



NORTHERN  
EDGE  
ALGONQUIN



# *Evolving your habits with the Habit Cycle*

The secret to changing a habit or building a new one is understanding and implementing the habit cycle. Habits are patterns and tendencies which have become automatic as the result of a 'cue, response, and reward' and we can use this in our favour to build habits which support our health and wellness.

## *Cue*

the prompt or signal which begins the habit loop such as the time of day, an environmental cue, a person, an emotion, or an action

## *Response*

the action triggered by the cue, providing the reward

## *Reward*

the satisfaction brought on by the response

Let's look at an example of this cycle and how we might shift a poor habit into a positive habit.

### *Poor habit cycle (responsive)*

The cue of stress provides a response of emotional eating, which then gives a reward of pleasure and a burst of energy.

CUE - Stress

RESPONSE - Emotional eating

REWARD - Pleasure and a burst of energy

### *Improved habit cycle (responsive)*

The response to the cue has been changed to a healthier habit option, resulting in a similar reward.

CUE - Stress

RESPONSE - Go for a walk with a friend

REWARD - Pleasure, sustained energy, endorphins, and support

### *Positive habit cycle (proactive)*

In this scenario the cue of time of day is designed to be proactive for alleviating stress, rather than responding to stress as the cue.

CUE - Time of day, 12:00 p.m.

RESPONSE - Go for a walk

REWARD - Pleasure, sustained energy, endorphins

Habit cycles may be written as:

When {CUE}, I will {RESPONSE}, which will {REWARD}.

When it is 12:00 p.m. I will go for a walk, which will give me more energy and release stress.



# Evolving your habits with the Habit Cycle - Exercise

What habits would I like to shift or evolve?

Above, circle the habit that would have the most impact in your life if you were to evolve it.  
In the space below - identify more about this habit . . .

What might be my cue?

What is my response to the cue?

What reward or satisfaction do I get from my response?

What changes could you implement to improve this habit, or make it proactive?

Current habit

Improved habit

Positive (proactive) habit

	Current habit	Improved habit	Positive (proactive) habit
Cue			
Response			
Reward			

The Habit Loop can help us to create new habits as well. Imagine a new habit that you would like to engage in  
- keep it simple!

What could cue me to do this new habit?

What is my response (new habit)?

What is my reward?\*

\*Consider "stacking" your habits so that the reward or response from one habit is the cue for the next.

Dive more into developing powerful and healthy personal routines:  
The Habit Reset is a 4 day immersive retreat to build simple habits that will help you reach your personal goals