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WEARABLE TECH USES SHOCK THERAPY TO EXORCISE BAD HABITS

 WORK & LIFESTYLE

Pavlok is a smart wristband that tracks owners' behavior and delivers an electric shock when they fail to commit to their goals.

Ivan Pavlov was a Russian physiologist famous for experiments in classical conditioning — the idea that behavior can be manipulated by associating it with positive or negative stimuli. It's a concept that's been embraced by productivity experts, and is key to recent success of gamification. Now **Pavlok** is a smart wristband that tracks owners' behavior and delivers an electric shock when they fail to commit to their goals.

Created by productivity blogger **Maneesh Sethi**, the device looks much like a typical Fitbit-style exercise tracker. Rather than just tracking sports activity, Pavlok is able to be programmed to monitor a variety of bad habits users want to change, from smoking to checking Facebook every five minutes. For example, if users want to start getting up earlier they can set the wristband to wake them up by vibrating at a certain time. If they hit snooze more than twice, it will stop vibrating and deliver an electric shock that's probably certain to get them out of bed. After a while, Sethi believes, users will simply want to make sure they get up to avoid the shock.

Sethi is no stranger to negative reinforcement, having previously hired someone to follow him around at work and **slap him every time he procrastinated** on time-wasting sites. He's serious about the device and has already raised USD 100,000 from investors. A crowdfunding campaign could soon be launched and Pavlok will retail for around USD 250.

For those who can't afford the price tag or wait for it to be released, there have already been apps based on a similar premise such as **Social Rehub**, which charges users money every time their friends

deem they've broken a bad habit. Are there other — perhaps less painful — ways that negative reinforcement can be used to shape behavior?

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