

12+ Simple Hacks to...



Boost your Productivity

by 30%

by this time To-morrow!

Simple Productivity Hacks

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Simple Productivity Hacks

Preface – Worth a read!

Whether you are seeking a promotion, looking to supplement or even replace your income or just become unstoppable, increased productivity from implementing a few simple hacks will certainly help you get where you want to be.

Increased productivity, when you open your screen and log on, is made doubly difficult as we are subject to many more distractions on-line than off-line.

Productivity, therefore, becomes doubly important.

I'm a believer in 'the simpler better'.

What I have assembled here are a few simple hacks, based on my own experience and observation of others, that I personally use, as do some of my colleagues. These simple methods or hacks have all been proven to help increase productivity. They are not new. There is nothing earth shattering about any of them. You may already be using some of them. They are mostly simple and good old-fashioned common sense. Things which are all too easily forgotten when faced with the vast array of software options, designed to increase productivity, that become no more than distractions.

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I'm not knocking the software options. I've used and still do use several of them myself from time to time, like ToDoList and Trello amongst others. And the latest iteration being 'Notion'. (Looks great by the way, but very time consuming!).

I suggest there is a down-side to all these.

There is always a learning curve and the time taken in setting up. And if you don't keep your stuff up to date, for whatever reason, then you will have to repeat the time-consuming process. Then there's the endless Updates, PowerUps and Tweaks...

It is very easy to get sucked in to experimenting with and tweaking, the program. Playing with it, in other words, as opposed to actually using it productively!

Sometimes it helps to get back to a simpler approach.

I cannot motivate you. Your motivation has to come from within you. But I can promise that if you use these hacks you will become more productive. And productivity in itself can be motivating.

Simple is better.

Let's get productive and become unstoppable!

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Section 1: Three (+ One) Simple, effective but often overlooked hacks

1. Email / Facebook / Social Media

Never ever start your most productive time of day by opening emails or diving into any form of social media. Hours will be lost before you start. Schedule a time of day, when you are normally less productive, so it doesn't eat into your most productive time. This alone can increase your productivity by as much as 20%.

2. Do Eat Breakfast

Your Mother probably told you to eat your breakfast and she was right. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. The body and the brain both need fuel in order to function properly. Without it you will be running on empty. It doesn't work for your car and it doesn't work for you either. Eat Breakfast.

3. Hack Number Three

Re-read hack number one – it's right up there at number one for a reason!

4. Coffee is good – Water is better

Okay, your world just doesn't work without coffee. Neither does mine. But your brain prefers water, plain unflavoured water. Try having a glass of water with every coffee and every meal. It will help.

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5. Get some sleep

Sleep is essential, all seven hours of it. Losing an hour-and-a-half of sleep, for whatever reason, can reduce your efficiency and productivity by as much as 30%. Grab that back. If you want to be super productive and efficient don't skimp on your sleep.

Productive, unstoppable people also sleep!

Section 2: Three Essential & Free Productivity Apps

You've probably got many more than three but these three I regard as essential. If you are not using them or similar, you really should be. Basic 'housekeeping' and tidiness can buy you an extra productive hour a day or another 15%.

1. Password Manager

If your passwords are not stored, protected and entered for you they should be. RoboForm, LastPass and Bitwarden are probably the top contenders. LastPass, did have a free version, Bitwarden does and I use it. Google can do it too but... Maybe the likes of Google and Facebook know enough about you already, without giving them access to all your passwords as well. Your choice but do use something.

2. Everything in one Place

That's Evernote. The ultimate filing facility. Web clippings, notes, maps, everything but the kitchen sink goes in there. See a web page that you want to keep, simply 'Clip it' and save it. Job done. A place for everything and everything in its place. And you can find it again!

3. Notepad++

Notepad++ as a plain text editor is difficult to beat. It does a lot of fancy things to do with code that I know nothing about. Ignore, unless you are a coder. One of its biggest advantages is that it stores whatever notes you make as tabs and it doesn't delete them when you close the program. Writing one thing – remember something else – open new note and make note – come back and carry on. It is that simple, that brilliant and a real time saver.

Section 3: Six of the Best hacks

1. The Much Loved or Loathed To-Do List! – Keep it Simple

Yes, you can do this electronically but there is something therapeutic about stepping away from your computer screen and going back to basics.

Nothing beats a paper and pencil To-Do list. Over the years I have tried many apps. Some are straight forward others are loaded with features. The irony is that you often start off with a paper and pencil list anyway as you figure out / design your input, before you start to actually input!

Simple paper and pencil, with no fancy features, still works well, which is why I keep coming back to it. So, go make your list and get ready to super charge it.

2. Super charging your To-Do List

How do you do that? By dumping most of it! "Yeah right - No way - Can't do that".

Yes, you can and this is how.

Create a long master To-Do list. Dump everything onto it. That becomes your master 'Brain Dump'.

Now extract 5 + 2 items and prioritize them, in order to make a new short, succinct To-Do list.

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In doing so extract the most important items from the long list before the items you think are urgent. Important comes before Urgent.

Equally important is to be specific with the 5 items on your list.

Simply stating 'write blog post or research for blog post' is insufficient. Expand it so you know exactly what you have to do.

For example, something such as, 'research for Stress Management in the Workplace' for a blog post will ensure that you are focused when you start.

This 5 +2 list is your To-Do list for the day.

The beauty and simplicity of this system is that you have removed the distractions of a myriad items on your list and wondering what to do next, every time you finish a task. You made the decisions once - when you created your 5 + 2 list.

Why five 5 + 2? Simple - Your target is to get through the first five. If you achieve that you've had a good day. If you are so productive that you have time to spare, then tackle the next two. You've then had an excellent day.

Besides 5 + 2 is a lot less daunting than your entire Brain Dump!

Try it. You'll be amazed at how much more productive you become.

I've witnessed way more than a 30% increase in productivity among colleagues putting this into practice.

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3. Schedule it

Now that you have a more manageable To-Do list, I suggest you add scheduling into the mix for super efficiency.

Before you start you will need to be realistic about how long you expect each task to take and what you think you can get done.

To best schedule your day, break your whole day down, from start to finish, into approximately forty to forty-five-minute chunks, with a ten to fifteen-minute break after every two chunks.

If you doubt the wisdom of this, then think back to school or college days. They scheduled classes / lectures that way because it is proven to work.

Drop your tasks into the forty-five-minute chunks.

If you have a couple of quick and easy tasks lump those together into one time slot.

Some tasks will be longer and require more than one chunk. Try not to allot more than two consecutive time chunks to any task.

Try and finish each task within the allotted time.

If you don't finish and need more than a literal two or three minutes, then stop working on it, close whatever it is and move on.

Re-schedule it for a later time chunk.

Schedule in some free time in addition to the ten-minute breaks.

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You can turn off the external interruptions, but the internal, mental ones will still happen. If you suddenly think of something that needs doing, just make a note (**refer Section 2 Notepad++ !**) to attend to it when appropriate and get back to the task at hand.

Do download a countdown timer and use it or better still use a physical timer.

Your smart phone has probably got a timer. Use it but turn your phone onto airplane mode so you can't be interrupted!

There are additional benefits to using a timer. When you use a timer, you will find that you really strive to finish a given task within the allotted time.

You will also become aware of how long you may be spending on tasks and that will benefit your future planning.

4. Hit the Ground Running

Know what you want to do tomorrow before you go to bed tonight. And aim to spend your most productive time doing it as opposed to wasting that time checking email or Facebook – Read Hack Number 1 again!

Sounds easy enough but let's dig deeper.

Let's suppose that your most productive time is the first few hours of the morning. If you are different please alter the times to suit. The principle remains the same.

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It is not sufficient to simply know that you are going to spend the first few hours 'writing'. It is important to know what to write about.

Are you going to start writing a report or pdf product?

Is it a review or just a Blog Post? What is the topic?

Is it a Sales Page?

If the task or topic requires some research, then do the research beforehand not during your most productive time.

You can go one better than that if you know your point of entry to the topic and a good idea of how you want to tackle the opening paragraphs.

If you have previously outlined the project so much the better.

You can go even better still by writing the first few lines. This enables you to hit the ground running, carrying on from where you left off, without staring at a blank screen waiting for inspiration.

Sometimes, you may experience an added benefit this hack.

Many of you, at some time in your life, will have experienced going to bed with a problem unsolved and waking with a solution. It is a fairly well-known phenomenon.

If you have written the first few lines before you go to bed you could well wake up with a lot of the task already written in your mind. All you have to do then is hit the keyboard and let the words pour out. And that you are going to do running. That's Productivity on steroids!

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With this simple hack your time will be focused on the task not wasted wondering what to do. Based on my own experience, there have been times when it has doubled my productivity in the same time period.

Try it, you might surprise yourself with how much more you achieve.

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5. Effective, Efficient and Super Productive Hack to Get Stuff Done

I've recently been doing this for myself and it has definitely paid off.

I'm a firm believer in also using a To-Do list for specific projects.

But lists, especially long lists, get to look a little dog-eared after a while. And when the job is complete and everything on the list is ticked off, the list gets thrown away.

Many project tasks are repeated each time you tackle similar projects.

So, you end up recreating the same or very similar list all over again!

That's nuts.

This simple hack is taking the list process one step further with some tremendous and potential payoffs.

Let's say you have a long list of things to do to create your next pdf., course, book, product, whatever it may be. You've made your list of all the various tasks required to be done and ordered them. E.g.,

1. Research & gather reference material
 2. Source Illustrations
 3. Write Report / Course / Product / whatever.
 4. Write / Create Sales page
- sort of thing and so on...

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Now get yourself a pack of Record or File cards and transpose each item or task on your list onto a card.

One task - one card. Simple.

Check the order of the cards take the first card and put the rest aside somewhere.



Preferably out of sight and out of easy reach.

Now work on that one task until it is complete. No flicking through to see if there is a task you would rather tackle. You put them in the correct order remember, so stick to it. No excuses, no ifs, no buts, just complete the damned task!

6. And the hack that will make you way more than 30% super productive...

Firstly, notice how long each task actually takes and make a note of it on the cards. Next time you tackle a similar project you will have a much better idea of how long it is going to take.

Next, when you hit a snag, problem or get stuck with something and you solve whatever it was, make a note of your solution on the card. Next time the solution is right there.

If you find a task needs breaking down into multiple tasks then create cards for each task, sort them into order and add them to the others.

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Keep out only the one card for the task you are working on. No exceptions remember.

When a task is complete, make sure you've noted the time taken, and any tips to yourself for next time, congratulate yourself and add it to the back of the stack.

Now take out the next card / task and work on that exclusively until that too is completed. And so on...

Reward yourself from time to time!

Why does it work so well?

When you are working on one card / task at a time and only that card is visible, you have effectively removed a number of distractions.

By keeping a record of time taken, solutions, tips and any short cuts you discover, you are automatically improving productivity for the next time you tackle something similar.

Plus – **You now have a process in place** to automate next time.

And the Bonus...

Depending upon the nature of the project, when you have finished and all the cards are in there correct order and all the solution, tips and tricks added, you could have the makings of a simple step by step saleable cheat sheet or product.

There's money in that – capitalize on it!

Section 4: Perfection is a Myth

Perfection and Procrastination are deserving bedfellows. Forget making it perfect. Worth doing well is one thing. Striving for perfection is another altogether.

Perfection will never be achieved because something, some tiny little thing can always be improved. That's just the way it is. Stop trying to make perfect when good enough is good enough. Just get it, whatever it is, out there and tweak it later.

Who was it said 'Ready, Fire, Aim!'

Section 5: Conclusion...

If you are already implementing everything I've covered, in one way or another, and manage to stick to it, full credit to you, I applaud you. I wish I could say the same!

For the rest of us... Consistent action will bring results. These simple hacks will, hopefully make your action more productive. Implement all of them and a 30% increase in your productivity is well within your reach.

I said earlier that there is something therapeutic about stepping away from your computer screen, grabbing a pencil and paper and doing a brain dump before extracting a short list of important tasks.

In addition, there is something immensely satisfying in crossing completed items off a list.

Doing both can not only boost your productivity but leave you feeling pretty damn good about yourself. And there's nothing wrong with that!

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