

Habits Cascade: Find Your Cornerstones

When to use: When things feel out of control, or you need to re-center your habits.

What's a cornerstone habit?

Habits that have outsized impact on other habits – they are the habits that make it more or less likely you'll stick to other habits helping your work your happy. For example:

- Not enough sleep → more caffeine → junk food snacks in the afternoon
- Overbooked a weekend so missed grocery shopping → getting a drive through meal → feel too logy to go to the gym or go for a walk

Supplies:

- Pen and paper, or the notes function on your smart phone
- A timer

Instructions:

- Set your timer for 5 minutes
- Make a list or mind map of habits that make you feel good

- Set the timer for another 5 minutes
- Make a list of the habits that don't help or serve you

- In the 5 minutes remaining, review both lists and circle the three habits which are your cornerstone habits. Remember, these are the habits that cause a ripple effect into other areas of your life – positive or negative.

Why it works:

- The times when life feels crazy is a great time to take a minute to refocus attention on what we want – and what we're doing to get what we want. [Psychology Today includes habit evaluation as one of six ways to refocus on what's important.](#)
- A recent HBR article points out that [When Life Gets Busy, Focus on a Few Key Habits](#) to maintain stability and focusing on what's important over what's urgent.

Inspiration: I started to notice bad habits creeping into my day-to-day life during a recent time of stress and pressure. And one bad habit seemed to lead to another... and suddenly things were out of control. I spent time reflecting on what small things I could do every day to feel more in control – you know, figuring out my own cornerstone habits!