

Habitual, the tools, support, and guidance you need to achieve and maintain better health

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Napala Pratini, CEO & cofounder of Habitual about habit change, weight loss and the reversal of type 2 diabetes.

Temps de lecture : minute

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What was the catalyst for launching Habitual?

I started my career in scientific research, and later shifted my focus to technology and startups, subsequently relocating to the UK to study for an MBA at the University of Oxford in 2017. After finishing my MBA, I started working for a research organisation where I became fascinated by the role of habit change in weight loss and the reversal of type 2 diabetes.

The potential to scale up these findings and help a broader population achieve sustainable weight loss and improved overall health was the catalyst for launching Habitual. Driven by the desire to address the global obesity crisis and the lack of accessible, comprehensive weight management solutions, my co-founder and I started Habitual to provide not only effective weight loss tools, but also personalised support and guidance to empower individuals to make lasting changes.

Tell us about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

Habitual is a healthcare company empowering sustainable weight loss and lasting habit change, offering a comprehensive approach to weight management for individuals with type 2 diabetes and obesity.

Obesity is one of, if not the, most pressing issue facing our healthcare systems, affecting over one billion people worldwide. We are on a mission to change this. As a trusted NHS partner and private provider of weight loss and type 2 diabetes programmes, we empower individuals to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Our approach combines proven interventions including weight loss medications and low-calorie meals with expert-designed habit change interventions—all coordinated through the Habitual mobile app.

How has the business evolved since its launch? When was this?

We launched to the public in 2021, initially offering type 2 diabetes remission programmes that combined nutritionally-complete, low-calorie diet plans with daily bite-sized pieces of content to help patients change their habits over time. We eventually realised that some people were coming to us for weight loss rather than type 2 diabetes, so we expanded our focus to include patients without a type 2 diabetes diagnosis. We've also continuously improved our digital experience, adding on features such as progress dashboards, daily tracking, rewards, recipes, and much more. Last year, the NHS started rolling out type 2 diabetes remission programmes nationally, which we're excited to be a part of.

At the same time, GLP-1 medications started picking up momentum in the

UK in 2023, and it was a natural evolution for us, as the medications are meant to be delivered alongside a behavioural intervention—which we had coincidentally spent the last few years building. Our current offering includes medications, food products, and all of our wraparound care and support.

Tell us about the working culture at Habitual?

We have always tried to build a culture that reflects the advice we give to patients, i.e. one that encourages a healthy balance between the various competing priorities we all face in life. The best example of how this looks in practice is that everyone on the team gets up to an hour every day to do something that makes them happier or healthier—gym, cooking a healthy lunch, calling a friend—the list goes on. We talk about what we're going to do for the day in morning standup to hold ourselves accountable.

How are you funded?

We've raised about £4M from angels, VCs, and an Innovate UK grant. We achieved profitability this summer so future funding will be used for growth.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

Early on, one of our biggest challenges was customer acquisition. We knew we had an effective product, but getting it in front of the right people was a constant struggle. Our marketing budget was tiny, so we couldn't afford expensive ad campaigns or large-scale outreach. We had to focus on being scrappy, leveraging word of mouth, and, importantly, evolving our product to meet the needs of our users. We also started seeing a significant amount of organic growth once we were a couple of

years into the business, so there is a learning around patience—sometimes all the capital in the world cannot make things move faster.

How does Habitual answer an unmet need?

We fill a critical gap in the weight management landscape by offering a comprehensive, long-term solution to sustainable weight loss through encouraging long-lasting habit changes. Unlike short-term diets or quick-fix approaches, Habitual combines medical intervention with personalised support to empower individuals to break free from unhealthy habits and adopt healthier ones.

Unlike most companies that offer point solutions, our holistic approach encourages participants to address the underlying behaviours that contribute to weight gain, Habitual equips individuals with the tools and strategies to make lasting changes. This holistic approach not only leads to successful weight loss but also promotes long-term better health.

What's in store for the future?

We are building the go-to partner for weight management, which means offering a comprehensive suite of products and services that someone would need on their journey. We've made a strong start with meals, medications, and our habit change app, but have much more in the pipeline. Stay tuned!

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Surround yourself with people who can support you on the journey. Being a founder—even if you have a cofounder—can feel super lonely. Building

a network of friends, advisors, and fellow founders is critical for staying sane!

And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

I don't love "rules", as I generally find that balance is more important than being overly strict. With so many health trends that come and go, I try to figure out what works for me and not just change based on what's trendy. Generally I try to exercise 3-4 times per week, get at least 7 hours of sleep, drink lots of water, spend time with my friends and eat a balanced diet... nothing unexpected, just difficult to fit it all in with a busy life!

Napala Pratini is the CEO and cofounder of Habitual.



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Article by Napala Pratini