

Cultivating the Habits of Successful People

Objective

To identify and practice habits that increase the likelihood of success in life.

What to Know

Have you ever wondered what it takes to be a successful person? Success is often defined as the ability to reach your goals. But success is not a destination, but a journey where you develop the skills and identify the resources you need to thrive. Researchers have identified the behaviors you can utilize in your daily life to become more effective and ultimately more successful.

Apart from skills, intelligence, and opportunities, successful people have good habits that make a difference. So, if specific habits are the key, you might want to adopt some of these behaviors and activities to increase the likelihood of your success.

Social expertise. Successful people tend to have a large network of people around them. To do that, they learn and practice social skills. Socializing is a skill you can learn and improve on. Start by reading self-help books or blogs about making small talk and networking. Consider joining groups such as Toastmasters to increase your confidence and public speaking skills. Specific social skills you might want to focus on are:

- empathy
- active listening
- small talk
- asking open-ended questions
- emotional intelligence
- body language
- humor and charisma

Surround yourself with people who inspire you. Surround yourself with people who are more like who you would like to become. This increases the likelihood their positive influence will influence you. Spend more time with people who have achieved goals you want to achieve.

Network. Once you have built your social skills, start to create relationships with new and different people. Join community organizations, business groups, or even volunteer for an organization to expand your network.

Constantly learn. This can include learning a new hobby or skill or expanding your knowledge about your profession. Successful people read—for pleasure, but also to gain knowledge and insight.

Focus on improving yourself. Even if you excel in your career, you can benefit from continuing your education. Learn a new language, practice a musical instrument, improve on your

technology skills, or even learn to garden. Learning something new can also increase your motivation.

Wake up early. You can take the time to properly wake up before starting your day. Use this time for self-reflection, exercise, journaling, or sitting down to read the news and eat breakfast. In addition, you can use this time to organize your day.

Stay organized. Without taking time to organize your life (and maintain that organization), you may feel overwhelmed or annoyed. There are many organizational tools available, including apps, planners, calendars, self-help books, physical systems, and more. If you want to accomplish your goals, getting organized can help you.

Set clear intentions and write down your goals. Put them somewhere you can see them. Otherwise, you might forget the steps required to achieve your goals. To reach your potential, steer your path based on your goals and intentions.

Practice effective to-do list habits. Make one list that includes a general outline of things you want to accomplish, but without deadlines. Keep a second list of things to do over the next two days, including urgent items. Avoid putting too many things on your lists. Keep a brief “urgent” list and add another item when you complete a task.

Prioritize saving for an emergency. Experts recommend you have an emergency savings to cover three months of expenses—in case you lose your job, become injured, or just need an unexpected large sum of money.

Relax. Relaxing—by meditating or simply avoiding distractions—is one of the most-often mentioned habits of successful people. The act of “taking a breath” can help you prepare for what is to come next in your day. Concentrate on your breathing for three to five minutes, 2-3 times each day.

Think toward the future. It can be easy to focus on instant gratification, rather than meeting long-term goals. If you struggle with this, set reminders on your phone to remind you to review your goals and re-focus.

Stay on track. Set time every morning when you put away your electronic devices and review your daily plan and goals. Consistency is key in achieving almost anything, which is why it is important to regularly remind yourself of what you want to achieve.

Develop a positive attitude. According to some successful people, having a positive attitude is one of the root causes of success. Gratitude and positive self-talk are often priorities in the lives of the ultra-successful. Frequently remind yourself *why* you are grateful to achieve a stronger effect.

Eat a nutritious diet. There is a strong connection between eating well, success, and happiness. What you fuel your body with is very important, because what you eat does not just affect your physical health—it can also affect your brain functioning and mental health. This can impact your social life, financial health, work productivity, happiness, and much more. If you are serious about being successful, prioritize meeting your nutritional needs.

Be physically active every day. You do not have to do an hour-long gym session every morning. You can take a walk, stand up and stretch throughout the day, or find other pleasurable ways to get your body moving. Find an activity you love, such as swimming, hiking, playing pickleball, and so on. If you are sedentary most of the day you may notice it affects your sleep.

Improve your self-confidence. Focus on the things you want to achieve in life, and find ways to improve your confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth.

Share. Whether through donating money to charity, volunteering time at a local non-profit, or sharing ideas, successful people have a habit of giving and understand the value of sharing.

Prioritize sleep. Not getting enough sleep reduces your brain's capacity to work at its full potential. If you do not get good sleep, your productivity will be reduced—and you are less likely to achieve your goals. You might be tempted to stay up all night to complete a project, but you may cause more harm than good. Developing good sleeping habits is essential. Here are some tips:

- turn off electronic devices about an hour before bedtime
- decide on a set bedtime and wakeup time and be consistent
- engage in a calming activity just before bedtime (e.g., take a bath, read a book, etc.)
- make sure your bedroom is dark and the temperature is cool while you sleep

Boost your energy. Staying physically active, eating well, and getting enough sleep help boost your productivity and increase your energy. Taking just these three steps contribute to your success!

Successful people tend to have more of the types of habits that contribute to their success. If you want to be successful, add the above habits to your daily routine. Some of the best habits for success require only conscious effort. Others, such as becoming organized, may take some time and skill but ultimately result in the desired outcome—success. This worksheet will help you identify and practice the above habits to increase the likelihood of your success.

What to Do

Use the following chart for three weeks to practice your “success habits.” There is no need to add ALL of them to your daily routine. Pick just a few that seem easiest to implement. When they become habits, add another. Note the date, what you did (activities/behaviors), and the total time spent on each. Write down how you felt after completing each activity or task. Finally, note whether it was easy or difficult to complete the activity or task.

Date	Activities/behaviors	Total minutes	How did you feel after?	Was it easy or difficult?

Did this exercise help you feel more successful? Why or why not?
