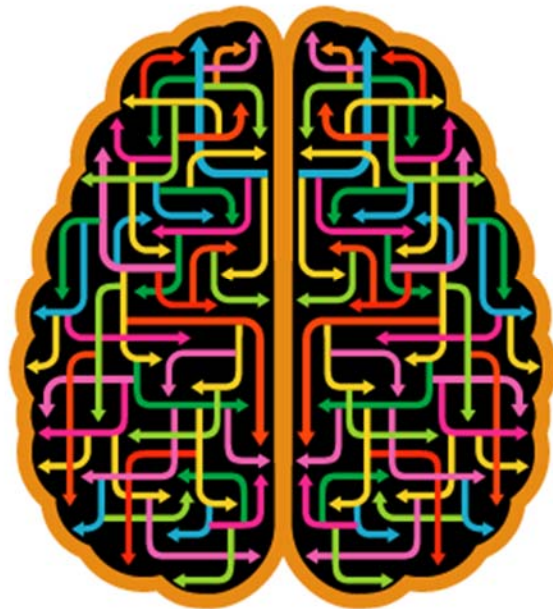


THE **INCREDIBLE** POWER OF
HABIT



POSITIVE HABIT CREATION

IN 21 DAYS

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Introduction

Habits are what help us achieve great things in life. You won't find a successful person who doesn't have habits that have helped them accomplish what they needed to on their way to a goal. This guide, "21-Day Habit Creation," can help you develop habits that will take you to your ultimate goal and beyond.

You might look at Olympians' habits as grueling and so time-consuming – with no guarantee of winning the gold medal – that it seems like too much to bear for just a chance of winning. But, the Olympian has passion for what they're reaching for. Without passion for the habit you're trying to create, you'll have a much more difficult time reaching the finish line.

During the formation of a habit, you'll probably make all types of excuses why the habit can't be carried out. For example, if you want to get up early to exercise, your excuses to stay in bed might include:

- "I didn't get any sleep."
- "It's too cold to go outside and run."
- "I'm sore from yesterday's workout."
- "I need to check little Davey's homework this morning."

This is the dark side of habit creation. Our subconscious minds are going to try and sabotage the new habit simply because the old habit gives us some type of reward and is easy, or at least familiar.

There are other saboteurs who may try and wreak your efforts of creating new habits. They can be instances from your childhood that have caused you to create habits that don't serve you well anymore.

Habits such as biting your nails, watching too much television, smoking and many others can all be traced to something that happened when you were a child. It's

important that you bring those habits to the forefront and learn why you developed the habit and make the decision that it no longer fits into your present lifestyle.

Habits come in two distinct types – good and bad. The bad habits are the destructive ones that keep us from living up to our full potential. Unfortunately, they also tend to give us pleasure – that extra sleep in the morning rather than working out or watching our favorite shows on television rather than studying.

Good habits can be created and that's what this guide is all about. It will teach you how habits work, how to formulate a plan of action and how to make them stick throughout your life.

Habits need to be repeated for at least 21 days before they become a part of your routine. Some habits take longer – for example, those that are associated with addiction such as smoking.

The “21 Day Habit Creation” guide will help you understand the key components of a habit – how they work and how you can make them stick.

How Habits Work

Habits are based on the decisions you make on a daily basis. As you grow older, these decisions become habits that are a part of who you are and what defines you. If you learn to master these decisions and turn them into positive habits, you'll be one of those people who are destined to succeed in life.

There's no one plan of attack to get rid of bad habits and replace them with positive ones, but there are certain facts we know about how habits work. There are ways to do away with bad habits and create new ones. It may not be easy, but some time and effort on your part will help you succeed.

Most time management experts say that a habit pattern can be accomplished within 21 days, but we know that some habits may take longer and some a shorter amount of time. It depends on the complexity of the habit.

For example, some habits may take a small amount of effort and planning, such as setting the alarm clock to wake you up at an earlier hour so that you can eat a healthy breakfast, meditate or exercise.

Other habits may take more effort and time such as the habits you've developed through an addiction. For example, if you're used to having a cigarette with your morning cup of coffee, it may be difficult to break that habit because of the nicotine addiction factor.

But, habits that are of medium complexity can be changed for the better in about 21 days. Changing a habit involves repetition of the new habit -- and practice, practice, practice.

You may not feel completely comfortable with your new, positive habit for months or years, but the fact that you're changing yourself for the better will definitely boost your mood and your self-confidence.

Understanding Habits and How they Work

If you want to understand habits, you should first know that any event such as a complete happiness experience or a painful incident or period of time can lead you into a habit that may affect you for the remainder of your life.

For example, if you had a near-drowning incident as a child, you may develop a habit of never going near a swimming pool or the ocean. If you're considered a "neat freak," you likely developed a habit somewhere in time that makes you love to have everything organized and in its place.

Every habit has a definitive loop. It begins with a **trigger** or cue that sets off the **behavior** and the behavior reaps a **reward**. These are the three elements of a habit, and to figure out how to break a bad habit or create a good one involves knowing what your triggers are that lead to the behavior and the reward you'll receive.

After you figure out those three elements of the habit you want to break or create, you can create a plan of action. At the end of 21 days of practicing your new habit, you should be well on your way to developing a habit that can become part of your personality and lead you toward success.

Triggers, Behavior and Rewards

We've all experienced triggers that make us want to act. Smelling Mom's home-made cake can make it almost impossible to resist a slice. A rainy morning may make you want to stay in bed rather than exercising. A trigger leads to a certain behavior and the reward is the taste of the cake or a few minutes more of lying in a warm bed.

But, these triggers, behaviors and rewards aren't going to lead you to success. Anything worthwhile in life requires that you replace some of your bad habits with good ones or to create habits that will lead you to the ultimate reward of success.

The behaviors you exhibit when you experience the trigger can be detrimental to ever achieving a goal. You may procrastinate because the task of studying (or whatever) is going to be boring. A "better" behavior of the moment might be watching television or playing games on the computer.

Rewards are what you experience when you exhibit the behavior caused by the trigger. Think of it as a carrot on the proverbial stick. When you perform the behavior that the new habits demand, you get the carrot.

Sometimes the reward you get takes time – such as a degree in the field of study you chose. Sometimes, it's faster – such as losing weight by sticking to a habit of healthy eating and regular exercise.

The purpose of "21-Day Habit Creation" is to help you understand habit creation, to minimize the time it takes to reach the ultimate reward and to help you see how creating and implementing good habits in your life will change your life for the better.

Main Learning Points of Chapter 1: How Habits Work

You've got to understand how habits work if you want to get rid of one you don't want and create one that will help you rather than hinder you in life. Chapter 1, "How Habits Work," presented the following overview:

- Studies indicate that it takes 21 days to develop a habit pattern.
- Awareness of your actions and lots of practice is the only way to establish a habit pattern that will last.
- Creating a positive habit will boost your mood and provide more self-confidence.
- Past experiences can bring on habits that will affect you for the remainder of your life.
- Every one of your habits is a loop that begins with a trigger, which results in the behavior, which leads to a reward.

Key Habits of Successful People

There are certain principles of creating habits that successful people know and use to create wealth and personal success. Whether you want more successful relationships, wealth, career or educational success, you can learn and develop the habits that will spur you on to the success you desire.

Habits can make or break you. If you're in the habit of procrastinating, you won't complete projects or goals you've set for yourself that will make you successful. You may not even realize what's holding you back, but a series of bad habits can keep you from success.

Every highly successful person has developed certain positive habits that have led them to monetary or personal success. A highly educated person may have developed a habit of getting up early to study. The new CEO of a company may have early on developed a habit of "early to work and late to leave."

When you repeat a good habit for at least 21 days, you're well on your way to creating the habits that will lead you to success and replace the bad habits that have held you back.

Here are a few of the good habits among highly successful people who have learned the secrets of habit creation:

1. **Have a purpose.** Successful people – at some point in their lives – have developed a clear understanding of their purpose in life. This knowledge determines the actions they must take and the habits they must develop to reach the pinnacle of success they envision.
2. **Negative thoughts are not allowed.** Those who have become successful in life have made it a practice to immediately replace negative thoughts with positive ones. Negative thoughts are bound to creep into your minds, but

with some practice, you can quickly create a habit of replacing them with positive ones.

3. **Develop the power of listening.** Those people who interrupt others when they're speaking or think ahead to what they're going to reply are usually left behind in the journey to success.
4. **Decision-Making Skills.** The big winners in this world can make decisions quickly and strongly. They know that they can always change them later, but it's important to take the reins of power by making decisions fast and as needed.
5. **Goal-Setting.** This skill of successful people goes along with having a purpose in life, but you're actually setting goals and putting time limits on accomplishing them. This will help you prioritize the important tasks in life – the ones that will help you succeed.
6. **Exercise Regularly.** Physical exercise can keep both your mind and body in shape so you're always ready to face the challenges that life hands you. You'll be able to think more clearly and enjoy good health so that you can function at the top of your game plan. Successful people take time to keep in shape.
7. **Do What You Love.** It's just impossible to reach a goal if you don't like what you're doing. If you're an accountant but long to be sailing, you're likely never going to move up in a corporation or in your own business. Take the leap in life to ensure your passion, but be practical about it. If you have a family, it may not be practical to sail around the world, but you could work in the industry.
8. **Master the Skills You Need to Know.** Set your sights on becoming the best in the business. A person who is mediocre in a profession won't rise to the same heights that a person who builds a foundation of complete knowledge and experience in a profession.

Success can only be reached if you have a goal in place and a plan to ensure you get there. With the proper habits in place, they'll become so ingrained that they're automatic in your daily routine.

Main Learning Points of Chapter 2: Key Habits of Successful People

When you look carefully at the lives of successful people and how they reached that level, you get the idea that they're alike in so many ways. They all have developed habits that are key to reaching and maintaining their level of success. It may be physical or mental, but each habit is especially created to obtain goals they're passionate about.

In Chapter 2: "Key Habits of Successful People," you learned about some of the habits that you should develop if you want to be successful in your chosen field or passion:

- **Habits are responsible for your success – or lack of success.** If you have a bad habit that's holding you back from something you really want to do, you'll likely never reach that goal. For example, if you have "climbing Mt. Everest" on your bucket list, you might not ever achieve it if you're a smoker.
- **You may not realize that bad habits are holding you back.** Take a hard look at some of the ways you may be your own worst enemy when it comes to habits you've developed. For example, if you're procrastinating about returning to school, you may never learn the skills needed for your chosen profession.
- **When you practice a good habit for 21 days, you're well on your way to a successful outcome.** Experts say that it takes approximately 21 days of complete focus and practice for a good habit to "gel."
- **There are certain habits that are likely found in every highly successful person.** Such habits as immediately replacing negative thoughts with positive ones, goal-setting and doing what you love are just a few of the key habits that most successful people enjoy.
- **Practice habits constantly.** Habits that are practiced constantly become so ingrained that they will eventually be a natural occurrence in your daily routine.

- **Triggers, behavior and rewards work together.** These three habit-formation elements work together to help you achieve either success or failure. Creating good triggers lead to the behavior you'll need that will get you to the ultimate reward.

How to Create New Habits

There are definite methods to creating positive, new habits that have been proven to work. There are fundamental “ingredients” found in every newly developed habit and you can use these ingredients any time you desire to develop habits that will be lasting and that will improve your chances for success.

Here are some things you’ll want to incorporate into your habit creation methodology:

- **Identify the behavior you want to establish.** When you make a firm and calculated decision about a type of behavior that will become a good habit and incorporated into your daily life, you’ll set in motion the actions that are necessary to achieve it.

For example, if you want to develop a habit of exercising each morning, you might set the alarm clock earlier than usual, have your exercise clothes ready to slip into and have planned where you’ll go and what type of exercises you’ll perform.

- **Use the visualization technique.** When you visualize your new habit taking place, you’ll be reinforcing its value in your life. Imagine acting as if your habit is already established – that will serve to ingrain the habit in your sub-conscious mind and help it to become automatic.

The act of visualization is used in many methodologies to help a person progress in what they want to accomplish. Athletes use visualization to help them reach goals they set for themselves and future executives are taught to imagine themselves in the seat of power within a company.

- **Don’t make excuses.** As your new habit is in its early stages of formation, it’s important that you don’t make excuses or rationalize why you should break from it – even temporarily. That can put you on a downward spiral of continually finding excuses why you can’t or shouldn’t perpetuate the new habit.

For example, many people find excuses not to exercise. “I’ve had a tiresome day,” or “I’m sore and exhausted,” or “I don’t have time.” Work through these negative excuses and find a way to develop the discipline necessary to see any good habit or behavior pattern through to fruition.

- **Tell friends, family and co-workers about your new habit.** Most of the ones you tell will be happy about the changes you’re attempting to make and will encourage and help you through the low points. There will be some who consciously or subconsciously try to thwart your efforts.

Don’t listen or pay attention to those who are trying to fill your mind with negativity so you’ll fail. Keep focused on the outcome you want to happen and surround yourself with those who encourage you rather than put you down.

- **Repeat positive affirmations.** Affirmations are extremely valuable in creating new and lasting habits and will decrease the time it takes to make the habit stick.

An example of a positive affirmation is, “I will exercise each day after work.” Repeating that affirmation all day in your mind will push the negative attitude to the back and firmly ensconce your new habit to the forefront.

- **Make a commitment to success.** Unless you have the willpower to persist in the quest to create a new and better behavior for yourself, you’ll feel uncomfortable and will likely quit before giving it a chance to succeed. Without a strong commitment to change, you’ll be more susceptible to the negative thoughts and pull from your old habits to regress and ruin everything you’ve been working for.

- **Reward yourself.** The final part of the habit changing loop is to reward yourself. This reinforces and reaffirms the new behavior patterns you’re trying to make a part of your life.

Positive changes in your life will begin to occur when you get used to the rewards and the good consequences of what happens when you change for the better.

After your new habit has found a place in your daily routine, you'll be less apt to procrastinate about actually doing the positive actions in your life that will get things done and lead you to the success you desire.

Why Good Habits Fail

Remember in the previous chapter how there is a loop present in every habit. This includes the trigger, the behavior and the reward. When you're attempting to create a new habit, it's extremely important that the loop is kept intact.

For example, if your alarm clock is the trigger that cues you to get up and exercise in the morning, it's important that you react to that cue in the way that will lead you to performing the exercise. That will lead you to the ultimate reward which is becoming healthier and/or losing weight and becoming toned and fit.

Breaking the loop doesn't necessarily need to be a failure. You can think of it as simply increasing the time it will take you to reach your goal or to form the habit. It's necessary that you resume the loop in its entirety as quickly as possible. Letting too much time pass before you resume the habit formation can cause you to continue with the bad habit pattern and abandon the new and better habit.

It's important that you take every part of the habit loop seriously. Minimizing any one of the steps can cause failure after failure. Have the triggers firmly in place that lead to a behavior that you're consistent in performing and that provides a reward that you enjoy and benefit from.

One Step Forward – Two Steps Back

Don't be too hard on yourself if you regress to an old habit or don't stick to a new one at first. It takes time to create and develop a new habit so that it will be reinforced to the point that it becomes second nature to you.

Using the tools mentioned in this chapter, you should be able to ultimately cement the habits that are going to change your life for the better. The next chapter in “21-Day Habit Creation” deals with how to make the good habits stick. You’ll learn how to experiment with the rewards you allow yourself and how to create cues that will eventually automate the new habit.

Main Learning Points of Chapter 3: How to Create New Habits

The creation of new habits that will serve you better in life involves commitment, and some time and effort. It’s not always easy to let go or to put in place a new habit that might be contrary to what you’ve been used to, but as you create the habits that will take you to the top, you’ll begin to think of more ways to change for the better.

Here are some thoughts from Chapter 3: “How to Create New Habits” that you’ll want to remember:

- **There are certain “ingredients” found in the creation of every new habit.** Whether your new habit is a good or bad one, you can usually identify the elements, just as you can in a gourmet dish that’s gone wrong – or created to perfection.
- **First, identify the habit you want to create.** Identifying a specific habit helps you to focus on all of the “ingredients” you want your new habit to have. For example, if you want to stop procrastinating, you might identify the ingredients of persistence and determination.
- **Visualization is a main part of creating a new habit.** It’s easy to act successful if you visualize yourself doing it. When you visualize yourself as doing everything that a non-smoker can do (climbing a mountain or running in a marathon), it’s less of a challenge to put down that cigarette.
- **Make a commitment to change.** If you’re not committed, you won’t be successful in creating a new and better habit. It’s as simple as that. Anyone

who has ever succeeded in life has made a stark commitment that he or she will follow through with whatever it takes to get the job done.

- **Rewards are important.** Unless you reap some rewards of the commitment and effort to change or create new habits, you'll quickly tire of the process and go back to your old ways. Be sure that you figure rewards into the challenge of creating new habits.
- **Don't break any part of the habit loop.** All three portions of a habit loop – triggers, behavior and rewards – are equally important in achieving success. If one part of the loop is broken at any time in the creation of the habit, you risk either increasing the time it takes to reach your goal or in abandoning it altogether.

How to Stick to Your New Habits

It's normal to want everything to remain the same – even though we may desperately want to change ourselves for the better, we remain drawn to the old ways. That's because we're getting some type of reward for the habit.

When you smoke, you get the reward of the “nicotine high,” or if you bite your nails, you're passing time in a way that helps calm you down or simply gives you something to do with your hands. Every habit is based on rewards.

Your new and better habits will also be based on a reward system. It will succeed or fail depending on how you view that reward. This chapter will focus on some strategies that will help you on your quest to set up a system within your thought pattern and your life that can get you through the bad times when you may think of reverting to old habits and the rewards that come with them.

Have a Plan in Place Before Beginning the 21-Day Habit Challenge

Practicing a new habit for 21 days will give you the head start you need to continue implementing the habit into your every day routine and thought pattern. By the end of the 21 day period, you should know how this new habit formation will change your life.

Before you begin the 21-day challenge of creating a new habit, you should give much thought, time and effort to the plan and have a system in place to counteract any obstacles you might face.

Here is a step-by-step guide to help you in the formation and implementing of a new habit and how to make it take root.

1. **State and research the habit you want to create.** Understanding the habit you want to get rid of and/or the one you want to create means that you

should know why it hurts or can help you and to know what rewards you're getting from it.

It sometimes helps if you have a journal to write down everything you're thinking and doing to put your new habit into action. Take some time to write down the definition of the habit (in detail) and how the new behavior is going to change your life.

2. **Know the three components of your new habit – the triggers, the behavior and the reward.** These three parts of a habit formation are the mainstay of how and why it lives on in your life. Knowing this loop of a habit you want to implement in your life can help you avoid roadblocks you'll likely encounter and which rewards will make it worth your while. Take some time to think about what might trigger you to perpetuate your old habits such as smoking. The triggers might be stress, alcohol consumption, drinking caffeine or hanging around with friends who smoke. You'll find that most of your habits have several triggers – and to make the new habit successful, you'll need to figure out which new triggers might work in a positive way.
3. **Use positive self-talk and actions to combat triggers you want to eliminate.** If you're trying to exercise first thing in the morning, set the alarm clock across the room so you'll have to get up to turn it off. Self-talk might include affirmations about how much better you're going to feel and look when you're toned and fit. Only you know the triggers that can make you more susceptible to the old habit and which will make you want to carry on with your new plan of success.
4. **Make time for your new habit.** Any new habit you go for will take some time out of your schedule. If you plan ahead, you can cut out some time and won't be so overwhelmed with your "new" responsibility. We all have ultra-busy schedules these days, but your new habit can make a difference in the way you work and fulfill your responsibilities. The habit may create more time in your life so you're not so overwhelmed, or it may make you feel better – so you have more energy.

5. **Create triggers that will help you ingrain the new habit.** For example, just as having a cup of coffee often triggers the need for a cigarette, you can create a new trigger that will help you substantiate your fledgling habit. If your new habit is to lose weight by eating healthier, you may want to develop a trigger of drinking a bottle of water 15 minutes before every meal. That will fill you up so you don't eat as much.

You can have more than one trigger to develop a healthy habit. And, they don't all have to be monumental. Tiny repetitions of something that will be a cue for you are all you need to be well on your way to establishing a new habit in only 21 days.

6. **Overcome lack of willpower.** When it comes to creating a new and lasting habit, lack of willpower is often the worst enemy. You'll likely have no trouble beginning because you'll be all fired up about beginning a life-changing way to live your life.

The problem begins when something happens to make you want to fall back on your old way of doing things. After all, it's familiar and easy and probably gives you much more pleasure (in the beginning) than your new habit.

Your habit-changing plan of action needs to deal with lack of willpower before you even begin. Figure out what will keep you on track and help you overcome the lack of willpower that can become an obstacle to your progress.

7. **Reward yourself.** There's nothing like rewards to train dogs and people. If you look toward the reward you're going to have after completing your habit training, you'll succeed.

Experiment with some rewards to see what works best for you. You may have to rev it up a notch or two for the reward aspect of the habit loop to work as it should.

Unfortunately, there's no one formula that works to make a new habit stick. Persistence is the key – and being able to continue after a bout of failure. Almost everyone will have a time where they falter during the 21 days of creating a new habit.

Don't let a temporary fall back make you quit altogether. Getting back on the horse after you fall off is the only way to keep going and to realize the ultimate success you're striving for.

Know the Saboteurs

There are saboteurs in every great plan. They may be negative self-talks that your sub-conscious feeds you at a critical time in the habit formation. For example, if you're trying to lose weight and are craving a donut, you may have thoughts such as, "One donut won't hurt – I'll make up for it by not eating dinner."

If you give in to the negative self-talk and eat the donut, you'll be breaking the loop of the habit creation process by choosing a trigger that isn't part of your plan to lose weight and eat healthier. The self-talk was the saboteur that made you vulnerable.

Your own family and friends may be saboteurs in your efforts to create and keep good habits. If you're trying to quit smoking and hang around people who smoke, it's going to be much more difficult to break that habit. The key is to create new ways to spend your time or to be sure you inform those around you how important it is to you to quit smoking.

As much as you try to plan ahead so you can ward off any saboteurs that might keep you from your habit goal, they are bound to happen. Spend some time in the planning stages of creating a new habit thinking of things that might occur and how you might be able to resist the saboteur effectively.

Main Learning Points of Chapter 4: How to Stick to Your New Habits

All the planning and mind-searching have been relatively easy up until this point. Now, you've got to make sure you stick to the plan and put your new habit firmly in place.

It may not be easy, but this part of the guide should have given you some great insight into how to stick with these new positive habits. Among the high points of Chapter 4: "How to Stick to Your New Habits are the following:

- **Know the habit you want to establish -- inside and out.** You know you desire the behavior pattern you're about to establish, but unless you fully consider the rewards you're getting from the old habit and the results of establishing the new habit, it's difficult to see the light at the end of the tunnel.
- **Learn about the three components in the new habit.** The three parts of every habit are the trigger, the behavior and the reward. You'll want to write down what triggers the old habit and create new ones to combat them. Also, what is your behavior going to look like with the new habit pattern – and, what rewards will you reap from establishing that habit.
- **Set aside time in your schedule to develop the new habit.** Besides taking planning and willpower, a new habit takes time to establish. Set aside some extra time in your life for the habit pattern to take hold. You'll have much less chance of failing if you're not overwhelmed.
- **Overcome lack of willpower.** Our old habits are sometimes so controlling that we risk them overwhelming our willpower and taking over – even when we struggle to keep going. Planning what you will do in case a lack of willpower occurs is essential to succeeding in the formation of the new habit.
- **Rewards make a difference.** With the establishment of every new and better habit, a reward is present. When you reward yourself for each step

you take in the formation and continuation of a new habit, you're ensuring that the habit is strong and will succeed.

- **Know the saboteurs in your life.** Saboteurs can come in the form of negative self-talk, people who don't understand your need to create a more positive habit or triggers such as a television show that beckons you to watch rather than study for an important final.

The Habit-Driven Life

In many ways, habits are what drive us to become successful – or not. When you have the tools you need to develop good habits, it's much more likely that you'll make things happen in your life that will lead you to the success you desire.

If you want to be an electrical engineer, a habit you might want to develop would be study time. That study time might replace an old habit such as watching television in the evening. That's a big pull that you're going to have to overcome if you want to become an electrical engineer.

Success in anything requires that we go above and beyond what the normal person would to create habits that will help us get ahead. Changing your habits can be difficult. They're ingrained in all of our senses and our subconscious minds, making them difficult to obtain power over.

You may look at some people with habits you consider strange or as persons who live abnormal lives. Getting up before dawn to run for a couple of hours before getting showered and dressed for work may seem like an unusual habit to you.

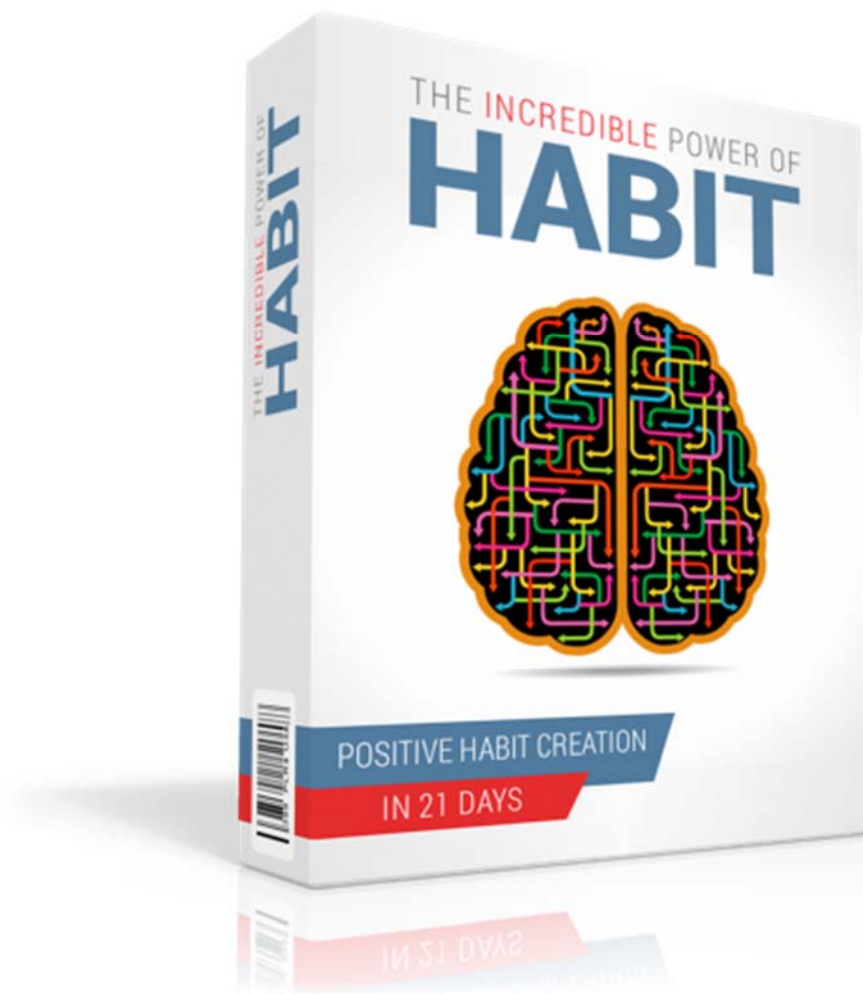
But, observe the person who has developed the habit of running before work. He or she is likely fit and toned and seems to find time for everything life throws at them. Running is a habit that keeps them healthy and fit and they've learned to turn it into a motivating habit.

A habit-driven life can be exhilarating or boring, depending on the habits you choose and the rewards you reap from them. You can either live a life of habits that keep you unhealthy and in the background or habits that boost your health and longevity and lead you to personal and business success.

Habits are choices that you make every day – sometimes hundreds of times a day. You'll face obstacles, such as the smell of that favorite fast food place when

you're trying to lose weight – or sore muscles when you need to get up and exercise in the morning.

It's up to you to choose the habits that will carry you to the pinnacle of health and success. Hopefully, this guide will spur you on to learn more about changing your bad habits to good ones or creating habits in your life that will serve you well.



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Founder, Wendolyne C. Buckner, PMP, CPC
<http://www.laceforlife.com>