

Atomic Habits and Aphasia



Maybe you've once heard the saying by Aristotle, "We are the sum of our actions, and therefore our habits make all the difference." Even though he made his statement over 2,000 years ago, it still stands true that we ARE our habits. More recently, researchers at Duke University backed this up by publishing that habits comprise 40 percent of our behaviors on any given day.

When it comes to aphasia therapy, sometimes it feels like being "ALL-IN" comes and goes in **waves**. Sometimes we stay on track with home practice, and other times it feels like pulling teeth to get through a task. No matter where you find yourself right now, there's GOOD NEWS: you can achieve all of your aphasia-related goals by changing your habits.

In Atomic Habits, a New York Times #1 best seller, the author highlights 5 easy-to-implement ways that we can all use to get closer to being the person we WANT & ASPIRE to be.

1) Start with an incredibly small habit

- ★ A general rule of thumb to follow is to make the habit so EASY, you can't say no. For example, if you want to improve your adherence to home practice, you can start small by setting a plan to practice just 3 minutes per day.



- 2) Increase your habit in very small ways
 - ★ Starting small and gradually improving is key to increasing willpower along the way. Once you accomplish completing home practice for 3 minutes a day, increase it to 4, then 5 minutes, and so on. This will make it easier to stick to your habit FOR GOOD.

- 3) As you build up, break habits into chunks
 - ★ Once you get in the groove of **making small gains**, such as adding one minute to your home practice every few days, you'll realize how quickly you've increased your practice tolerance in such a short amount of time. If your eventual goal is 30 minutes of practice per day, it is important to keep your goal REASONABLE by CHUNKING it up. Building up to 30 minutes of home practice can be realized by splitting it into two segments of 15 minutes at first.

- 4) When you slip, get back on track quickly
 - ★ Of course, we all have slip ups every now and then. Consistency is the goal, not perfection. If you find yourself having missed a few days of practice, don't beat yourself up. The important thing is that when you get off track, you get back up and **continue from where you left off**.

- 5) Be patient & stick to a pace you can SUSTAIN.
 - ★ Consistency comes from patience, so being patient with yourself is crucial. If you've made it to your goal of 30 minutes of practice per day, don't rush to increase it right away. Stay at that level and sustain your practice goal until you're absolutely ready to level up.

If you're interested about learning more about building habits that LAST, or about getting rid of habits that don't serve you, be sure to check out this link:

<https://jamesclear.com/atomic-habits-summary>

And don't forget, achieving every BIG goal starts with making SMALL changes. Stay patient and consistent, and you'll be surprised how quickly you reach all of your aphasia-related goals!

