

11

PRODUCTIVITY HACKS

THAT DON'T SUCK



We don't want to waste any of your time,
you need to be more productive.
So here we go, in rapid-fire fashion,
productivity tips you can start using today

1 Be selfish 4 hours a day



Studies show that the average person has about **4 hours of deep concentration in them per day.** This is when you are at your best, doing your best work.

Don't let distractions, interruptions and “shallow work” steal your most productive time.

2 Take control of your mornings

In general, people have the most energy in the a.m. Use that to your advantage and pay yourself first.

Give two one-hour blocks to your most important, highest impact task or goal as soon as you get to the office.

Disappear to a quiet area if you have to. This goes double for your personal life.

Combined with the first tip, you will guarantee yourself at least two hours of peak performance on your key initiatives. Imagine the progress you'll make in just a week.



3 Use your tired, stressed and unmotivated time wisely



Reality says you're going to have good days and bad days. High energy peaks and low energy valleys.

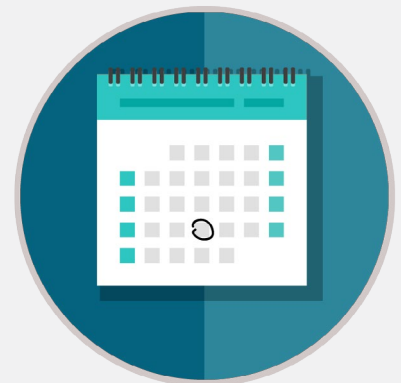
You need to recognize this, and pack as much of your simple, low value and administrative work into these down times.

4 Get rid of your to-do list, create a to-do schedule

GOOD give every item on your list an estimated time to work on it or complete

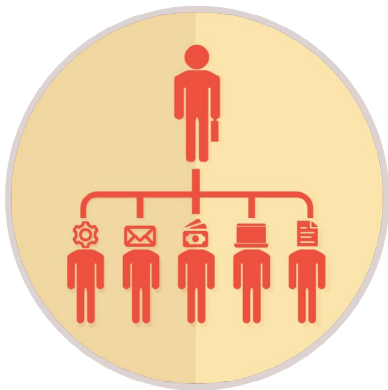
BETTER take that time, and put it on your calendar at a specific date and time

BEST schedule everything, not just meetings (and don't forget breaks)



5

“If something can be done 80% as well by someone else, delegate!”



Author John C. Maxwell said that.
We only half agree.

If someone can do my highest impact tasks at only 80%, keep them.

This only applies to things outside your top 20% of activities.

6

Maintain a healthy inbox

Archive all email in your inbox after 48 hours. Create a new folder called “Old Email” if you prefer not to use the default archive feature in your email program. If you’re really bold – delete email more aggressively. If it’s truly important, people will follow up. If they don’t, it probably wasn’t that urgent or important in the first place.



BONUS: Progressively unsubscribe from all email newsletters as they come in. Only add them back if you truly miss receiving them.

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Become a meeting stickler



Demand an agenda for every group meeting you attend. Decide if you really need to be there.

Can your part be handled with a simple one-minute email?

Don't commit to more than 45-minute meetings as a general rule

(exceptions do apply) – and set the expectation at the beginning of the meeting that you have a hard stop for the scheduled end time. Don't allow meetings to interrupt the flow of your deep work time blocks.

8 Say “no, because”

If you wonder where the day goes and why you don't have enough time to get things done, look no further than saying “yes” too much. You've allowed people to steal your valuable time without even knowing.

Stop that.

Start saying no as the default answer to most requests and pair it with a reason why.

A strong reason is best, but any reason is good enough. This will soften the blow for the other party and reduce the begging and guilt trip.

Don't feel bad about it, either. Sure, you're a good, generous person and that's nice. But nice people are unfortunately the people most taken advantage of. Put the onus on the other party to convince you why you should get involved. It's got to be something only you can do or urgent AND important. Most requests simply don't qualify.



9

Develop a shutdown ritual



Cal Newport, author of the awesome book “Deep Work,” suggests running through a series of steps at the end of every work day:

- ✓ **Review** incomplete items or goals from your task list/schedule
- ✓ **Write down** a plan to tackle them at a specified time (put on your schedule) or delete them entirely, if possible (you didn't do it, so how important or urgent was it really?)
- ✓ **When finished**, say “shutdown complete” as an audible cue of success for the day. More importantly, it clears your mind and you can leave work without the burden of unfinished items haunting you at home.

10

Ask your boss this question

“How much time should I be spending on deep, important work vs shallow, low-impact work?”



- ✓ If your boss says more than **60%** should be focused on deep work – discuss a plan to restructure your work environment to accomplish this. Meaning, identify distractions and barriers in the way of dedicated blocks of time to focus on your highest impact items – and design them out.
- ✓ If your boss says less than **50%** should be focused on deep work – discuss your priorities and how you can have more impact.

11

Stop making excuses



You're better than that. The fact that you read **ResourcefulManager** tells us you give a damn. You want to improve. You want to be better. What's holding you back, then?

Have a heart-to-heart with yourself, and conquer the barriers preventing you from achieving your goals.

Don't wait, do it now.

ONE FINAL NOTE

These tips are only as good as your consistency in executing them. Productivity improvement is gradual in the beginning, then compounding. You have stick with it to create better habits that earn you the positive impact you want. Tips and hacks will only take you so far.

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