



Take Control Of Your Life With Hypnosis:

Eliminate negative habits; Create healthy changes; Achieve optimal well-being.

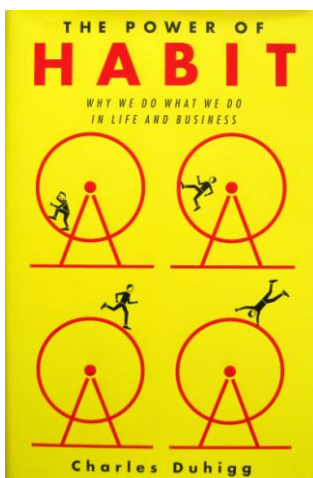
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HABITS

“I am your constant companion I am your greatest helper or heaviest burden. I will push you onward or drag you down to failure. I am completely at your command. Half of the things you do you might just as well turn over to me and I will be able to do them quickly and correctly. I am easily managed – you must merely be firm with me. Show me exactly how you want something done and after a few lessons, I will do it automatically. I am the servant of all great individuals and, alas, of all failures, as well. Those who are great, I have made great. Those who are failures, I have made failures. I am not a machine, though I work with the precision of a machine plus the intelligence of a human. You may run me for profit or run me for ruin – it makes no difference to me. Take me, train me, be firm with me, and I will place the world at your feet. Be easy with me and I will destroy you. Who am I? I am Habit. [1] (author unknown)

“William James wrote in 1892: ‘All our life, so far as it has definite form, is but a mass of habits.’ Most of the choices we make each day may feel like the products of well-considered decision making, but they’re not. One paper published by a Duke University researcher in 2006 found that more than 40% of the actions people performed each day weren’t actual decisions, but habits.”[2]



Habits take hold in the subconscious mind as experiences, messages and influences in our lives get repeated. Once there, they become automatic – just like breathing. While habits may be positive, negative or anywhere in between, it would make sense that the best way to deal with unwanted ones is through the subconscious mind. As a hypnotist I’m always helping people do that by releasing everything connected with the unwanted habit, replacing that with a new positive perception, and reinforcing that so it becomes the new habit. Charles Duhigg, in his book *The Power of Habit*, suggests that “...you can never truly extinguish bad habits” [3]. He does, however, provide an in-depth look

at the habits of individuals, successful organizations, and societies, with no subconscious connections.

Most people try to eliminate habits without any assistance from their subconscious mind and can be likened to those who make New Year's resolutions. They decide to establish a new habit and put varying degrees of conscious effort (willpower) into doing that. But, as author/researcher, Steve Shapiro, states: "According to our study, only 8% of Americans say they always achieve their New Year's resolutions. The way it seems to work now, setting a New Year's Resolution is a recipe for defeat." This dismal statistic was gleaned from a random telephone survey conducted by Shapiro, author of "Goal-Free Living," with the assistance of Opinion Research Corp. of Princeton N.J... [4]

Remembering that hypnosis provides the most effective way of dealing with habits, it makes sense that people using only their conscious minds to overcome them can substantially increase their odds for success by making a solid plan and sticking with it. The "18 Tricks to Make New Habits Stick" [5], by Scott H. Young (below), offer a host of ways to increase the success of establishing new habits.

- 1. Commit to thirty days** – Three to four weeks is all you need to make a habit automatic. If you can make it through the initial conditioning phase, it becomes easier to sustain. A month is a good block of time to commit to a change since it easily fits in your calendar.
- 2. Make it Daily** – Consistency is critical if you want to make a habit stick. If you want to start exercising, go to the gym every day for the first thirty days. Going a couple of times a week will make it harder to form the habit. Activities you do once every few days are trickier to lock in as habits.
- 3. Start Simple** – Don't try to completely change your life in one day. It is easy to get over-motivated and take on too much. If you wanted to study two hours a day, first make the habit go for thirty minutes and build on that.
- 4. Remind Yourself** – Around two weeks into your commitment it can be easy to forget. Place reminders to execute your habit each day or you might miss a few days. If you miss time it defeats the purpose of setting a habit to begin with.
- 5. Stay Consistent** – The more consistent your habit the easier it will be to stick. If you want to start exercising, try going at the same time, to the same place for thirty days. When cues like time of day, place and circumstances are the same in each case it is easier to stick.
- 6. Get a Buddy** – Find someone who will go along with you and keep you motivated if you feel like quitting.
- 7. Form a Trigger** – A trigger is a ritual you use right before executing a habit. If you wanted to wake up earlier, this could mean waking up in exactly the same way each morning. If you wanted to quit smoking you could practice snapping your fingers each time you felt the urge to pick up a cigarette.

8. Replace Lost Needs – If you are giving up something in your habit, make sure you are replacing any needs you've lost. If watching television gave you a way to relax, you could take up meditation or reading as a way to replace that same need.

9. Be Imperfect – Don't expect all your attempts to change habits to be successful immediately. It took me four independent tries before I started exercising regularly. Now I love it. Try your best, but a few bumps along the way.

10. Use "But" – A prominent habit changing therapist once told me this great technique for changing bad thought patterns. When you start to think negative thoughts, use the word "but" to interrupt it. "I'm no good at this, but if I work at it I might get better later."

11. Remove Temptation – Restructure your environment so it won't tempt you in the first thirty days. Remove junk food from your house, cancel your cable subscription, and throw out the cigarettes so you won't need to struggle with willpower later.

12. Associate With Role Models – Spend more time with people who model the habits you want to mirror. A recent study found that having an obese friend indicated you were more likely to become fat. You become what you spend time around.

13. Run it as an Experiment – Withhold judgment until after a month has past and use it as an experiment in behavior. Experiments can't fail; they just have different results so it will give you a different perspective on changing your habit.

14. Swish – A technique from NLP (neuro-linguistic programming). Visualize yourself performing the bad habit. Next visualize yourself pushing aside the bad habit and performing an alternative. Finally, end that sequence with an image of yourself in a highly positive state. See yourself picking up the cigarette, see yourself putting it down and snapping your fingers, finally visualize yourself running and breathing free. Do it a few times until you automatically go through the pattern before executing the old habit.

15. Write it Down – A piece of paper with a resolution on it isn't that important –writing that resolution is. Writing makes your ideas more clear and focuses your mind on the end result.

16. Know the Benefits – Familiar yourself with the benefits of making a change. Get books that show the benefits of regular exercise. Notice any changes in energy levels after you take on a new diet. Imagine getting better grades after improving your study habits.

17. Know the Pain – You should also be aware of the consequences. Exposing yourself to realistic information about the downsides of not making a change will give you added motivation.

18. Do it For Yourself – Don't worry about all the things you "should" have as habits. Instead tool your habits towards your goals and the things that motivate you. Weak guilt and empty resolutions aren't enough.

[1] cwestermarkwordpress.com/2012/12/02/1-am-habit/

[2] *The Power of Habit*, Charles Duhigg, New York, Random House, 2012, pp. XV-XVI

[3] Ibid: p62

[4] <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2005/12/prweb319962.htm>

[5] www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/18-tricks-to-make-new-habits-stick.html

HEALTH TIPS

Can exercise help keep your mind sharp? Researchers increasingly say the answer is yes. John J. Ratey, a psychiatrist who wrote the book *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, says that there is overwhelming evidence that exercise produces large cognitive gains and helps fight dementia. The *Washington Post* advises: "...while the volume of that research grows, the safest course of action for both body and mind appears to be to keep our weight down, follow a regular course of moderate to intense exercise, and stick with it."

(<http://fitness.mercola.com/sites/fitness/archive/2010/06/12/growing-evidence-links-exercise-and-mental-acuity.aspx>)



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Happy Health!

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Remember: Hypnosis can be done in the office, by phone and via Skype.
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