

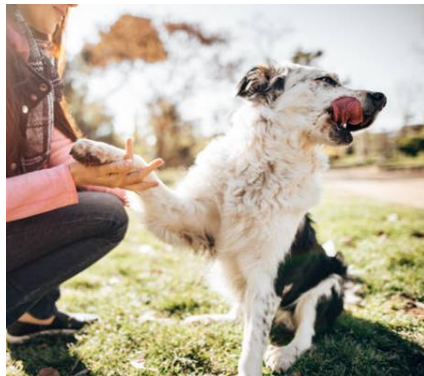
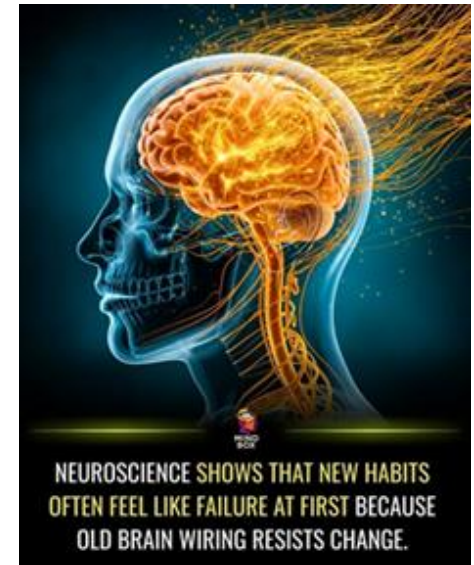
## Building New Habits for Better Wellbeing

### Teaching an old dog new tricks

How many times have you tried to change your lifestyle into one that includes new healthier habits and practices only to end up going back to your old way of living, feeling disappointed with yourself and believing that it will never work: "There goes my diet! No more exercising for me! I can never follow a healthy lifestyle! Once again, I have failed!"

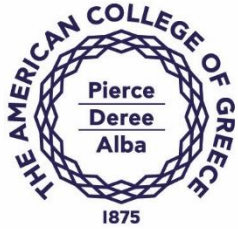
According to Britannica, a **Habit** is a settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up.

There is a myth that says it takes 21 days to build a new habit. Real change takes longer. A University College London (UCL) study, published in the European Journal of Social Psychology, found that it takes on average, 66 days for a new behavior to become automatic, though the time ranges from 18 to 254 days. According to Phillippa Lally, a senior lecturer in psychology, University of Surrey, UK everyone has a unique habit-building timeline. She emphasizes that repetition and individualized ways can fasten the process of building a new habit.



According to neuroscience the brain relies on deeply ingrained neural pathways built over years, and new habits initially feel uncomfortable because those pathways are weak and inefficient. It shows that your habits are wired into deeply ingrained neural pathways, built over years, not weeks or days or hours or minutes. New behaviors feel awkward and "wrong" at first because those pathways are still weak and inefficient, your brain is literally learning a new route. This creates negativity, disappointment and resistance.

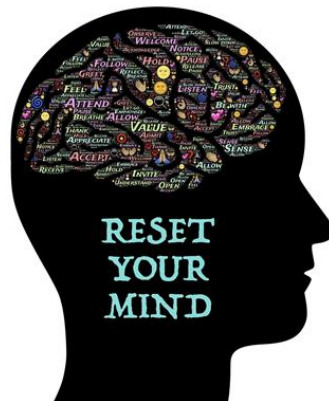
This early resistance is often mislabeled as failure, when in reality it's a sign that change is happening.



## Building new habits and the sabotage

Our old patterns/routines/way of life are established because we have been practicing them through the years. They are more energy-efficient, so our brain defaults to them automatically. When we introduce a new way of thinking, feeling, or behaving, the system pushes back, in away it sabotages our efforts, not because the new habit is bad, but because it hasn't yet been repeated enough to become the easier option. It is the brain doing exactly what it was designed to do. Our brain is wired for efficiency, and it prefers familiar neural pathways that have been reinforced over time. These pathways require less energy and feel safe, predictable and almost like autopilot!

When you attempt to build a new habit, the brain must create new neural connections. This process, known as neuroplasticity, requires effort, repetition, and time. In the beginning, these new pathways are weak and unstable, while old habits are deeply ingrained.



According to Eldin Hasa, an expert on Human Behavior and Neuroscientist “With consistent practice, neuroplasticity strengthens the new wiring and it starts to override the old default.” In other words patience and repetition creates lasting change. Quitting when it feels uncomfortable simply re-confirms the old wiring. Staying with small, repeatable actions gives your brain the time it needs to adapt. Progress often feel slow even invisible at first but eventually transformation happens and new habits are acquired.

New habits do not stop the old habits from existing; but they become a stronger influence on our behavior.



## Tips to help you over come the “sabotage”

1. **Be Patient:** Consistency is more important than speed.
2. **Small steps and achievable behaviors:** 3 minutes of breathwork, 5 minutes of brisk walking, 2 minutes of meditation, use of stairs instead of elevator, not smoking upon waking up
3. **Expect resistance.** When you feel the sabotage coming, label it: “This is old wiring firing, not who I am now.” and do the smallest possible version of the new habit: instead of a 5 K run, jog around the block, but do get out of the house and establish a pattern
4. **Identify and recognize the triggers** that support the old habit
5. **Commitment, repetition and consistency** are the most crucial elements in making a habit automatic. Your brain will do the rest. The wiring will follow the ritual.



“Embodiment New You as Identity”

“Healing is not a destination, it's an identity you embody every day through conscious breath.”

Eldin Hasa

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### Sources & further reading:

[https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/habit#:~:text=%3A%20a%20usual%20way%20of%20behaving,a%20regular%20and%20repeated%20way](https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/habit#:~:text=%3A%20a%20usual%20way%20of%20behaving,a%20regular%20and%20repeated%20way;); <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/striving-thriving/202110/the-neuroscience-habits>; <https://www.eldinhasa.com>; <https://www.facebook.com/MinddBox/photos/neuroscience-reveals-why-forming-new-habits-often-feels-uncomfortable-or-even-li/990107124177595/>; <https://www.pixabay.com>; <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2009/aug/how-long-does-it-take-form-habit>; <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/people/phillippa-lally>