



6 Ways to Skyrocket Your Productivity



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Do you feel like you always run out of time

If you are like most people, and especially most entrepreneurs, than productivity is a big challenge. There is just way more on your plate than you can handle. Discovering how to be more productive sharp and focused is essential.

Here are the main problems:



First there is information overload.



Second between Skype, slack, What's app, text message, Facebook messenger ...You get the point. Everyone has access to you. Which leads to easy distractions



Third, the world is just way more competitive, the economy is way more globalized and people in all walks of life can leverage great resources to outperform you, be more productive than you and out earn you. This means that you have to optimize your productivity.

Traditional articles would tell you to take some fancy nootropics/supplement, wake up super early, and do something insane like turn off your cell phone while you work or stop checking your email and going on social media :)))

At **Ultiself** we take a much more practical and realistic approach.

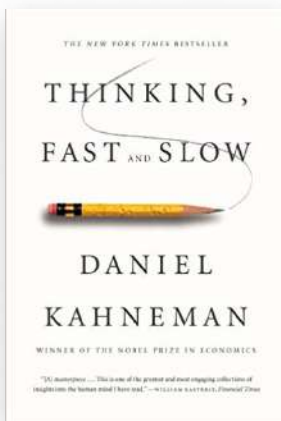
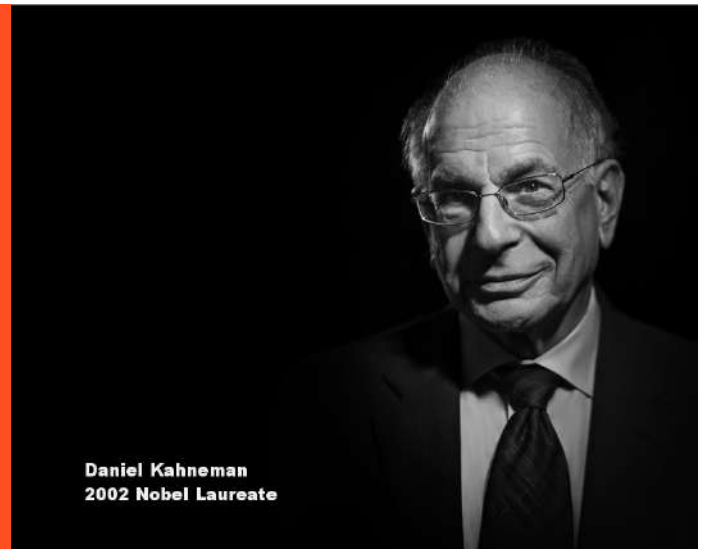
So here it goes:

1. Know your limitations

A key player you may have never heard of

You most likely have heard of Tony Robbins, Brian Tracey, Joe Despenza and Tim Ferris, but have you ever heard of Daniel Khaneman?

Kahneman is a Nobel Prize Winning psychology researcher. His research is backed by studies and is widely used in marketing and self improvement.



If you are an entrepreneur and are yet to read his book **Thinking Fast and Slow**, you definitely should. It is not a super easy read but the info on psychology and marketing is priceless.

One of the principles in his book is called the **"Planning Fallacy"**, The premise of it is that people typically underestimate how long a task or project will take and they typically overestimate their abilities [5].

This type of over estimation happens on all levels. Kahneman, cites a bunch of examples like a 2002 US survey of kitchen remodeling that showed that on average people end up paying twice as much as they estimate for their kitchen maintenance.

If you grew up in Boston, like I did, than you certainly heard of the “Big Dig” tunnel construction project, which is one of the greatest examples of this



The list goes on and on.

So do you just become less ambitious?

Absolutely not! You just need to face reality. If you assume that you will accomplish 5 things in a day understand that it may only 1 or 2.

Sounds bad, but it can actually be used for good!

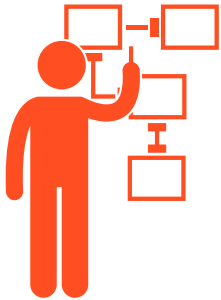
As someone who built and sold 2 successful businesses, i learn one massive productivity trick.....



**MOST OF THE WORK THAT YOU WILL DO
FOR YOUR BUSINESS WILL ACTUALLY
BE USELESS!!!**

It's basically the Pareto principle, also known as the 80-20 rule. That states that 20% of the things you do will generate 80 percent of the results you get.

For example you may be focusing your effort on designing or writing copy for an inner page of your website that nobody will see, or answering a phone call or an email that will clearly get you nowhere.



The moral here is understanding that your work capacity is limited **will force you to plan MUCH better** and really stop and try to identify the key drivers for your business or project and defer, delegate or best of all delete the rest.

I will end this section with a great quote from a very successful lawyer I know. He said:

Your success as a lawyer is determined by the work you reject not by the work you take on.

2. Identify Your Most Important Task

If you did not go to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), maybe you should learn about MIT (Most Important Task).



This is something that you must identify ahead of each day. **1 and only 1** absolutely positively critical to your business or job task that you absolutely positively **MUST** accomplish ahead of that day.

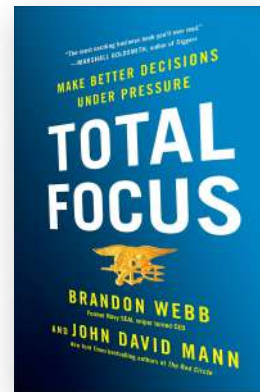
Taking at least 20 minutes to analyze your project management or task management tool ahead of each day and identifying this will absolutely skyrocket your productivity and self efficacy.

- 1 You will clearly accomplish more key tasks.**
- 2 You will mitigate distractions.**
- 3 You will feel like a success because you accomplished what you planned. Rather than feeling like a failure for falling short.**
- 4 You will feel less stressed and overwhelmed.**

If you want to read 2 great books about this theory check out



The One Thing
by Gary Keller



Total Focus
Brandon Webb

Both books drive home the concepts



FOCUS



VALUING
YOUR TIME



PRIORITIZATION

3. Plan your next day's tasks the night before



It's always a good idea to hit the ground running when you start your work day.

But many people who have yet to read this wonderful article come in to the office and have no idea where to begin. They are overwhelmed by tasks, texts, emails and requests.

This is why a phenomenal habit is to plan your next day's tasks the night before.

The best thing to do is to plan your **MIT** (most important task). Add 1-2 tasks that you also may do **ONLY** if you have time left over (which most of the time you will not).



You should also take into consideration any **KEY** (and only key) phone calls that you have to be on, meetings and emails that you have to send.

You obviously know Murphy's law, and even the simplest thing can get very complicated.

So how do you determine which are the most critical tasks for you to do?

First you need a good task management system that can help you organize your tasks and make it easy for you to prioritize the important ones.

David Allen's GTD, get things done, system is one the best and easiest ones to use and there are many apps like NirvanaHQ that will help you organize your tasks according to this system.

The idea is pretty simple.

- 1 Anything you need to do you get out of your head and put into the inbox in the app.**
- 2 The non-urgent items go into the later folder**
- 3 The items that you are waiting on someone else to do go into the waiting folder.**
- 4 The items that you need to do soon go into the next folder.**
- 5 You star the most pressing items in the next folder and do them 1 by one.**

Some keys to the system is you put ALL of your tasks in it, personal, business and side projects. You can use tags to distinguish them so that you can filter later if you want.

And to organize your app in regular intervals, at least once a week.

This system gives you flexibility and frees up your mind because all of your tasks are in your app. A good way to approach working with this app is to pick your most important task from the next folder and work on it, than move on to the next.

4. Set Hard Time Stops and Deadlines

Deadlines

Remember when you were in school and had assignments and tests with due dates. For some reason when a teacher set those for you, you adhered to them.

But now when you are grown up and set deadlines for yourself to build a business and accomplish your goals and dreams and feed your family you push them off.



You were scared to betray your teacher, but you are ok betraying yourself.

If you are not in this group I apologize :) but most people are.

This may seem a bit contradictory to the planning fallacy, but it's a bit different.

The idea is this.

- 1 Use the planning fallacy to really analyze your task list, and determine what you ABSOLUTELY, TRULY have to do.**
- 2 Once identify your MIT...set a hard deadline and approach it very vigorously. Like a sprint not a jog.**

According to research self imposed deadlines do in fact improve productivity [1].



DEADLINES CREATE A SENSE OF URGENCY, GIVE YOU STRUCTURE AND MITIGATE PROCRASTINATION AND FOCUS ON UNNECESSARY COMPONENTS OF THE TASK.



IF YOU ARE WORKING WITH A TEAM, ESPECIALLY STAFF, HAVING DEADLINES SETS A STANDARD FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION TO ATTACK PROJECTS AND TASKS WITH VIGOR AND ENTHUSIASM.

Also you probably heard of parkinson's law that work takes up as much time as you give it [2].

Set a hard time stop and rest to improve your productivity

Cliche statement :)...drum roll ...If you don't take time to sharpen your sword and keep fighting all the time eventually your sword will become dull and you will lose.

This goes for work too. If you keep working late and then you wake up early and get right back to work and work none stop you will lose your edge.

You need to wind down to keep your balance in life.



Many preach to wake up super early in the morning and have a hard stop at the end of the day than do things like workout or spend time with your family, read, play sports, go to the beach or go for walks. This is a great approach.

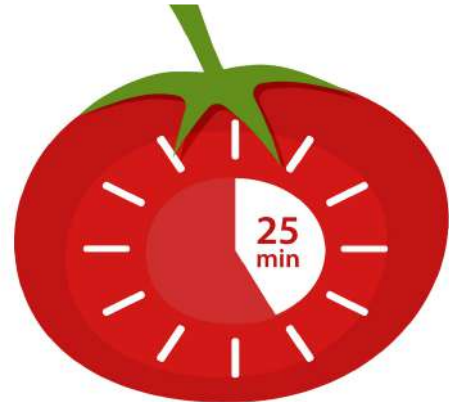
Here is a twist, if you are not a morning person. Give the morning to yourself. Work out, get a nice breakfast, go for a walk and then hit it hard late morning or early afternoon and go until late.

It's not as great as starting early but works too. The idea is to give yourself time to recharge.

5. How to use the Pomodoro Technique to improve focus and productivity

When you are working focus is critical.

One very popular productivity hack to improve focus is the **pomodoro technique**. This technique takes the assumption that people are better capable of working with short sprints rather than long dragged out sessions.



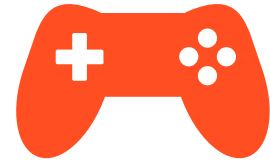
This means work for 20-40 minutes without any distractions and then take a 5-10 minute break then rinse and repeat.

From a strictly physical standpoint this technique is great, especially if you work sitting down. It forces you to take small breaks and ideally move around or stretch during those breaks. Sitting too long on a chair is very bad for your posture and getting up and stretching your hip flexors and thoracic spine is very needed for people that sit in front of computers all day.

Additionally the **pomodoro technique** takes into account that it is very hard to turn off your phone and not check your email for an extended period of time.

Therefore it makes you eliminate distractions by forcing you to work in total sprint mode for a relatively short period of time in regular intervals.

One great trick that you can use with the pomodoro technique is to gamify it.



There are many pomodoro apps in the app store and Google Play. they track how many pomodoros you do every day.



A good idea is to create a daily habit of completing at least 1 pomodoro and to check it off on your habit tracker for a dopamine boost. This will get your addicted to completing your pomodoros.

The apps will also keep track of your daily averages of pomodoros. Make it a daily game to try to beat those.

6. Eat for productivity and focus

With all these hacks we can not forget one very important fact. We are animals! This means that we have to optimize our physiology for productivity, focus and mental sharpness.

Here are some key physiological habits things you should consider:



SLEEP ENOUGH - How productive would you be if you worked drunk? Probably not very productive. Some studies show that driving when sleep deprived is as bad as driving drunk. Other studies show that sleep deprivation is associated with risks of injuries. [3] Case and point, get enough sleep. You will be amazed by how much your productivity improves.



OMEGA 3'S AND HEALTHY FATS - Fish oil, coconut oil, avocado, MCT oil, walnuts and other healthy fats increase blood flow to the brain and can improve your cognition.



CAFFEINE AT THE RIGHT TIMES - can also give you a boost. One trick with caffeine is not to have it right in the morning. In the morning, if you are well rested, is when you have the most energy so why have caffeine. As the day goes by and you need more energy is when you need the boost from caffeine. Therefore early afternoon may be a great time to have that cup of bullet coffee or green tea.



HYDRATE - did you know that 73% of your brain is made up of water [4]. It's no wonder that when you are dehydrated you can't think clearly. Drinking water with lemon and/or lime all day is super healthy and is great to keep your mind sharp.



VITAMINS AND NOOTROPICS - In addition to the basics there are some key vitamin levels you should pay attention to. If you are low on b12 you will be a bit off your game and will have low energy levels so get that one tested.



VITAMIN D - In addition to the basics there are some key vitamin levels you should pay attention to. If you are low on b12 you will be a bit off your game and will have low energy levels so get that one tested.

OTHER THINGS THAT YOU CAN EXPERIMENT WITH INCLUDE GINSENG, CHOLINE, DARK CHOCOLATE AND THE LIST GOES ON AND ON. TRY IT AND SEE HOW YOU FEEL AND ADJUST UNTIL YOU FIND THE ONE THAT WORKS FOR YOU.



Conclusion

In conclusion:

- 1 Don't underestimate your tasks or overestimate yourself.
- 2 Spend lots of time analyzing your task list so that you focus on what's truly important now.
- 3 Plan your task(s) the night before
- 4 Have a good task management system like the GTD
- 5 Focus on your Most Important Task (MIT) each day first.
 - Set a deadline for it
 - Attack it with vigor
 - And don't start anything else until it's done.
- 6 Give yourself time to rest, learn and think
- 7 Use the pomodoro technique to improve your focus and productivity
- 8 Don't forget that you are a biological being so make sure to sleep, hydrate, and eat for optimal productivity.
- 9 Enjoy

Sources

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