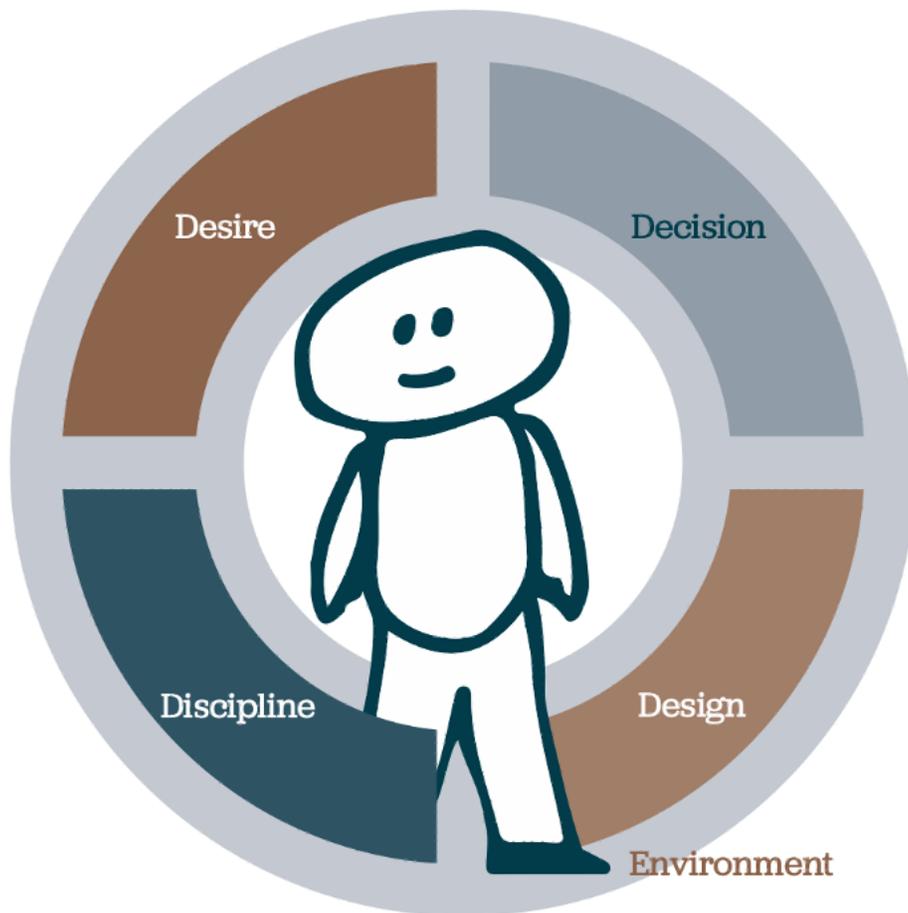


How we make our habits stick with The Habit Method™

Ciara Conlon



Ciara Conlon is a Life and Leadership coach, productivity expert, author of three books and Audible's Get Organised Course, This is an extract from her book [Rise Before Your Bull, and other habits of successful people](#). You can find out more about Ciara here ciaraconlon.com.

Achieving Our Goals Through Our Daily Habits

We all have goals we want to achieve and at this time of year we are primed to take action towards achieving them. We know that the vast majority of people fail at change and goal setting so how can we set ourselves up for success and not fall prey to the typical mistakes that most make.

So how do we create a habit? Repetition.....

Once a habit is automated, though, it is difficult to break, because it occurs in the most primitive part of the brain: the basal ganglia. In reality, the most successful way to break a bad habit forever is to replace it with a positive one.

You may have heard it takes 21 days to form a habit; it turns out this may not be entirely true. The idea was first suggested by a plastic surgeon who observed that it took his patients an average of 21 days to get used to their new faces. But more recent research on the subject, by [Phillippa Lally et al. in the University of London](#), found it took people an average of **66 days** to create a new habit, with results ranging from 15 to 254 days. One thing, however, remains true: The more we repeat a habit under the same circumstances, the easier it gets.

The Habit Method™ is a framework to help you think through the habit you are trying to create and set yourself up for success. **Desire, Decision, Design, Discipline** and **Environment**

Is the *Desire* there?

Desire is the first, and possibly most important, component of habit creation. You must have a burning desire for the new habit, and understand why you want it.

What is the goal you long to reach? Why is it so important in your life? Without true desire your resolve will be weak when the going gets tough. Your desire is what will fuel the fire when the light is burning low.

Often our thoughts work against us, damaging our attempts before we have even begun. But when you focus on desire and are clear about what you want and why, your thoughts and beliefs will be in alignment, supporting you in moving in the direction of your goals.

If you are struggling try keeping a journal to capture your daily thoughts in relation to your new habit, to make sure they're encouraging your efforts. Your positive thoughts will be the support system for your desire, propelling you toward your new habit.

Has the *Decision* been made?

Making the decision to move forward will carry your desire from thought to action. When you decide you're going to do something, you must make a commitment. Move away from half-hearted decisions and promise yourself you'll do what it takes to reach the goals you've set.

Deciding what you want and making sure it's your top priority are vital for success. But often we get confused about which direction to take and what to do next. The Eisenhower Matrix can help you identify your priorities and ensure the direction you choose is the right one for your life right now. Once you make the decision, this clarity will help you move forward fearlessly. Then you don't allow your thoughts to question that decision. Your rise before the bull in your head tells you it's not a good decision anymore.

Take time to *Design* your habit

Now you know what you want, and have committed to getting it, you need to make a plan.

How are you going to achieve this goal?

What do you need to get going?

Who will support you?

Spending time to get clear on these now will leave less chance for opting out later.

Thinking through your plan in advance and having tools and techniques will help you move into action. The Habit Canvas (page 4) is a resource that can help you plan out your new habit, paying attention to the 4 Ds and increasing your chances of success.

Do you have the *Discipline*?

Willpower and discipline alone aren't enough to form new habits, but the latter plays an important role in the process. Until your habit becomes second nature, you will need to rely on discipline to help you establish the new routines. Using a Habit Tracker will keep you motivated while you're working toward automating your habit.

For discipline to work, it also requires a strong command of your thoughts. Meditation can help you rein in the monkey mind and better manage your unhelpful negative thoughts. [Insight Timer](#) is a great tool for both beginner and experienced meditators and claims to have the largest free library of guided meditations on earth.

Is your *Environment* right?

It's an element that is often overlooked, but your environment has a big influence on your state of mind and state of being. Even Charles Darwin admitted he hadn't put enough emphasis on environment in his theory of Natural Selection!

When your environment is designed optimally, it will be easier for you to take the regular action needed to create your new habits. A challenging environment is not an excuse to opt out or give up, though. It may require more planning and adaptation, and a little more creative design and discipline, but if you have the 4 Ds in place, your actions will still lead you to success. No matter what, take daily action to ensure your environment is supporting you and not sabotaging you.

Creating positive habits is about more than grit and determination; there is a proven method you can follow to greatly increase your chances of success. With some reflection and a little bit of planning you'll be well on your way to creating the positive habits you've always craved.

The Habit Canvas

<p>2. Decision</p> <p>What is your number one priority?</p> <p>Habit:</p>	<p>3. Design</p> <p>When:</p> <p>Where:</p> <p>Trigger:</p> <p>Reward:</p>
<p>1. Desire What do you really want?</p> <p>Goal:</p> <p>What are you willing to give up?</p> <p>Who is going to hold you accountable?</p>	
<p>4. Discipline</p> <p>What are my loopholes?</p> <p>What will I do when I don't feel like it?</p>	
<p>5. Environment</p> <p>What needs to change</p> <p>The Habit Canvas ©</p> <p>www.ciaraconlon.com</p>	

*The Habit Canvas™ is taken from the Lifeflow Planner www.lifeflowplanner.com

The Habit Tracker



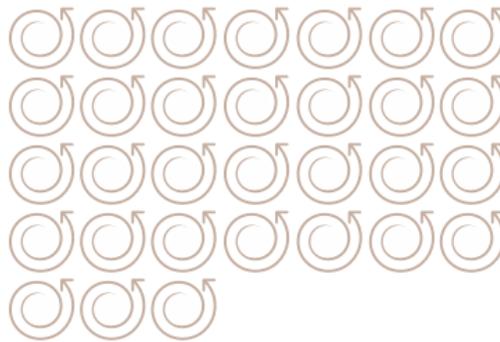
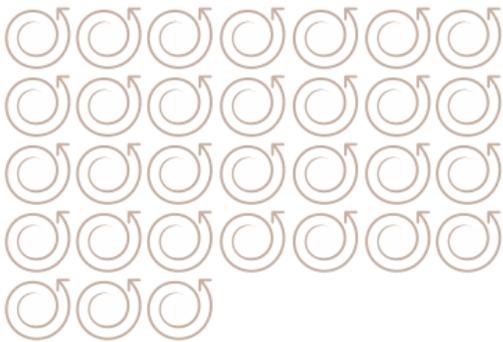
MONTH _____

Use this page for tracking your monthly habits. Ideally you will want to create one new habit at a time but if you already have existing habits that you want to track, you can do so here.

Your Core Habit is your most important habit - the one that is non-negotiable for you to carry out each day.

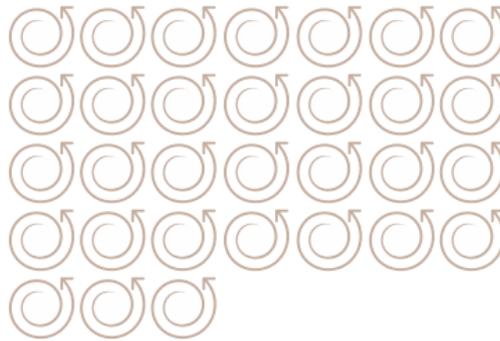
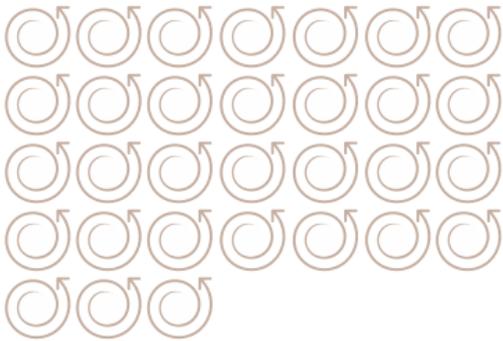
CORE HABIT:

HABIT:



HABIT:

HABIT:



*This Habit Tracker is taken from the Lifeflow Planner www.lifeflowplanner.com

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