

Productivity Tips and Techniques

Feeling overwhelmed by many ideas and possibilities and burdened by excessive work is common as a startup founder. Before changing habits, however, it's important to understand that productivity without purpose is futile. It's like running fast without a destination. When necessary, use your north star to reorient and prioritize.

Planning

- *Prioritize.* Force yourself to schedule the most valuable projects and block time for self-care. When new things come up, you have to triage based on your priorities.
- *Daily.* Plan your day for a few minutes, either the night before or early morning. Confirm that time is allocated to your priorities and self-care.
- *Weekly.* Plan your week at the end of Friday or first thing Monday. If you need to adjust your schedule, this gives you time to respectfully inform others.
- *Meetings.* Review your recurring meetings quarterly by asking three questions: Is the purpose and outcome clear? Are you adding value for others? Are you learning? If you answer "no" to all three, you should either improve these meetings or stop attending.
- *Media.* Unfollow people and content that does not benefit your life. You will be less distracted and more energized by the remaining engagements.

Timing

- Tackle the most important projects and work during your "high-energy" times.
- Perform work requiring less mental energy during your low-energy times.
- Improve at delegating. Done constructively, this helps you to remove responsibilities and allows someone else to develop their skills.
- Batch email responses versus responding to people throughout the day and check messages and social media only at designated times, not constantly.
- *Handle the worst first: "Eat a live frog first thing in the morning, and nothing worse will happen the rest of the day." – Mark Twain*

Environment

- *Breaks.* Move your body and refocus your mind regularly.
- *Focus.* Remove or silence smartphones and other distractions.
- *News fast.* The news makes us less happy, so take a break during periods or even try for a couple of days.
- *Honor transitions.* If you had a rough morning or a bad meeting, walk away or shake it off to bring your best self to the next activity.
- *More.* Some people work better under brighter light/sunlight, cooler temperatures, calmer background noise, improved chair and desk position, clean workspace, etc.

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Learn & Adjust

- Record these areas weekly: Accomplishments, Ideas, Progress, and Ways to Develop. You may revisit your Accomplishments during a tough period.
- Track your time, including meetings, projects, tasks, and planning. Based on your priorities, reallocate your time so your efforts align with your objectives.
- Experiment with productivity apps e.g. timers and wearables.
- Recognize that building mental muscle will take time to see results.

More Tips

- *Sleep*. Since a lack of sleep leads to slowness and foolishness, get what you need.
- *Exercise*. Schedule short workouts every day and try extra activities when stressed.
- *Eating Habits*. Keep healthy snacks on hand and stay hydrated.
- *Mindfulness*. Consider the benefits of breathing, meditation, journaling, and yoga.
- *Connection*. Meet regularly with people who want the best for you.
- *Preparedness*. List tasks you can accomplish in 5-10 minutes for unexpected downtimes.

Final Thoughts

Don't try to change everything all at once. **Pick one practice to start**, and once that works for you, consider adding another new technique.

Expect a new habit to take at least four weeks to absorb, often eight. Finally, forgive yourself if you try a change and it doesn't work out. The key is persistence, not perfection.

Good luck in building the best you possible!