

Build Habits That Stick

Motivation fades — habits keep working. Learn the simple loop behind habits and design yours on purpose.

Up Front: Start with a step small enough that you're confident you can repeat it inside a normal day.

START HERE

Why it matters

Real change is not about motivation or willpower — it is about habits, the small actions you repeat until they run on autopilot. Motivation comes and goes, but a habit keeps working even on the days you do not feel like it. The science of habit is simple and hopeful: when you understand how habits form, you can design them on purpose, so healthy choices can become the easy, automatic default.

KEY IDEAS

How a habit works

Habits run on a loop: a cue (something that triggers it), the behavior itself, and a reward (what makes it worth repeating). To build a good habit, make the cue obvious and the behavior easy. To break an unhelpful one, disrupt the cue or make the behavior harder.

1

Cue Something that triggers it



2

Behavior The action itself



3

Reward What makes it worth repeating

MAKE IT STICK

Ways to make habits stick

- ✓ **Start tiny** — so small it feels almost too easy. Shrink it until you cannot say no.
- ✓ **Anchor it** to something you already do ("after I pour my coffee, I take my vitamins").
- ✓ **Make it obvious** — set out your shoes, keep fruit on the counter.
- ✓ **Track it and celebrate small wins** to reinforce the loop.

One at a time: Focus on building one or two habits until they feel automatic before adding more. Slow and steady tends to win here — a habit that sticks beats five that fizzle.

WHEN IT HAS NOT WORKED BEFORE

If you've quit before (most people have)

In one often-cited study, people building a new daily habit took a median of about 66 days before it started to feel automatic — and the range ran from under three weeks to well over eight months. If it's taking longer than you expected, that's ordinary, not failure.

And when life interrupts, use the rule that helps most: **miss one, never miss twice.**

PUT IT TO WORK

Try this

Design one habit this week.

1 What is one small habit you would like to make automatic?

2 What existing routine could you anchor it to?

After I _____, I will _____.

3 How will you celebrate or mark the win each time you do it?

Track your first 14 days: mark each day you do it. Miss one? Circle it and make the next box your comeback.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐

The Bottom Line: Tiny start, steady repeats, and when you slip — miss one, never miss twice.

Pairs with the Build Habits That Stick lesson in NuStart Blocks, your online lesson library.