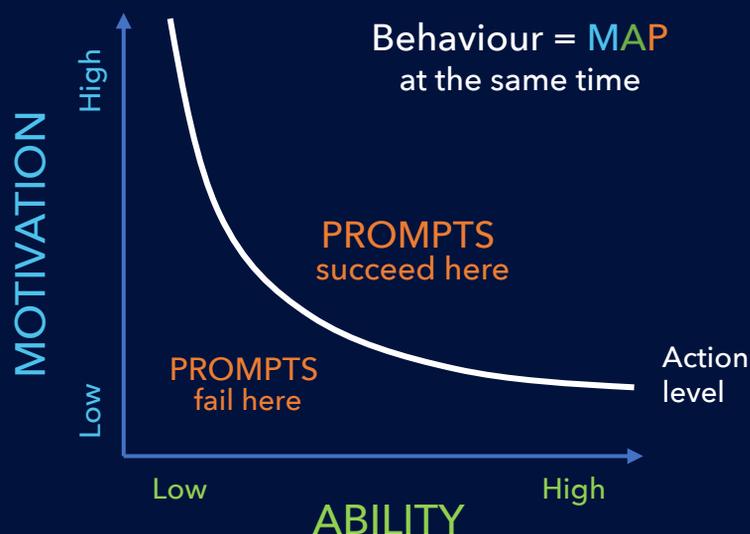
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How to design a habit

These behaviour design principles are based on *Tiny Habits*, a book by behaviour change expert, B.J.Fogg, which I highly recommend.

“A new behaviour requires a combination of **motivation**, the **ability** to make a change, and a reliable **prompt** - or trigger - to remind us to act at the right time.”

Motivation is a bit unreliable – if you're tired, or busy, motivation drops below the level needed for action, and your prompt may fail. It's therefore best to keep your new habit as **simple and easy** as possible, so that you always have the **ability** to repeat it..



Principles of behaviour design, Tiny Habits (2019)

#1 Get creative

The first step is to grab a blank sheet of paper and brainstorm 10 ideas for potential new sleep habits. There are no wrong answers..

Ask yourself: **What would I do if I could wave a magic wand to create better sleep habits?**

If sleep is a problem because you're too busy, think about ways to manage work boundaries, or reduce distractions. If your kids keep you awake, focus on their their sleep habits, such as their bed time routine.

You don't need to try everything! We'll narrow these down in the next step. **Here are some ideas to get you started...**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear ear plugs Help my partner stop snoring Buy a more comfortable bed Fit blackout blinds Adopt a more regular routine Wind down before bed Dim the lights at night Drink less alcohol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start the day earlier Sleep in a quieter room in the house Help the kids sleep better Buy a light alarm clock Stop scrolling on my phone in bed Use blue light filters on technology Put my gym clothes out ready the night before
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work fewer hours Work on reducing stress Cut back on caffeine Lose weight Eat more healthily Find a CBT therapist to help Warm bath before bed Tidy my bedroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get out of bed at the same time every day Stop eating 2hrs before bed Read before bed Protect time to make love Meditate every day Write a daily journal Listen to music before bed

Example brainstorm.. write down all ideas, big and small

#2 Prioritise

Now it's time to find the best habits for you. The task is to map out your list of habits by answering 2 questions:

1. Impact - is it likely to improve your sleep? Put higher impact habits at the top. Take a best guess – it may take some trial and error.

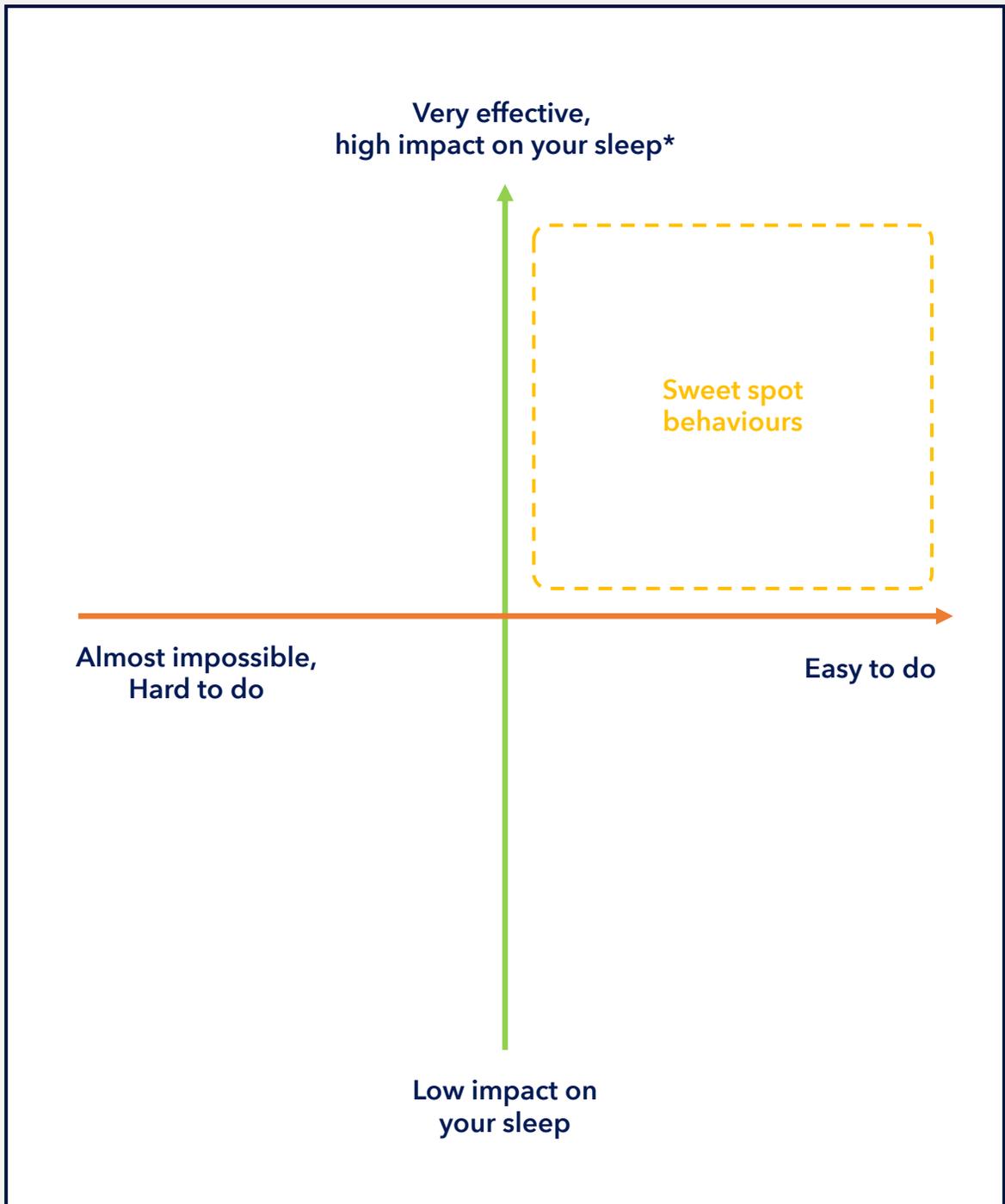
2. Ease - how easy will it be for you to do? Put easier habits towards the right, and more difficult habits towards the left. You might want to write the options on post-it notes so that you can move them around on the next page.

The **sweet spot** belongs to actions which are a good fit with your desired future identity (the ideal you), are simple, and impactful.



Example sleep habit map - this will be unique for everyone

#2 Prioritise: your turn!



*If you're not sure, take a best guess - experiment to see what works for you

#3 Make it really easy

When you have up to 3 behaviours in the **sweet spot**, the next task is to make them as easy and specific as possible, so that you can **repeat** them frequently.

If something feels too **hard**, you're more likely to avoid it, more likely to feel bad about avoidance, and to stop doing it altogether.

How can you make a habit specific and **easy to repeat**? e.g.

- give up caffeine vs. alternate caffeine with water
- exercise more vs. walk to the shops to buy milk each morning
- never have a lie in vs. leave the alarm clock out of reach of bed

For each habit, try and think of a **prompt**, or trigger, to remind you to do it. The most reliable prompts are things which **anchor** the new behaviour with an existing part of your routine, for example, brushing your teeth or having dinner. Other prompts include setting an alarm, leaving yourself notes or asking for help.

Wind down before bed

At 9:30pm when my alarm goes off I will switch off my phone and run a bath

While I brush my teeth I will think of 3 things I'm grateful for

After dinner I'll switch off the main light and turn on side lamps

Do more exercise

When I get out of the shower I will do 2 press-ups, and 2 squats

After lunch I will walk outside for 10 minutes

Whenever I park the car I will choose the far side of the car park to walk further

Practice slow breathing to relax

When I've brushed my teeth I will take 10 slow calm breaths

Every time I switch on my computer I will take 5 slow deep breaths

When I sit on the toilet I will take 5 slow deep breaths

Example sleep habits with the prompts highlighted

#4 Celebrate progress

Can you write in 3 simple sleep habit plans?

<p>Habit Plan #1</p> <p>Each time</p> <p>I will ...</p> <p>Start date:</p>	<p>Habit Plan #2</p> <p>At this time</p> <p>I will ...</p> <p>Start date:</p>	<p>Habit Plan #3</p> <p>Whenever I</p> <p>I will ...</p> <p>Start date:</p>
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When you're launching a new habit, it can be really satisfying to tick off your successes each day on a **Sleep Habit Tracker**. Print out the template on the next page and stick it on your fridge, or somewhere you'll see it each morning.

Compare notes with your partner or family – can you **support each other** to feel good when you've met your goals?

Feeling positive when you've completed your new habit is the key to repetition. How will you savour the sensation of **success**? Smiling, punching the air, doing a little wiggle of joy.. whatever makes you feel good!

When you know you can change successfully at one thing, your **confidence** grows, and you will be better able to build on that momentum with more habits... and the process begins again!

Sleep diary & habit tracker

Fill in your planned **wake up** and **ready-for-bed** times at the start of the week. Track 3 pro sleep habits, and you might want to work out your sleep efficiency. At breakfast each morning, tick successes from the previous day, and feel good about any successes!

Start date: _____	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Target wake up time? (Get out of bed within 10 minutes for a tick)	<i>Example</i> 6:30am ✓						
What's your target bed time?	11pm ✓						
1. e.g. Warm bath or shower							
2. w.g. 30 min physical activity							
3. e.g. No technology 1 hr before bed							
How many hours were you in bed for last night?	9 hours						
How many hours were you asleep for?	6 hours						
What was your Sleep Efficiency? = hrs sleep / in bed * 100	67%						
How would you rate your energy yesterday? 10=best ever	8, good day!						

I really hope this guide helps with choosing some winning sleep habits for 2021. If you'd like to know more about sleep, you can find me on Twitter, YouTube or Instagram @drsophiebostock. Very best of luck, Sophie