

The Science Behind Goal Achievement

If you're a list-maker, you know how gratifying it is to cross things off that you've accomplished. But did you know that brain science plays a big part in that satisfaction?

Research shows that being able to cross actions off as you achieve them is highly rewarding to our brains. Literally drip-feeding your brain with dopamine, which keeps you curious and motivated.

Dopamine is released when we eat something we love, after we exercise, and yes, even when you experience the pleasure of checking something off your list.

Because dopamine rewards us for taking actions and motivates us to repeat them, building and strengthening our brain's wiring, the more steps we take toward setting our goals, the more motivated we become to keep the dopamine flowing. We get hooked on our goals!



Chemical Cocktail, Anyone?

Dopamine is part of a chemical cocktail of neurotransmitters – chemicals that help create feelings, stimulate thoughts and trigger memories – that help us stay goal focused.

While dopamine keeps us energized and fuels our motivation to persevere through challenges, there's a second chemical that also plays an important role in meeting our goals.

Norepinephrine helps sharpen our attention and gets our body ready for action. When it comes to goal achievement, this increased alertness helps keep us focused and energized enough to undertake challenging tasks often associated with big goals.

And finally, serotonin, often called the feel-good hormone, can increase our ability and willingness to tolerate difficult experiences and be resilient. It helps regulate our mood and sleep, essential for going the distance when working toward challenging goals.

Goal achievement isn't just about setting goals. A powerful chemical recipe is hard at work behind the scenes. Using simple brain hacks – such as crossing things off your to-do list each day – will help you create the optimal chemical brain conditions for goal success.