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*Must Read Articles For  
Creating Successful  
Habits*



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## *5 Must Read Articles for Creating Successful Habits*

- 3 Steps to Creating New Habits
- The Inverse Relationship Between Habits and Willpower
- How Long Does It Really Take To Create A New Habit?
- Get Some Help – Simple Hacks To Help You Build New Habits
- Make It A Habit – The Benefit Of A Routine & Habit Filled Day

# 3 Steps to Creating New Habits

Let's talk about forming new habits. We all have times in our lives where we intentionally want to change our behavior for the better and create new habits for ourselves. This could be getting in the habit of eating healthier and drinking more water. Or it could be moving more and taking the dog for a daily walk. Or it could be work related, or spiritual, or mental. There are so many areas in our lives that could be improved and made easier if we created new habits.

Getting into the habit of doing something is often easier said than done. We seem to acquire bad habits without any effort, but getting into a "good" habit can be a little more challenging.

Let's break it down into a three step process that makes it easy to follow until we've internalized the new behavior and made it a true habit – something we do automatically without having to think about, like brushing our teeth.

## **Decide What You Want To Do**

The first step is to decide what you want that new habit to be. Be as specific as possible. Don't just tell yourself you want to exercise more. Instead say something like "I will go for a 30 minute walk every single day". Deciding what your new habit will be and committing to when and how you're going to do it, is half the battle.

## **Remind Yourself To Get It Done**

The next few days should be smooth sailing. You're motivated and excited to get this done. Sticking to your new habit isn't an issue. But a few days in you'll notice that it's easy to slip back into old habits.

Maybe it's raining and you don't really want to go out and walk. Or maybe your day just gets away from you. This is when it's important to have a daily reminder. Set an alert on your phone or add the new habit to your daily to-do list for a while.

## **Make It Part Of Your Routine Until It Becomes A Habit**

Which brings us to the last step. It takes some time before a new behavior becomes a true habit. Until then, a routine will work to your best advantage. Even before the new behavior becomes automatic, a routine will help you get it done without having to spend a lot of willpower or relying on daily reminders.

Make that daily walk part of your after dinner routine, or change from grabbing a snack at the vending machine at work at 10:00 in the morning to packing a healthy snack.

Congratulations! Decide to create the new habit, practice the routine until it's second nature and you'll be well on your way to forming a new good habit.

# The Inverse Relationship Between Habits and Willpower

It's hard to keep up willpower for any length of time. Yes, we can stick to a low-fat 1,000 calorie diet and go hungry for a week or two, but eventually our willpower fades. And yes, we can do exercise we hate for a while - until we run out of willpower.

But what about getting up to take the kids to school every morning, brushing our teeth or going to work every day. Those may not be our favorite things to do either, but we do them daily without the risk of running out of willpower. That's because they have become habits. They are so ingrained in what we do and who we are that we do them without even considering skipping a day or a week. We don't have to make a conscious decision each day to shower or drive to work. It's just what we do – a habit.

When you start to think about it, there is an inverse relationship between habits and will power. When you first want to build a new habit, it takes a lot of will power to get it done day in and day out. As you start to establish that habit, it becomes easier and easier to do until you don't even have to think about it anymore.

Just being aware of this process helps us stick it out. We know we don't always have to make such a big effort to go work out or skip the donut for breakfast. There is a light at the end of the tunnel. We know eventually it will become habit to go out for a run first thing in the morning and grab some fruit or fix some eggs for breakfast.

While we're in that transition from willpower to habit, we can use tools to make it easier. Use a to-do list or set a reminder to help stay on track. Find an accountability partner so the two of you can motivate each other and help bolster that willpower when it starts to fade after the first enthusiasm wears off. Even something as simple as laying out your running clothes the night before and keeping your sneakers by the door will make it a little easier to go out for that run.

Do what you can to help your willpower along until you have made the new behavior a true habit. After that it'll be easy and automatic and you've created a new lifelong habit.

# How Long Does It Really Take To Create A New Habit?

They say it takes 21 days to create a new habit. That's kind of a weird idea though, isn't it? It doesn't take that long to form a bad habit. And sometimes no matter how hard we try it takes us a lot longer to form a new habit.

So how long does it really take to create a new habit? The answer is that it depends. It depends on your mindset and it depends on how big of a change it is from what you are doing now. If it is your habit to eat a bowl of ice cream at night and you switch from regular ice cream to a low sugar frozen yogurt version, it's probably not going to take you very long to make that new habit. Giving up ice cream altogether though or cutting out all sugar on the other hand might take a lot longer.

When we ask that question, what we really want to know is how long do we have to tough it out before it gets easier. Is there a light at the end of the tunnel where we don't have to try so hard anymore? In other words, when will this new behavior become automatic?

While it will be different from one person to the next and even from one habit to the next, there are a few things to keep in mind.

It's easier to make a new habit than get rid of an old one. Be prepared to work a lot harder to give up checking your email every 2 minutes or snacking late at night. Whenever possible, try to replace an old habit with a new one. For example if you're wanting to give up coffee, brew a cup of herbal tea in the morning and throughout the day when you would usually reach for your cup of Joe.

Habits will form faster if you stick to the same time and environment each day. Instead of going for a walk whenever, keep your sneakers next to the door and schedule your walk every day at 6pm, right after dinner for example.

A constant reminder of why you're trying to change your behavior is also helpful. Remind yourself every day that you're exercising so your body stays strong and you can go play with the kids or grandkids in the yard. Or put up a picture to remind you that you're making frugal habits so you can one day purchase your dream home. Keep your reason why you're changing front and center and then be prepared to stick it out. Yes it will take some time to make new habits and replace old ones. But it will be well worth it in the end.

# Get Some Help – Simple Hacks To Help You Build New Habits

Creating new habits isn't easy. Here are six simple hacks that will make it a little easier. Use them until you've internalized the new habit and don't need them anymore.

## **Schedule It And Put It On The To-Do List**

Sometimes we forget to do that new thing we were trying. Maybe we forget that we're supposed to be having eggs for breakfast instead of a stack of waffles, or that we need to get that daily walk in.

Schedule your new habits or make them part of your daily to-do list until they become something you do automatically.

## **Make It Public and Be Accountable**

Let family and friends know what new habits you're trying to establish. They will call you out if you don't stick to your plan and get you back on track.

You may even go as far as sharing it publicly on Facebook or write a blog about your new journey. Knowing that others read it and know about it might be just enough to keep you going when you feel like throwing in the towel.

## **Piggyback On A Habit You Already Have**

Whenever possible, add the new habit to one you already have. For example, if you fix a cup of tea or coffee at 4pm, and you want to get in the habit of taking a daily walk, make the new ritual to go for your walk and then come back and enjoy your tea.

It's much easier to amend an existing habit or ritual than creating an entirely new one.

## **Make Slip Ups Costly**

Here's a fun idea. Put a jar on the kitchen counter and each time you slip back into your bad habit or forget to stick to the new one you have to put five dollars in the jar. It will quickly help you remember to skip that sugary food and motivate you to go out for that walk. For extra motivation donate the money to charity at the end of the month or hand it over to your spouse to go spend on him or herself.

## **Find A Partner and Help Each Other Along**

Find someone with the same or similar goal. This could be a workout partner or a diet buddy. Keep tabs on each other and encourage each other to keep going. It's much harder to skip a walk if you know someone else is depending on you being there.

## **Make It A Group Challenge**

If one accountability partner is good, a whole group is even better. And they don't even need to be local. Find a supportive group online and challenge each other to stick to your new habit for the next 30 days or so. Not wanting to be the first one to give up will keep all of you going until you establish that new habit.

Give these simple little hacks a try. Keep using the ones that you find helpful until you have made new habits you can stick with without the help of any tools or support.

# Make It A Habit - The Benefit Of A Routine & Habit Filled Day

Do you have notice that it gets harder to make decisions toward the end of the day? You're too tired to figure out what to have for dinner or what to watch on TV. That's because we all have a finite amount of decisions that we can make in any given day.

Knowing that helps us prioritize. We can cut out a lot of decision making by implementing habits and routines. That way we save them for the important stuff. It also frees brain space for more creative and productive thinking. Routines are a great tool that simplify our lives and cut out a lot of our daily stress.

Chances are you already have a morning routine. You get up, you get your coffee, read the paper, check your email, and fix some toast before heading into the shower. Let's expand on that. If you create a "uniform" for yourself, you don't even have to think about what to wear. You just grab a pair of pants and a shirt, or a skirt, tights and sweater and off you go.

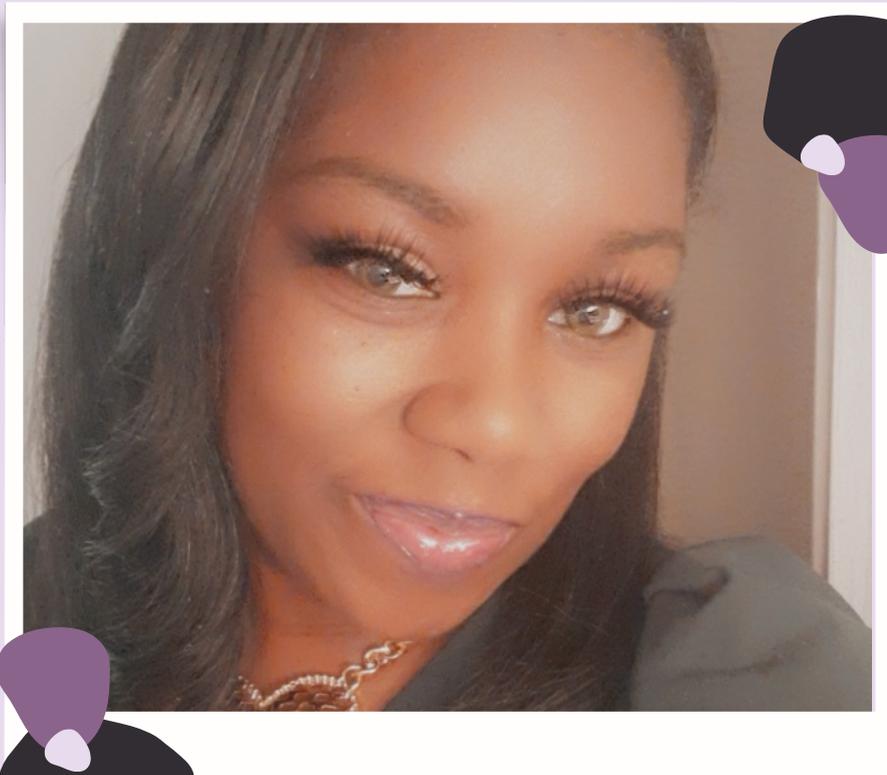
Implement some routines into your workday wherever possible. Meal planning helps you figure out what meals to fix and eat. A cleaning schedule makes sure you stay on track with your household chores without you having to spend any valuable decision making skills in the process.

Wrap your day up with a bedtime routine that not only helps when you're too tired to make smart choices, it also helps you fall asleep more easily. What works for your toddler works for you as well.

Start by doing a few chores that make the next morning easier. Making sure the kitchen is clean and the kids' school things are in order are great examples. Come up with a few calming things that help you slow down and get ready for sleep. Read a book, listen to some music or wind down with a cup of herbal tea.

Sit down with a pen and piece of paper and think about what parts of your day and week you can turn into routines. Write them down and create daily to-do lists for yourself until you've established these new habits and routines.

Spending a little bit of time creating routines and habits will make your day run a lot smoother. You might just find yourself less stressed and get more done during your productive hours. And that's a beautiful thing. It allows you to save plenty of decision making for the fun stuff like figuring out what park to go to, what family movie to watch or what board game to play.



*Thank You!*

**"The Secret of Your Success is Found in Your Daily Routine"**

I hope you found these mini articles helpful. Creating healthy and successful habits will change your future when you develop them. Are you ready to change your life? I'd love to help you create successful habits that will improve your life, and help you to stop breaking promises to yourself. For a free consultation, please contact me via one of the options below.

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