

# 49 Practical Ways to "Save" in the Economy of Behavior-Control



You don't keep the windows open when you have the AC running, do you?

Of course not. That's wasteful.

Yet we waste our mental dollars every day.

I'll show you how we waste and then give you 49 practical ways to "save" in the Economy of Behavior-Control.

## **Real quick, what's the Economy of Behavior Control?**

The Economy of Behavior Control (EBC) shows us how to manage our behavior through simple economic terms.

Blood sugar is our "currency" because it's what allows for self-regulation and conscious thoughts and behaviors (exercising willpower, high-concept decision making, planning, etc.). You can learn more about it [here](#).

## How do we waste?

We buy decisions that are trivial or redundant: what shirt should I wear today? What do I want for breakfast?



We waste our mental dollars when we are unorganized: cluttered desks, desktops, messy cars and kitchens, and so on.

We use our working memory when we don't need to: remembering that post-lunch meeting in your head instead of creating a reminder on your phone.

There are many other ways we waste, to be sure, so let's get into the ways we can stop wasting and start saving.

## 49 ways to save

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## REPEAT what you EAT

1. Breakfast
2. Lunch
3. Dinner
4. Snacks
5. Meals Monday-Sunday
6. When at specific restaurants/coffee shops/bars
  - a) Days/times/orders/with whom

We don't have to automate all these decisions, but even automating some of them is beneficial.

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
					?	?
?	?	?	?	?	?	?
	?		?		?	?

Even if you only repeated those decisions above, it would still save you about 75,000 decisions in your life. And if you take into consideration the micro-decisions that go along with cooking it would probably save you millions.

## Understanding *Trivial* vs *Important*

We all have different value systems so we'll all differ a bit when deciding what's important. Once we know what we value, though, we can start to deliberately save.

If you're a foodie, you probably cringed at the section above. You care about food, others don't. You might not care about what socks you wear, others choose to express themselves through crazy socks.

It's all preference.

*Saving is not about taking away identity. It's about automating the unimportant so that you have more energy for the things you love.*

### Get the same: CLOTHES

7. Socks
8. Underwear
9. Undershirts
10. Dress shirts/blouses
11. Shorts/pants



If you have different pairs of socks, then you have to decide each day which to wear. Also, laundry is a pain.

If you have all black socks...no decisions. Laundry is a breeze.



Have specific outfits for

- 12. Each day of the week
- 13. Work
- 14. Exercise
- 15. Loungewear

Even if you care about fashion you can make outfits ahead of time: know which pants go with which shirts and whatnot, make a monthly repertoire and use a randomization app to tell you what to wear for every day of the month.

## Get the same: KITCHEN SUPPLIES

- 16. Plates
- 17. Mugs
- 18. Glasses
- 19. Bowls

- 20. Silverware
- 21. Napkins
- 22. Dishrags
- 23. Use the same pots and pans to cook specific dishes



**\*PRO TIP\***

Plain dishes are the best here so you can't notice inconsistencies in the patterns, and thus can't differentiate between them. If you can't differentiate, there's no need to decide because they're effectively the same.

## Grocery store

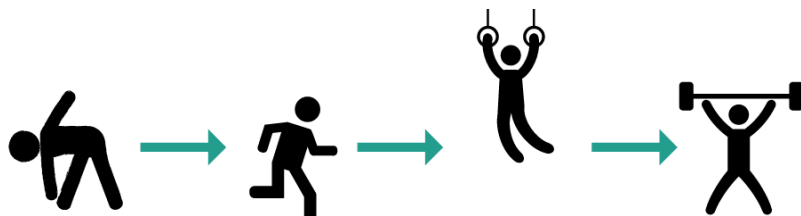
- 24. Place (same store)
- 25. Day
- 26. Time
- 27. Buy the same foods
- 28. Route to the store
- 29. Route with your shopping cart in the store





## Exercise

- 39. Place (same gym/park/whatever)
- 40. Day
- 41. Time
- 42. Order of exercises



If you're worried about constantly getting stronger, then increase your load by the same amount, or make some bright lines so that you know what to do, when (see bright lines below).

## What are Bright-Lines?

A bright-line (rule) is a clear, unambiguous rule with no room for interpretation. Which of the following is a bright-line?

Example 1: I'll do my dishes after I'm done eating.

Example 2: Within 5 seconds of finishing my last bite of my meal I will rinse my plate in the sink and then put it in the dishwasher.

Most of us use "rules" like the first one. But there's a problem: we are master rationalizers.

"After I'm done eating" is incredibly easy to rationalize out of because our brains are lazy by default. They are optimized to save energy.

The thought process goes something like this:

After is indefinite, I don't have to do it NOW. Plus, I might want a snack later, there's no point in washing the dish now, that would be a waste of water.

In Example 1 there is too much wiggle room. We need to make it air-tight like Example 2.

Many bright-lines follow the simple "if, then" format.

## A few more examples of bright-lines

- 43. If the dishwasher is full and dirty, then I will start the dishwasher immediately.
- 44. If the dishwasher is full and clean, then I will unload the dishwasher immediately.
- 45. If it is Monday-Friday, 6-8pm, then my phone will be on airplane mode inside my second drawer of my nightstand.



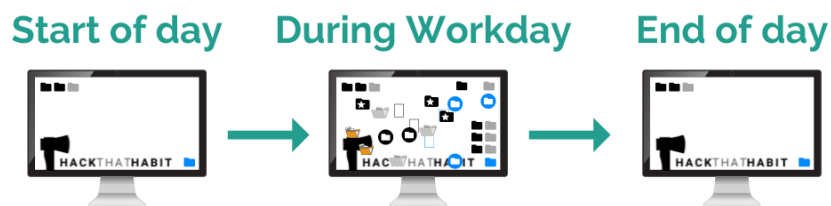
- 46. If I receive an unwanted email and don't want another one from that company, then I will unsubscribe within 5 seconds of opening it and before opening another email.
- 47. If I can do a task within two minutes, and I'm not in the flow of work, then I will do it right away and before starting any other task.
- 48. If I get reminded about something I have to do later, I will make a note of it right away (tell my phone to remind me at the right time/place or write it on a piece of paper I can access when you're out of the flow).
- 49. If I am on a run and see a piece of trash and feel the I'll do it later self-talk, I will pick up that piece of trash immediately (if it is under 5 pieces of trash for that day #upperlimits).

(Note: The sooner you can switch the mindset from the point of idea to the point of action, the better.)

This is similar to what Josh Waitzkin calls somatic awareness (or physiological introspective sensitivity). It's using that feeling as a cue to do the right thing.

## BONUS 1

I will make sure that when I leave my desk/desktop/kitchen counter/room/etc. when I'm done using that space, I will clean up so that it is the same as it was before I used it.



## Reduce your working memory

### BONUS 2

Finish unfinished projects, or make a specific plan to finish them because the plan will stop the background working memory.

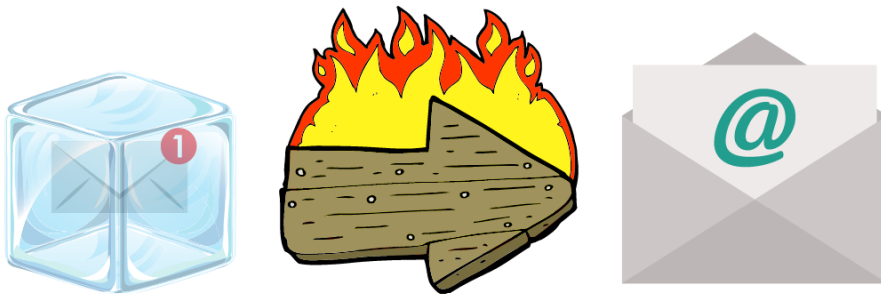
### BONUS 3

Don't remember things, use your phone's perfect recall whenever you can.

Your phone is a CRUCIAL new edition to and extension of your brain.

One of the main culprits to the Intention-Behavior Gap is something called a "cold trigger", a trigger we can't act on right away.

We can use our phones to "warm up triggers" by making reminders for times when you can actually act on them—or for places where you can act on them.



## Conclusion

Each individual decision doesn't seem like much, but life is long. There are about 30,000 days in 80 years.

Saving even one decision a day can have a profound impact on your life. And saving doesn't have to be bland. Or robotic.

Saving allows you to be more of the person you want to be by making all the unimportant decisions become automatic.

We all have different value systems, so we all have different ways to save according to our personalities.

The foodie won't sacrifice her meals and the fashionista won't sacrifice his clothes. That's fine. There are plenty of ways to save in the Economy of Behavior-Control. At least 52. And I'm sure there are some others from you. Feel free to share and I'll update this article every so often.