



# IF-THEN PLANNING

**Implementation intentions** specify when, where, and how a desired behaviour will be enacted. They boost the chances of successful behaviour change.

**IF**

Identifies the **cue** (when or where) to act.

This might be a time or place.

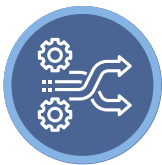
**THEN**

Identifies the **goal-directed response**.

This should be a specific behaviour.

**"If I find myself in ..... (situation), then I will perform ..... (goal-directed response)."**

**If-then planning** can be used to:



**Identify situations that can be used to overcome usual habits**

Example: *"I want to eat healthily."*

**"If** I am invited to an event with unhealthy food, **then** I will make sure to eat beforehand."

Example: *"I want to quit smoking."*

**"If** I am going out with my friends who smoke, **then** I will pick a non-smoking venue."



**Identify situations that could cue new behaviours**

Example: *"I need to remember to take my prescription medication twice a day."*

**"If** I have finished brushing my teeth, **then** I will take my medication."

Example: *"I want to improve my relationships."*

**"If** I am eating my lunch, **then** I will call my sister to check in."



**Shield a goal from unhelpful thoughts or emotions**

Example: *"I want to stay motivated to achieve my goal."*

**"If** I feel that change will be too hard, **then** I will review my list of reasons for changing."

Example: *"I want to overcome my anxiety about exercising after knee surgery."*

**"If** I am feeling anxious, **then** I will take a few minutes to control my breathing before doing some gentle exercises."

## YOUR TURN!

Create an **if-then plan** for a behaviour that you would like to change.  
Try to think of multiple situations that could cue your goal-oriented behaviour(s).

### IF-THEN PLAN 1

IF

THEN

### IF-THEN PLAN 2

IF

THEN

### IF-THEN PLAN 3

IF

THEN

### IF-THEN PLAN 4

IF

THEN

#### References

Achtziger, A., Gollwitzer, P. M., & Sheeran, P. (2008). Implementation intentions and shielding goal striving from unwanted thoughts and feelings. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34*(3), 381-393. doi: 10.1177/014616720731120

Gollwitzer, P. M., & Sheeran, P. (2006). Implementation intentions and goal achievement: A meta-analysis of effects and processes. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 38*, 69-119. doi: 10.1016/S0065-2601(06)38002-1.