

Habitual (Working Title)

Theme

In the book 'The Art of Learning: An Inner Journey to Optimal Performance', author Josh Waitzkin describes his approach to honing various skills. The concept of the book is that the approach to learning any skill is the same regardless of the skill in question and relies on deliberate practice.

I believe that most people have a habit of practicing poorly. This is supported by my own experiences and observations (as well as J. Waitzkin's).

A common piece of folk wisdom goes: 'practice smart, not hard'. I have a major disagreement with this quote for two reasons.

First, 'practice smart' is not an implementable strategy, because 'smart' is too vague to be useful. This just shifts the problem to determining what 'smart' means for a certain skill.

Second, there is nothing wrong with 'practicing hard' per se. In fact, deliberate practice is often more mentally and physically taxing than simply 'going through the motions' of your current routine or copying someone else's, without any thought as to why. What should be avoided is spending large amounts of time practicing without clear objectives.

Waitzkin argues that optimal performance comes from a steady regiment of dedicated deliberate practice. The theme of my site is to guide people toward this approach to practice.

Purpose

There already exists several websites dedicated to explaining or showing *what* experienced persons do in a certain context. I will refer to this kind of web content as a tutorial. Tutorials are useful resources when someone does not know what to do in the first place, but simply knowing theoretically what to do does not constitute mastery.

Mastery of a certain skill comes from theoretical knowledge coupled with experience in applying that knowledge. Most tutorial sites do not say anything about how you should practice the skill being discussed or what the relative importance of different subskills is. As a result, it takes people a long time to gain experience applying that knowledge because their practicing habits are inefficient, or because they focus on things that have a relatively small impact on their overall skill level.

The purpose of my website is to provide users with a tool for recording and modifying their practice routines for various skills. They should also be able to share these routines with other people, who should in turn, be able to modify and share these routines.

Personas



Lisa, 16 years-old, student.

Lisa is a high-school student who wants to get into a university for piano performance.

She gets recommendations for exercises from her music teachers frequently for technical exercises. Some of these she finds very challenging.

She wants a way to record these exercises and tweak them over time. As she tries new variations.

She wants a to be able to map out what specific techniques are used in different pieces and what exercises would work best for learning those techniques.

She would also like to share this map with other piano players and get their thoughts.

Lisa will most likely use a tablet to access the site.



Kevin

Male, 28 years-old, streamer / pro-gamer

Kevin is a professional StarCraft 2 player and streamer.

This is a highly technical skill that requires a significant investment in mechanical proficiency in a wide range of small tasks.

Over the years, he has developed various methods to practice these sub-skills efficiently.

Through experience he understands the relative importance of certain actions in the game and uses this hierarchy to evaluate his decisions.

He would like to be able to quickly construct a well-structured document that outlines the drills he uses. It should emphasize the goals and thought process that he thinks is most useful to grow as a player.

He would like the ability to make a visual map of the various subskills, their relation to each other, and their relative importance.

He would also like the ability to share this document, and potentially, to make it privately available to his subscribers.

Kevin will most likely use a computer to access the site.



Erin 22 years-old, professional.

Erin has recently started a membership at her local gym.

There is a lot of information about different plans online. She doesn't just want to use a plan; she wants to understand how a balanced plan is structured so she can modify it at will.

She would like to be able to record her workout, along with any questions that occurred to her. This way she can build a reference document that will remind her of what she should be focused on in general, and have a list of things to research.

She knows that consistent improvement requires regular engagement, so she would also like to have an inbuilt calendar to pair her records with their respective date visually.

Erin will probably use a smartphone to access the site.

Scenarios

Kevin wants to create a skill Map. He wants to be able to order different subskills by their relative importance and then see the output.

Kevin wants to create a practice routine from scratch. It should be easy and fast to enter. It should be in the form of a step-by-step list. It could reference a skill map he has already created. He is not looking for input from other users.

Kevin wants to privately share a skill map, routine, or both with someone.

Erin wants to look at other people's routines, she should be able to find a community for fitness and see a list of routines that other users have created. She can click on them to see a more detailed description with references to the skill map and a calendar.

Erin wants to record her experiences using a routine with a calendar. She should be able to select a day, and record what routine she used and what her experience was.

Lisa wants to look through her routines and modify them, she should be able to see a list of her routines, edit one of them and save the changes.

List wants to create a routine using an existing routine as a template. She should be able to see a list of her routines, duplicate one, and edit the copy.

Further Requirements

For sharing and saving of routines to site internally, we will need a database.

Different users may prefer to access the site via different devices, this is noted in the personas. Functionally, the site will remain unchanged, but window size should be considered so that the site is visually appealing across multiple devices.

Mock Up

Home Page

Habitual

Communities:

Create

View Routine

Habitual

Piano

Lisa

Major Scales - Beginner to Intermediate

1. Pick one of the 12 major scales to practice.
2. Pick a hand to practice with.
3. Play the scale out of time for two full octaves, focusing on correct fingering.
4. Play the scale with a metronome at a very slow speed.
5. Redo steps 1-4 with the other hand.
6. Play the scale in both hands out of time, focusing on the correct fingering for both hands.
7. Play the scale with both hands with correct fingering with a metronome at a very slow speed.
8. Repeat step 7, speeding up the metronome slightly.

View Skill Map

Habitual	Lisa
Piano	Major Modes - Skill Map
Major Modes	Add Routine
Dominant 7th and Minor 7th b5 Scales/Arpeggios	Add Routine
Minor Scales/Arpeggios (Natural, Harmonic)	Add Routine
Major Scales/Arpeggios	Major Scales Beginner to intermediate

Edit Routine

Habitual	
Name	Enter routine name.
Procedure	Enter the routine steps. ↵
Select a Skill Map	View
Select a Community	

Edit Skill Map

Habitual

Create a Skill Map

Name

Select Number of subskills

(Example for a skill with 3 subskills)

Account Page

Habitual
Lisa

Skill Maps

Select a Skill Map [View](#)

Create a Skill Map [Edit](#)

Routines

Select a Routine [View](#)

Create a Skill Map [Edit](#)

Community Page

Habitual
Piano

Major Modes by Lisa [View](#)

2-5-1 Progressions by Lisa [View](#)

Habitual

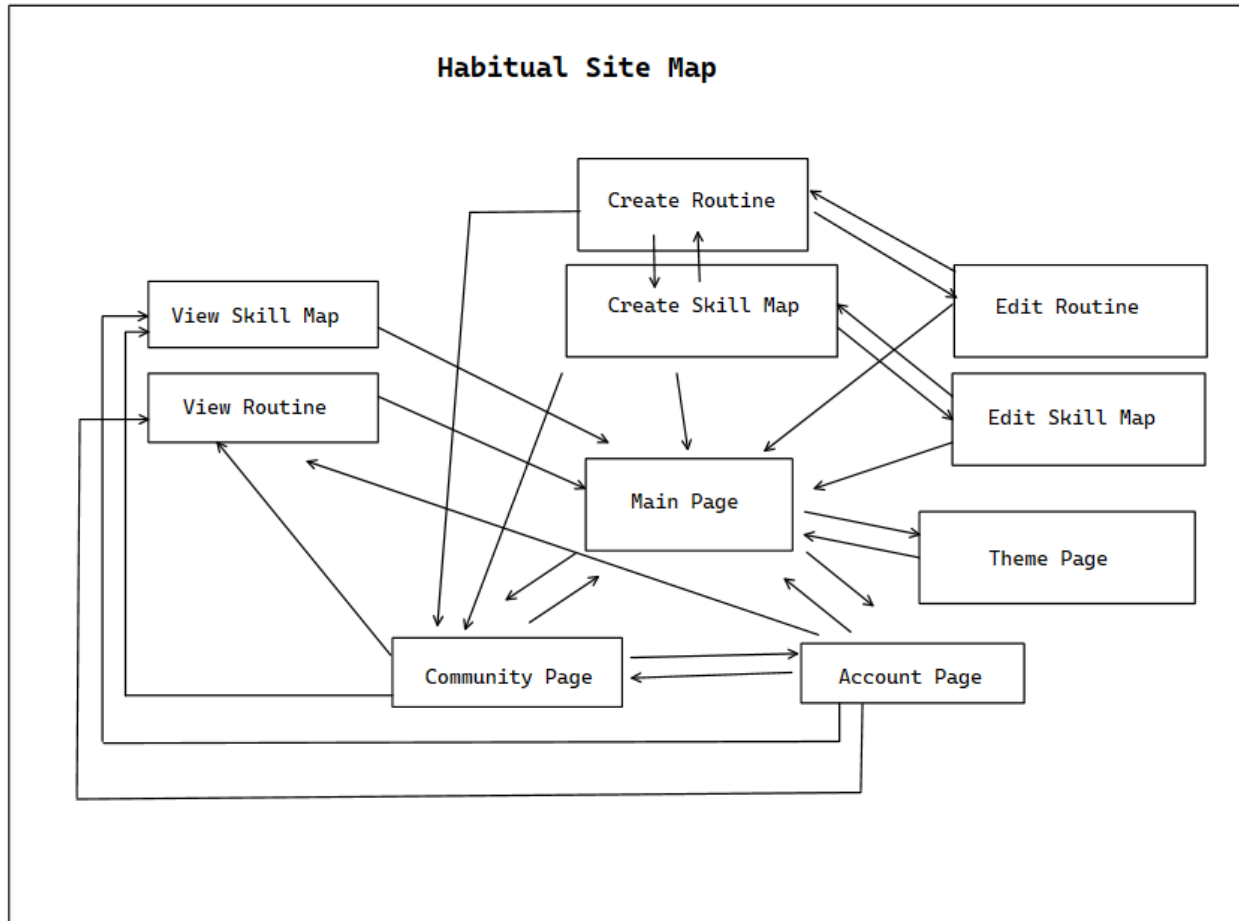
What is Habitual?

Habitual is a site dedicated to guide people toward better practicing habits.

You can make a skill map to describe how a skill is composed of subskills.

You can make a routine to explain how to practice a certain subskill.

The goal is to make practice more efficient by letting users see each-others routines and modify their own versions.



References

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