



Building Self Discipline

People who cultivate self discipline are happier, more productive, and less stressed.

Establish a clear plan. Self discipline is a learned skill that takes practice and repetition. To be successful, create an action plan of when, where, and how you will accomplish your goals. A daily schedule is better than a to do list.

Remove temptations. Recognize your weaknesses and take steps to combat them. Toss the junk food, turn your TV or phone off, find a quiet place to work. If you are easily tempted to surf the internet when working on a computer, consider downloading the SelfControl app to block distracting websites when you need to concentrate. If you waste time on your phone, consider using the OFFTIME app.

Take care of yourself. People who are hungry or tired tend to be more pessimistic and give up easily. Hunger makes it difficult to focus on the tasks at hand. Have healthy snacks and meals on hand to eat every couple of hours to help improve your decision-making skills and concentration. Prioritize getting 7-9 hours of sleep every night so you have the energy and desire to accomplish your goals.

Don't wait for it to "feel right." When behaviors become habits, we are no longer making decisions. We are on auto-pilot. Breaking a bad habit and building a new habit not only requires us to make active decisions, it will feel wrong. Your brain will resist the new habit in favor of what it has already been programmed to do. Acknowledge that it will take a while for your new actions to feel right or natural. Visualize your long-term goal regularly, so momentary discomforts don't sidetrack you. Be mindful of the uncomfortable, negative emotions that you feel as you change and recognize that they are temporary growing pains as you increase your self discipline.

Schedule breaks, treats, and rewards. Even the most disciplined mind needs rest to perform at its best. Plan time to relax, rest, socialize, and rejuvenate each day. Plan an indulgent meal, a day off from exercise, and breaks when working on a difficult project. The key is to plan these rewards in advance. Do not bargain with yourself when things get hard. Stick with your plan and know a reward is waiting when you are done.

Recover from mistakes effectively. It is very difficult to change ingrained habits instantly. Expecting perfection often results in failures and disappointments. Recognize that moving in a positive direction, not necessarily being perfect, is success. When you have a set back, acknowledge what caused it, learn from it, and move on. Forgive yourself and get back on track as quickly as you can.