THE SEVEN-DAY HABIT EXPERIMENT

A low-pressure field guide for testing one behavior, one cue, and one source of friction.

1 · DEFINE THE SMALLEST VERSION

Write one action that takes less than two minutes. Make it observable: “open the document and write one sentence,” not “be productive.”

Behavior	
Stable cue: After I…	
Tiny action: I will…	
Environment prepared by…	
Why this matters to me…	

2 · DESIGN FOR A HARD DAY

Reduce friction before relying on motivation. Put the object in view, remove one step, choose a precise time or preceding routine, and define a fallback version that still counts.

Prompt visible?	Yes / No
Action under two minutes?	Yes / No
Materials ready?	Yes / No
Fallback version defined?	Yes / No

Record whether the cue appeared and whether the tiny action happened. Do not score quality. A miss is information about the system.

Day	Cue appeared?	Tiny action?	Friction / note
1	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	
2	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	
3	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	
4	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	
5	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	
6	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	
7	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	

DAY 7 REVIEW

1. Which cue was most reliable? _____
2. What friction appeared repeatedly? _____
3. What one variable will you change next week? _____

Interpretation: If the cue rarely appeared, choose a more stable anchor. If the cue appeared but the action did not, shrink the action or reduce friction. If the action happened easily, repeat for another week before expanding it.

Evidence note: habit automaticity develops at very different speeds. One real-world study reported a median near 66 days, with wide variation; missing one opportunity did not erase progress. Lally et al., European Journal of Social Psychology (2010), doi:10.1002/ejsp.674.