

Boost Your Willpower

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Do you marvel at your best friend, who can take two spoonfuls of Chubby Hubby and promptly return the carton to the freezer? Or at your husband, who updates his resume every three months just in case opportunity knocks? Well, you, too, can acquire both of these types of willpower—the kind of self-control you need when you're trying to avoid something (such as treats) and the version you need when you're trying not to avoid something (like professional responsibility). Read on to learn how to improve willpower. **When You Want to Avoid Temptation...**Doughnuts, bad boys, and second (and third) cocktails—just a few of the things that put our willpower to the test. It can also be hard to resist nonmaterial pleasures, like compulsively checking your eBay auction when you should be

working. How to start:*Ditch the D Word* Making willpower a form of deprivation can set you up for backsliding. "You have to be motivated to exert self-control, and if you think of willpower as a form of punishment, you can lose that motivation," says Ethan Kross, Ph.D., an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Michigan. Instead, give it a positive spin: Think of temptations as mini challenges to tackle, says Kross. Just allow yourself some wiggle room. Trying to steer clear of sweets? Keep them out of your kitchen cabinets, but indulge when eating out. If you need some help, here are [foods that make you feel full](#). *Distract Yourself* It sounds counterintuitive, but to focus your willpower, you may want to get a little unfocused. "A lot of data suggests that it helps to turn your attention to an engaging alternative," explains Kross. "It's the out-of-sight-out-of-mind approach." When temptation strikes, stand up and take a quick walk around your office, or break out your sketch pad or guitar and get creative. *Fuel Your Resolve* According to a paper published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, some patterns of poor self-control can be attributed to drops in blood-glucose levels. "Glucose works to fuel brain activity," says study coauthor Roy F. Baumeister, Ph.D., a professor of social psychology at The Florida State University. That's why hunger, fatigue, and stress—all of which deplete glucose levels—leave your brain less able to resist the lure of any temptation. Fueling up frequently on small, protein-rich meals can help keep your willpower humming all day.

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