

Reinforcement Schedules

Education

The four schedules, and why the unpredictable ones are hardest to break.

Interval schedules count time; ratio schedules count responses.

Schedule	Pattern	Resists extinction
Fixed ratio	Every nth response	Low
Variable ratio	Unpredictable count	Very high
Fixed interval	First after set time	Low
Variable interval	First after varied time	High
Continuous	Every response	Lowest

Educational reference. Continuous reinforcement teaches fastest and fades fastest; thin it to a variable schedule to keep a habit.