

OUTSMART THE CLOCK

UNLOCK THE SECRET TO ACHIEVING MORE EVERYDAY



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HACK YOUR BRAIN: **UNLEASH YOUR INNER** **PRODUCTIVITY** **SUPERHERO**



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INTRODUCTION

Being productive isn't about accomplishing more, but instead, it is about investing your time and attention in a strategic way to value-add your life, career, and relationships. One thing that you may fail to consider is the reason and motivation that drives you. Often, your desire to be productive is based on a belief that it is what society expects from you, or because you think that you are being overloaded with a workload that you don't feel you can handle.

You might feel a desire to be more productive to impress your coworkers, or to seem like you are busy. While these reasons are valid, they are all external reasons. Other external reasons may include material things, money, or fame. While money can be a legitimate motivator for many people, it is essential for you to consider whether or not there is something else that is driving you.

If your reason for wishing to be more productive is a shallow one that doesn't serve a higher purpose in your life, there is a good chance that it will just cease to motivate you down the line allowing your productivity to fall by the wayside quickly. You need to take the time to consider what is driving your desire for productivity. If you need money to support your family, then the love you have for your family, a strong sense of duty, and sheer determination might be your driving factors.

Or, perhaps you have found yourself in poverty, and your drive is the desire to improve your situation and yourself. You need to determine what drives you on a deeper level and understand why you are working so hard. It is essential that you make sure that you know what you are striving to achieve. Only you know what drives you. Only you know what will make you wake up early and work hard. Only you know why you need to be more productive.

It doesn't matter what you tell other people. It doesn't even matter if it is true or not. You may tell people what they expect to hear, but it may not be your real reason. It does matter what you tell yourself. You always want to be honest with yourself because your productivity will fall as quickly as it has risen.

Continue to remind yourself why you are working so hard, and keep it in your heart and in your mind. If you can do this, then you are already half-way there. Unfortunately, there isn't a magic pill that you can take to fix



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STEP 1-UNDERSTANDING YOUR PRODUCTIVITY & WHY

When you talk about productivity, you probably think it has to do with a company's ability to produce a certain number of products and services during a single day. Or, you may think about the cost of the resources that went into the creating of those products and you gauge whether or not the company is productive and profitable.

However, there is also your own productivity. How would you gauge whether or not you are a productive member of your community? Being productive is about being able to deliver on both your professional and personal fronts because a complete and successful person is someone that is productive at home and at work.

Being productive is also a personal view because everyone has their own ideas regarding how productive they are throughout their day. You might think that if you managed to do all the tasks you've assigned yourself on a given day, that you were extremely productive. Or, you might think that since you managed to get a lot of work done within a short time that you have a productive day.

Then, there are those people who equate productivity with success and money. They might think they are productive because they have an expensive car or a large house. While others might think they've been productive because they've been able to accomplish activities that have made a difference in others' lives, or in the conservation of the planet.



Ultimately, being productive is about being able to complete particular tasks on a given day that will help you attain the goals you've set for yourself in life.

Each job that you get done successfully should take you one step closer to your goals. This is what being productive is all about.

Productivity also involves discovering your why and choosing the goals that are close to your heart and prioritizing them above others.

It can be tricky at first to find your why. However, there are several steps that you can take to determine your why.



FINDING YOUR WHY!

When it comes to becoming more productive, you have to be able to find your why. Your why is what gets you out of bed in the mornings, it's the reason why you work hard at the office, and it is why you spend the extra hours studying. It is your motivation, your drive, and your reason for wanting to get things done.

Everyone's why is different, but it is essential that you find out what yours is and keep it close to your heart. Before you can begin to become more productive, you need to make sure that you have discovered your why, and that you put it into practice. If this isn't something that you've ever heard before, it might be a bit confusing and challenging for you at first.

You may be wondering how exactly you find your why, and how do you know when you've found it? When you find your why, it will resonate deeply within you. It will be a clear, guiding beacon of motivation that will remind you to stay on course, remind you why you are choosing to work instead of play. You will know it when you find it, and it will stick with you. If you have been honest with yourself, then you will know your why when you find it.



DISCOVER YOUR CORE VALUES

The first step to discovering your why is to figure out your core values. Do you value honesty? Are you motivated by love, duty, or something else? What values do you live your life by and carry with you in your heart?

The chances are high that you have never had to try and articulate your core values before, so it can be challenging to put a name to these feelings, but it can be extremely helpful in making sure that you achieve what you've set out to do. Take some time to write down what you value.

Remember, this is for your own personal use. Don't put anything down that is false, or things that you think you should value. It is vital that you are true to yourself, even if you find it challenging because you will be far more successful in your endeavors. Consider what you spend most of your time doing. Think about what you would like to spend your time doing. This can provide you with a strong indication of where your interests lie and what might be motivating you to continue forward.

Write down your thoughts and feelings on this topic. Take a good look at your core values, and where you spend your time; considering them carefully. Out of these two things, you should be able to narrow down your focus. This is your why. This is why you are working so hard. Focus on this and keep it in the front of your mind and your heart as you move through your journey. It is one of the essential tools that you have for improving your productivity.



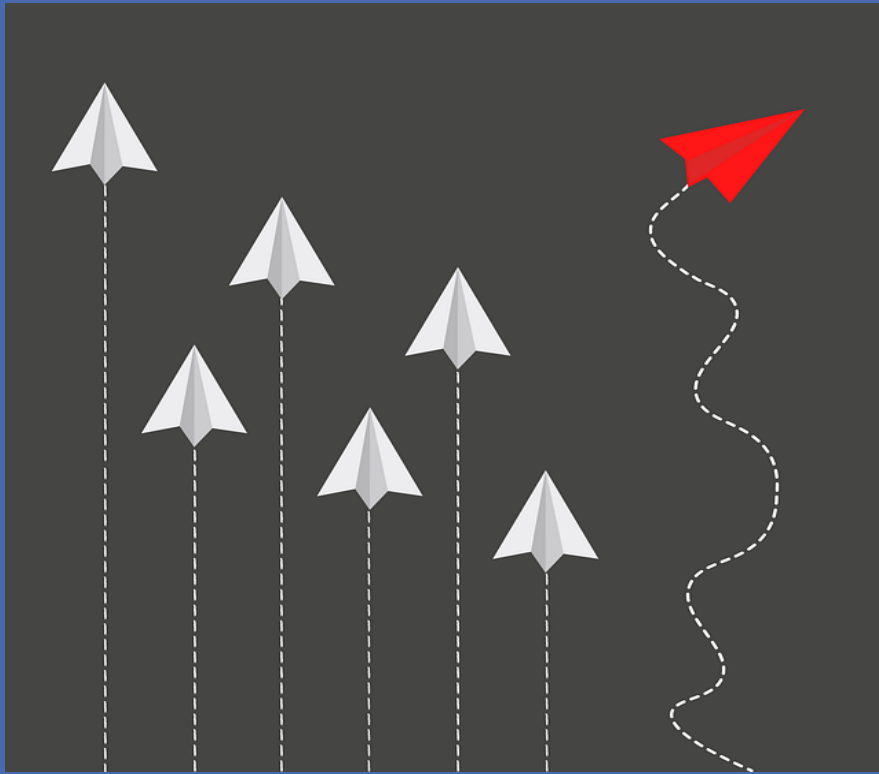
DETERMINE WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU

Next, you need to determine what is most important to you. Are money and security necessary to you? Or is it freedom? Do you value your time or your comfort? What about both? Take some time to consider what is valuable to you and what you are striving to accomplish. Perhaps you feel that your family is more valuable to you than your time and that their security and comfort comes first.

Maybe you are seeking to make sure that you have a future that is brighter than your past. It doesn't matter what is valuable to you, what matters is that you know what it is. Take a good, long look at your life and at your past. Who do you want to be, where are you looking to go? What is the most valuable thing that you have? This is going to vary from person to person, but before you move forward with the more practical steps to increase your productivity, take a moment to consider this.

If you ignore these things when trying to boost your productivity, you'll continue to find yourself sliding backward and watching as your productivity continues to drop. You will only make real progress when you focus on your core values and what is most important to you. This is one of the most important things that you can do if you want to increase your productivity and get more done.

STEP 2-IDENTIFYING YOUR GOALS



The first thing that you need to do on the road to being more productive is to choose the right goals.

These goals should be both personal and professional goals and all the things that make you a complete and comprehensive individual.

Once you've discovered your why, you need to identify your goals.

What Do You Want Most in Life?

There are many areas of your life that you, no doubt, want to excel in.

For example, you may desire to have a successful career or want to find someone you can share your life with and start a family with.

Or, you may want to find a way to spend more time with your friends. Take some time to identify your goals and write them down.

Why Do You Have These Goals?

Once you've identified your goals, you need to understand why they are on your list.

You might think that being more successful in your career is important to you because you love your job and the fulfillment it gives you.

This ultimately translates into happiness and a sense of satisfaction. That's an excellent goal to have.

You might have the intention of spending more time with your friends, but this goal is on your list because you feel pressured by them.

Converting Your Goals Into Concrete Milestones

Just wanting to get ahead in your career isn't enough. You need to carefully plan where you want to see yourself.

If you've started your own business, set a milestone that you will have at least two more stores at the end of five years.

If your goal is to lose weight and keep it off, set a target weight you want to be at the end of a year.

CONT'D



Determine What You Can Do to Achieve Your Goals

Next, come up with a plan for how you are going to achieve your goals. Remember, each step you take should translate into productivity. If you want to get ahead in your career, you can plan to take on significant projects at work and step in every time an opportunity arises. Or, if you want to live a healthier life, make time in your day to jog after work.

Determine if Any of Your Goals Have Changed

From time to time, it's a good idea to go over your goals and determine if they are still relevant. We are always growing and evolving, so it's perfectly reasonable to expect that you might change your mind about wanting to do something, or even wanting to do it differently.

Say, for example, if your goals have changed, it's essential that you factor it in with the rest of your goals and make time for it in your life. By going through this process, you'll have taken steps that will get you closer to your goals, which makes the time you've spent working toward those goals productive.

STEP 3- IMPROVING YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT SKILL TO BECOME MORE PRODUCTIVE

The time you spend on the various tasks of your day should ultimately contribute to the achievement of your goals. If you can do that, then you will have a productive day. If you want to be sure that you have a productive day, then you need to be able to allocate your time among the various tasks that you have to complete throughout the day.

This is what time management is all about, being able to use your time effectively and productively. If you're like everyone else, you probably look back at your day and wonder where all the time went, especially if you don't feel like you have anything to show for it. If this happens often, the first thing that you need to understand is why your time is not productive. This is something that you can quickly figure out by completing the following steps.





DECLUTTER YOUR SPACES

Improving productivity begins with assessing your environment. Take a look around you. Look at the way things in your home are organized. Do you know where to find something if you need it, or are your daily tasks bogged down by finding the things that you need to complete them? If you don't know where the things are when you need them, then it's time to organize your space.

The goal is to organize the spaces where you live and work so that everything has a designated spot, and in which everything has a purpose. No task in your home should begin with a scavenger hunt. You can quickly become overwhelmed and exhausted by simple tasks that are bogged down by these details.

In fact, many projects and tasks fail even to get started because the prep work is too daunting. While the task of overhauling your entire space may seem a bit overwhelming, you need to get yourself organized if you ever hope to boost your productivity. To make your task of reorganizing more manageable, take things one room at a time.

Start with either a room that you use most often or the worst offender when it comes to wasting your time. While it may take a good deal of time to get your spaces organized, the payoff in time and less aggravation is priceless.



DECLUTTER YOUR MIND

Now that you have a clutter-free workspace, you need to instill some focus in your mind. For you to reach your maximum productivity potential, your brain can't be focused on too many things at once. When your mind and body are aligned, energy and inspiration tend to flow. When you are tired, stressed, and overworked, your motivation to do anything is usually the first to go.

Our brains process a minimum of fifty-thousand thoughts a day, with a majority of them completely unproductive. We tend to be overcritical of ourselves, thinking about how we look and what others think of us. We worry needlessly about things we can't control. While it is impossible to eliminate these thoughts completely, we can work on how we respond.

Retraining your brain to think more positively will help you in this process. Negativity is incredibly draining on the mind and the spirit and can hinder your productivity both personally and professionally. Unfortunately, if your brain is used to negatively processing thoughts, it will always default to it.

To retrain your mind, you have to consciously redirect your thoughts in a positive way. On top of creating more positive thoughts, you need to try to create a mental priority list of things in your mind in order to weed out spending time on things that don't really matter.



KEEP A TIME DIARY

Get a schedule and keep careful note of every activity you conduct and the time you spend completing it. Continue to do this for a week. Two of your team members requested instructions for the ongoing project, and you spent 30 minutes on it.

Your boss called you in for an informal progress report. By the time you left his office, it was almost lunchtime and half your day was already gone. After lunch, you spent 20 minutes checking your email and social media accounts.

Next, you sat down to write a report but had to answer phone calls and emails. At the end of the day, you still hadn't completed the report, and your boss tells you it is due the next day. You consider working on it from home, but then you'd have to cancel your dinner plans with a friend that you hadn't seen in a while.



ANALYSE THE DAILY ENTRIES

Your time diary and its entries will help you understand precisely what activities during your day are productive and which ones aren't. By completing this exercise, you can pinpoint all the time that you are wasting on trivial tasks that you could have accomplished at the end of the day, after work, or those that weren't related to work at all. You will begin to gain an understanding of the time of day when you have the most energy and when you can deal with hands-on tasks.

You can also work out times when you are most likely to have to deal with people related to work, such as your boss, team members, clients, and suppliers. This will allow you to determine the best time to work on reports and other assignments because you know the time when you are the least likely to be disturbed. All of these factors will help you work out how to make your day more productive by eliminating the unnecessary tasks and assigning more functions to the time when you can work better.



DRAW UP MUST TO DO LIST

Knowing which tasks you must accomplish on a particular day will give you a sense of direction, and you'll feel more confident about your ability to complete the tasks and more focused on what you need to accomplish. To do this efficiently, you'll want to create a must-do list.

It's impossible for you to remember every little thing that you need to do, and some of the tasks might be high-priority. You can also include those activities that will bring you closer to your objectives. A good thing to do is write down each task when it comes up.

For example, if your physician calls to remind you that you are due to come in and discuss the results of your blood work in two days, write it down. If a client places an order and requests deliver in a week, make sure to make a note of it. Also, you may want to consider highlighting all of the essential tasks that you need to complete so you don't overlook any of them.

As the day progresses, you can keep checking your list to make sure that all of the high-priority tasks are being dealt with. The not-so-important ones can be moved to another day. Creating these kinds of lists can give you the ability to really push yourself into being more productive.



CREATE A SCHEDULE

Now that you know how you're spending your day and the tasks that you need to accomplish, it's time to start making a schedule. To do this, assign separate time slots to the various activities on your list.

For example, schedule a specific time slot for checking and answering emails. You can also take care of your other correspondences during this time, including phone calls, mail, and many others. Create another time slot for attending to your team members, giving out instructions and dealing with the issues they have. This will ensure the smooth running of your work because your team will always know when you're accessible.

You can also ensure that you won't be distracted at other times when you need to tackle essential tasks. Have a separate time slot for when you need to deal with personal activities. This should either be at the end of the workday, during your lunch or when you are commuting back and forth from work. This is the time that you want to catch up on your social media pages and make personal phone calls.

While it's always practical to put all the tasks on a single page so you can remember them all, you also can create separate schedules for your personal and work commitments. Every time you accomplish a task, tick it off so that you can gauge your productivity at the end of each day. Having a well-worked out schedule that you follow will help you to maintain your productivity levels and eliminate the distractions that contribute to you wasting your time.



BE FLEXIBLE

Being utterly rigid with your schedules and routine will not serve you or those around you well. Life has a way of throwing things at you just as you think it's all coming together. Therefore, you must also learn to plan ahead and leave time for the unexpected. To be consistently productive, it is a good idea to build up your flexibility so that you can work under any circumstances. Ideally, you probably work better with a clear plan of action, a strict schedule, and a quiet place to work.

However, as we all know, it is tough to come by these kinds of ideal situations. Instead, learn to build your skills to hone your focus in any environment. Flexibility is a necessity within any schedule. Feeling as though you must stick to a routine indefinitely becomes stressful and overwhelming. The thought that of doing the same things the same way all of the time can quickly degrade your quality of life.

Remember that we can't function at our best unless our heart and soul is in something. Listen to your gut and change your routine as you see fit. This may mean just changing the time of day you exercise, or making moves to a more fulfilling career.

Flexibility is all about change. Don't be afraid of it, be curious and accept it. This curiosity will lend you the possibility to do new things, and exciting new ventures to keep your brain fresh and productive. Now that you have a better understanding of how to increase your productivity, you need to learn about the typical snags that you are likely to face in your attempt to increase your productivity levels and get more done.



STEP 4-DEALING WITH POSSIBLE DETOUR IN PRODUCTIVITY

As you try to make the most out of your day, you may face a range of situations that demand your attention. While you do try to avoid these situations and stick with the schedule that you've created, there will be certain circumstances that you will need to deal with first. So, how do you know what the situations are that must be taken care of right away, and which ones can be put off for later?

WORK OUT YOUR PRIORITIES

Everyone has their own way to decide which issues are a priority, and you'll have to decide which one will work best for you. To start, you can sort each issue that comes up into one of four categories.

Category One: Imperative and Time Sensitive

These are the issues that you have to tackle right away. These are the emergency situations that can't be put off until later. For example, the delivery deadline for a critical report, or a short circuit at home that could result in a fire.

Category Two: Imperative but Not Time Sensitive

These are going to be the issues that need to be tackled, but not right away. You can take your time with these issues. For example, the proposal that is sitting on your desk with ideas that you need to implement over the next six months, or the garage that you need to clean.

Category Three: Not Imperative but Time Sensitive

These are the little things that you need to take care of, on a day-to-day basis. For example, entering your time at work before leaving for the weekend, or picking up the dry cleaning because you need your good shirt for a wedding over the weekend.

Category Four: Not Imperative and Not Time Sensitive

The items in this category are the real snags in your attempts to increase your productivity. These are the things in your daily life that can be ignored for a while, or if they aren't going to contribute to your goals in any way, can be ignored completely. For example, gossiping at the office or that annoying acquaintance who is always looking to get something out of you.

ELIMINATING DISTRACTIONS

When you are trying to get your work done, there are many things that can distract you and kill your productivity. When your brain has to keep switching between tasks you end up becoming less efficient in your work. You should already have a good idea of your daily distractions from the work you did in keeping a time diary in Chapter 2.

This will make it easier for you to deal with these distractions as they come up. The first step to eliminating distractions is to look at your social media networks. If you are like many, you probably receive alerts. The most important thing that you can do to eliminate distractions and increase your productivity is to train your mind to focus only on what you are doing at the moment, rather than planning for the tasks that you need to do later in your day.

The report that you are currently working on won't get finished on time if you are planning for the meeting with your boss later on or planning your dinner date. Getting rid of distractions requires you to discipline your mind. When you receive emails and alerts, it can be tempting to go and check them right away. It makes it difficult to continue working at first, but you'll soon see the differences it makes in your productivity levels.

AVOID MULTITASKING

This may come as a surprise to most people because they are under the impression that managing multiple tasks help you get more done in the same amount of time. While multitasking can help sometimes, it's one thing that you have to be careful with when trying to boost your productivity. This is because rather than helping you accomplish more, you might end up getting less done.

For example, if you want to try to add more physical activity to your workday, you can opt to get a walking desk. This would allow you to walk and work at a built-in desk at the same time. However, you may find that typing and walking at the same time might not be easy, so it's advisable that you take care of activities that don't take too much thought, like checking your emails or conducting research for reports that you need to prepare later.

When you're at home, you can catch up with current events and cook dinner at the same time. This is the kind of multi-tasking that can work to help you increase your productivity. However, trying to take important business calls while you are changing your baby's diaper isn't a good idea because both tasks need your full focus and attention.

THE OTHERS

Working with a Lack of Confidence

Not being confident in what you do, and not believing in your, and your talents and capabilities can significantly decrease your productivity. When you are assigned a task, you need to do the best you can and give it your 100 percent.

Remember, you're boss has entrusted you with the project and believed that you have the skill and talent to deliver. By secondguessing yourself, you will only end up losing time and not actually working, which in turn has a substantial impact on your overall productivity.

Working Without Breaks

You may believe that putting in long hours at work and at home will result in you having a more productive day. However, the reverse is true. Working non-stop without stopping to relax or eat only decreases your productivity and lowers your quality of work. This is because your brain needs time to stop and reboot from time to time.

Taking even a 10-minute break will refresh you and raise your productivity levels. Further, if you think that by skipping lunch, you're saving 30 minutes in which you can get more work done, you're actually depriving your brain of the fuel it needs to function optimally. If you want to have a truly productive day, it is essential that you take mini-breaks throughout your day.

Lacking Motivation and Inspiration

Boredom can prove to be a significant snag in your productivity. If you feel that your interest in a particular project or task is waning, you need to find some way to regain your motivation. Pushing on despite having no interest in a project isn't going to help you complete it. Not only will you be wasting your time on it, but you also won't have anything to show for your time.

Try to look for a fresh and exciting approach that will help infuse new life into the task. You can try to read inspiring stories, focusing on the great outcomes, or consider rewarding yourself at the end of the project to help you regain your motivation and get through the task. Do whatever it takes to maximize your productivity.

Trying to Do Too Much at Once

Sometimes, when you have to deal with a major assignment or task, it becomes so intimidating that you drag your feet and it seems to get longer and longer. If this happens, try to split the task into smaller steps and deal with one step at a time.

CONT'D

Not Acknowledging Your Achievements

When you accomplish a big goal, it's okay to pat yourself on the back. Do whatever you need to do to feel good about yourself. Every milestone that you accomplish and celebrate will motivate you to take on more projects and achieve greater success in life.

Not Making Use of Your Downtime

There will be times throughout your day when your brainpower is low, and you can't seem to get much done. You can make use of these times to take care of other tasks that you don't need to think too hard to accomplish. Try sorting and filing the papers on your desk, or print out documents that you need to mail, or even send out memos if you need to. In this way, you'll be giving your brain a break but still use your time productively.

Allowing Clutter to Build Up

Having a cluttered workplace or home is going to affect your productivity levels significantly. This is because every time you need to find an object or a piece of paper, you'll have to rifle through tons of unneeded and unwanted stuff. Clutter also has the ability to cause chaos and confusion, all of which are extremely detrimental to productivity.

Take some time during your day to get rid of unwanted items and putting things back where they belong. Now that you know the many factors that can snag your productivity, you'll be better able to overcome them. However, there is one snag that you will have to push yourself to overcome; procrastination. Learn how to determine the reasons why you keep putting off working and what you need to do to fix the problem.

STEP 5-OVERCOMING PROCASTINATION! THE BIGGEST HURDLE TO YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

No matter what tips you use to improve your productivity, you will never see the boost you want if you don't roll up your sleeves and actually get down to work. Knowing what your goals are, how to achieve them, and the steps you need to take to move forward are all good strategies. Now you can learn how to get yourself to work and stop procrastinating to boost your productivity and get more done. Procrastination has traditionally been defined as postponing taking action on something in favor of doing something else.

However, this definition is insufficient because it fails to recognize circumstances in which putting things off is sensible and pragmatic. A better definition for procrastination would be the act of deferring action on something when taking an earlier action would have arguably have been a better decision. For example, going to the gym, rather than binge-watching shows on Netflix, or mowing the lawn rather than going to the movies.

The biggest challenge in working on tasks that you consider to be boring, difficult or unappealing, is starting on them. However, strange things happen once you start. The anxiety and dread that you associate with the task rapidly declines. Think about the last time you postponed an unappealing task.

The task probably nagged at you. The discomfort you felt probably grew the longer you postponed taking action. Now think about what happened when you finally started working on the dreaded tasks. The discomfort and anxiety you felt, much of it stemming from the guilt of procrastinating, likely dissipated. Plus, once you started working on the task, you probably found it easy to continue doing so.

Taking action causes the discomfort and guilt associated with procrastination to evaporate. It also eases the stress and worries that you may of doing the task. And, just as importantly, it gives us the momentum we need to continue working until the job has been completed. Here are some ways that you can begin to beat procrastination to boost your productivity and get more done.



IDENTIFY THE UNPLEASANT TASKS

One of the most common reasons why people tend to procrastinate is that some of the tasks that they need to complete are cumbersome and unpleasant. You can tackle this procrastination issue in any way that works for you. For example, you can create a separate list for these kinds of tasks and promise yourself you'll do at least one every day. Or, you may consider adding them to your regular must-do list and tackle them over the course of your day.

PLAN FOR CONSEQUENCES

A good way that you can deal with procrastination is to have a good or bad consequence system in place. For instance, if you hate having to exercise every day despite being aware that you need to, tell yourself that you'll buy that new outfit because exercising will make it fit better. Or, you can promise yourself if you don't finish that assignment by 3 pm, you'll give up watching the game on Sunday. You need to choose a consequence that will help to motivate you in the best way possible.



GET HELP FROM A COLLEAGUE OR FRIEND

When you invite someone in to work with you on a project, it can be challenging to put it off if that person arrives at the agreed upon time. When your friend or colleague sacrifices a weekend to help you paint the kitchen, you can't possibly put it off any longer. If your colleague gives up their lunch hour to help you put together a proposal for a client, you'll have to get down to it even if you don't feel like it. If the project is not one that you need help with, ask someone to check in on you at fixed intervals to make sure you are staying on track.

TELL ALL WELL INTENDED YOUR GOALS

Talking to people about your objective makes it a matter of prestige to achieve it just the way you described it to them. Making this an excellent way to fight procrastination. If you own a business, tell all your friends and family that they can expect to find themselves shopping at your second store in a year. When they know this, they will be more likely to continue to check in with you on the progress of the project, which can give you the added incentive to ensure that it happens.



CREATE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

Gather all the tools, paperwork, and any equipment that you need and make sure that everything that you need to start your task is in place. Turn off your phone alerts and let the people around you know that you are not to be disturbed for the next hour or so. If you work from home, have set times when you'll wake up and get your workday started. Move your desk or workstation out of the bedroom if you have to, anything to make you feel less lazy.

MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE GO-GETTERS

Think about trying to make friends with people who have the same goals as you do. Better yet, make friends with people that have already achieved the same goals. You might also want to consider joining support groups or find a mentor to help you. Talking, working with them, or reading about their life stories can inspire you to begin working on your own goals.

CONCLUSION

Now is the time to start to put these steps into action and incorporate them into your daily routine. Remember that productivity waxes and wanes due to a variety of different factors. It's important to run with any bursts of motivation that you have, and impart some of these tools when it is lacking. Whatever you want to do with your life should fill you with passion, enthusiasm, and be in line with the values you have in mind. This is the real secret to increasing your productivity so that you can get more done.

THANK YOU

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