

Take Action



...Even When You Don't Feel Like It

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How often do you wake up ready to take over the world but something happens, and you quit altogether? Perhaps you get sleepy and decide to work later. Or a friend calls and you decide to go out instead of taking the action you'd planned on. After all, you only have one life. While it's perfectly fine to take a break from time to time, it shouldn't become a habit.

Procrastination, analysis paralysis, and perfectionism are your worst enemies. Not to mention stress, which can discourage even the most motivated person. One thing is for sure. We all have the same 24 hours in a day, and it's up to you how you use them.

What Keeps You from Getting Things Done?

A staggering 26 percent of people are chronic procrastinators. Up to 95 percent of students have this tendency as well. Studies indicate that procrastination rates have more than quadrupled in the last three decades.

The tendency to postpone things affects not only your job or career but also your relationships and your big dreams for the future. Over 40 percent of those facing this problem have experienced financial loss because of it. Procrastination can ruin careers and relationships, and even wreak havoc on your health.

Different people procrastinate for different reasons. Some blame stress and fatigue. Others are feeling overwhelmed by work, or waste precious time on meaningless things that drain their energy.

Another common cause is analysis paralysis, which occurs when you become so lost in the process of analyzing things that you eventually give up. It's the state of over-thinking a situation, which keeps you from getting anything done.

Let's say you're planning to start a new business. You make a plan, assess your budget, and research the market. However, you're never satisfied with the results. You either find flaws in the project or believe that you could do things a

lot better. As a result, you make no decision. You keep postponing your project over and over instead of taking action.

The truth is that most people are afraid of making a wrong decision. However, some take this fear to a whole new level. Surprisingly, this often applies to the brightest professionals. Intelligent people are particularly prone to analysis paralysis due to their tendency to overthink.

Perfectionism and analysis paralysis are strongly connected. Since there is no such thing as perfection, you'll never be satisfied with the result. The fear of failure can hold you back and stop you from launching a business, going back to college, stopping a bad habit, or making your dreams come true.

One last reason why we procrastinate is plain laziness. Sometimes, you simply don't feel like working - and there's nothing wrong with that. Just make sure it doesn't become a part of your daily routine. Taking a day or two off is good for both your mind and body. It boosts your productivity and motivation, sparks your creativity, and gives your brain a well-deserved break.

Ideas pop up when you least expect it. The highest flow of productivity comes when you're 100% focused on the task. You might not find your "Why" right now, but this doesn't mean it's not there. Find your inner drive, take action, and plan your time wisely.

Ready to stop procrastinating and get things done? Try these strategies!

Prioritize the Most Important Tasks

According to researchers, our willpower is limited. Think of it as a phone battery. As the day goes by, your willpower decreases. It's strongest when you wake up in the morning and gets weaker every hour. Every decision and task drain your "battery."

That's why experts recommend starting the day with your most important tasks. Have a big project that needs to be ready by 7 PM? Wake up one hour earlier than usual to get things done. This way, you won't be facing tight deadlines or feeling stressed about the whole thing.

The most successful entrepreneurs are notorious for being early birds. Up to 90 percent of executives wake up at 6 AM or earlier. Jack Dorsey, Twitter's CEO and co-founder, wake up at 5 AM. Indra Nooyi, Pepsi's CEO, starts her day at 4 AM. Tim Cook, Apple's CEO, rises at 3:45 AM.

These people wake up early in the morning for a reason. That's when they have the most willpower and are less likely to get distracted. Plus, it allows them to exercise, meditate, and plan the day ahead without feeling rushed.

Take a Break from Social Media

Time flies when you're browsing your Facebook Newsfeed or reading the latest tweets. In 2017, the average person spent 135 minutes per day on social networks compared to 126 minutes a day the year before. Those who have an office job spend even more time online.

Perhaps social networking is part of your job. SEO, digital marketing, advertising, and other occupations rely heavily on social media. However, it's one thing to use these platforms for business, and another thing to waste hours checking up on your friends and what they're doing.

Set a time limit for your daily social media usage. Nowadays, there are all sorts of apps that block distractions, such as Focus, Cold Turkey, Anti-Social, and Self-Control. Some will even count your "active" minutes, so you'll know exactly for how long you've been working.

Change Your Environment

Sometimes, it's your work environment that keeps you from getting things done. After all, who wouldn't get bored or distracted when spending every single day in the same place?

Different environments impact our productivity in different ways. Consider changing the scenery from time to time. Go to a local park or a co-working space. Redecorate your room and eliminate the clutter. If your boss allows it, go to work at a café or work from a home office. If they see a rise in your output, they'll be more likely to continue to allow you to work in these locations.

Prepare for the Unexpected

Most of us have a work calendar full of appointments, Skype meetings, and other responsibilities. Problems arise when you least expect them. Your child gets sick, a co-worker is late getting their part of a project completed, or you have an unexpected meeting you must attend. The worst part is that these things happen when you're the busiest.

To counteract the probability that the unexpected will happen, start taking action on your tasks right away. Don't wait until you have to pull an all-nighter to finish the job. This way, you'll get things done and stick to your schedule no matter what. Plus, you'll feel less stressed and have peace of mind knowing that if the unexpected comes along, you're prepared.

Fulfill Your Basic Needs

When was the last time you had a good night's sleep? What about your exercise routine? We get it. Life is busy. And skipping a workout or a meal isn't a big deal. But, if it becomes a habit, it can hurt your productivity, mental focus, and motivation.

Sleep deprivation, for instance, has been linked to poor work performance, difficulty concentrating, and reduced creativity. It also weakens your immune

system, heart function, and mental health, which further affects your ability to take action on your most important goals.

In a study, subjects who got less than seven hours of sleep per night were three times more likely to develop a cold. Poor sleep may also lead to chronic fatigue, hormonal disorders, anxiety, and depression. Plus, it affects your problem-solving and decision-making skills.

No matter how many obligations you have, make health a priority. Exercise every day, even if it's just for 10-15 minutes. Get at least seven hours of sleep and take a nap if necessary. Eat well and stay hydrated. Whenever you skip a meal, your blood sugar drops. That leads to diminished mental focus, tiredness, and lethargy.

Find Your Motivation

Motivation is what keeps you going. If you're stuck in a rut, set short-term and long-term goals. For instance, you could tell yourself that if you finish that difficult project on time, you'll book a trip over the weekend. Reward yourself for getting things done.

Look for inspiration around you. Set new goals or start working on a project you've been postponing for years. Build anticipation and picture yourself succeeding.

Share your goals with other people, whether it's your family, friends, or co-workers. When you commit publicly, you're more likely to get things done. After all, you don't want to look bad in front of others.

Final Thoughts

Now that you know these tricks it's time to try them out! More importantly, celebrate your achievements, big or small, rather than worrying about your mistakes.

Remember, time is your most valuable asset. Use it wisely and stop procrastinating. Your work will never be perfect. You are not perfect. Nobody is. Do your best with what you have and make improvements along the way. Having a brilliant idea is not enough. The only way to bring it to life is to take action.