

Building New Habits

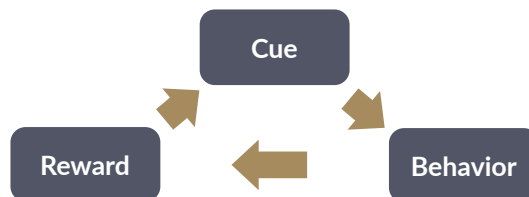
Our habits can be incredibly powerful. Building new and healthier ones, however, is much easier when we understand how they work.

Habitual behaviors often break down into three elements:

1. **Cue** - A stimulus or trigger that sets off our habitual routine, e.g. *finishing dinner and craving something sweet*.
2. **Behavior** - The actions that comprise the habit, e.g. *reaching for a cookie*, and
3. **Reward** - The tangible or intangible positive reinforcement for the behavior, e.g. *satisfying one's sweet tooth*.

Breaking an old habit, or building a new one involves:

- Identifying the cue(s)
- Planning a new behavior, and
- Building in a reward.



By planning a reward for our desired behavior - the new habit - we can create motivation to continue on with it.

The table below uses Implementation Intentions (“If-then”) planning to help you craft a goal for each step of the Habit Loop. To complete the table, complete the sentence stem in each step to craft an implementation goal and build a new habit. An example is provided to help you.

<p>Cue ↓</p>	<p>“If...” <i>(E.g. If I start browsing social media instead of doing my homework...)</i></p>
<p>Behavior ↓</p>	<p>“Then I will...” <i>(E.g. Put my phone and tablet in the cupboard...)</i></p>
<p>Reward</p>	<p>“The Reward...” <i>(E.g. Finish my homework by 5.30 and go to the beach)</i></p>