

You are Your Habits

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Habits are very important to living a productive and enjoyable life. The longer you work on doing something consistently, the easier it is to sustain new ones and keep old ones going. If you don't take special care to prune out bad habits and grow new ones, it can be very, very difficult to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

When you're young, you're often taught about all the healthy habits that you should always keep in your routine: brushing your teeth twice a day, taking showers every day, getting enough exercise, etc. If you've been raised practicing these habits, they may seem pretty basic. In any case, it's always good to make sure that you are in the routine of practicing them. You might also be told not to engage in unhealthy habits like watching too much TV, playing video games, or eating junk

food. While it's okay to do them once in a while, you shouldn't practice these long and consistently enough for them to become a habit.

In theory, forming a good new habit sounds really easy. Just *do it* for a while, and *boom!*— it's a habit. But in reality, feeling motivated is not constant, and it can be extra difficult to summon motivation at times.

A less daunting way to form a habit is to begin with a little at a time. With this method, it's necessary that you don't push yourself too much. Start with something not very challenging, but better than doing nothing, and then increase the difficulty in small increments. For example, if you wish to start reading more, set a timer or a number of pages to read each morning when you wake up. Pick a book that appeals to your interests, even if it doesn't match the great novels you want to read in the future. From anywhere from a few days to a few weeks, stay consistent with reading that many pages. When you feel ready, increase the number slightly and stay consistent with that number. Repeat this until you feel that you've accomplished your goal.

Another important part of making a habit, especially if you've failed to establish it before, is to identify what held you back from getting it done in the past. If it was simply that you aspired to start too high, then like I said before, try and divide the load up into smaller accomplishments. Maybe your obstacle was that you were making excuses not to free up time. A lot of the time, the problem is really that you're making excuses in order not to have to change something. However, you might really be too busy to have time to do something on a normal day. If that's the case, and you want to

make a habit badly enough, you should be able to set aside some time to work on that goal, even if it's only for that 5 minutes after you eat breakfast. Finally, maybe you just didn't think of trying it before! In any case, making sure you know what you're facing can be half the battle.

Last but not least, using habits you already have to support budding new ones can help you remember to work on forming your habits as well as build them into your routine. For example, if you already brush your teeth twice a day, but your dentist told you to start flossing them as well, you can use the habit of brushing your teeth to help guide you into flossing them. Whenever you brush your teeth, floss them as well. After a while, it just becomes part of your routine, and you don't need to think about flossing your teeth as long as you continue with brushing your teeth. Linking new habits to old ones can give you a nice cue to do them.

All in all, habits may seem difficult to form, but if you follow these tips, you'll have a solid foundation. Before you know it, you will have mastered the process of creating a new habit.

More resources:

- [The 1-minute secret to forming a new habit](#) This TED talk from Christine Carter explains her experience with forming habits during quarantine and how to form a new habit quickly and efficiently.
- [Matt Cutts: Try something new for 30 days | TED Talk](#) This short but sweet TED talk by Matt Cutts teaches you about starting new habits and getting things done by using 30-day challenges.
- [How to Form a Habit](#) This YouTube video explains the fascinating science behind and process of forming a

habit.

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