



Seven Simple Tips to Stay on Task

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Do you have a difficult time staying on task? If you feel as though you're spending a whole day just trying to get started, while never actually getting anything done, you can do something about it!

There are some very simple ways to help you regain your focus and stay on task, no matter what the day brings. In fact, some of these strategies are so simple that you may question whether they really are effective. The truth is, the simplest of strategies often yields the greatest result.

Here are seven simple tips you can use to help you stay on task:

- 1. Keep a list.** Create a daily task list on paper for your whole day or week. If you think creating a list in your mind is just as effective, think again. The truth is, you're more likely to waste precious time just trying to remember what's ahead!
 - When you take the time to create a list, you're giving yourself a visual confirmation of what's next. When you have a list to refer to, there's no arguing what comes next and you won't have any excuse to stray from your plan.
- 2. Schedule time for meetings and events.** Set up specific times when people can come in and interrupt your work. Let your co-workers know what works for you and strive to stick to it as much as possible.
 - For example, it's often helpful if your co-workers know they need to leave you alone for two or three hours in the morning, but then after that they can come in and ask questions or get advice from you as needed.

- 3. Refuse to check email every five seconds.** If you interrupt your workday by checking your email too frequently, you can get side tracked just as you are building momentum. Set specific times when you check email. It could be twice a day, or every few hours, but the goal is to eliminate unnecessary distractions.
- You can also send an automated reply that explains when you check email and when the sender should expect a response. I'm sure people can wait a few hours for a response!
- 4. Keep off of Facebook, Twitter and instant messaging services.** Sure, communicating with your friends and colleagues can make the day go faster, but it distracts you from the task at hand and keeps you from building precious momentum.
- How can you possibly get anything done when you're immersed in a real-time Twitter conversation? You can't. So turn it off and go back on when it's the right time for you.
- 5. Use headphones to block out noise.** If you have trouble focusing on your work because of the noise around you, wear a pair of noise-canceling headphones. If you don't want any sound at all, get some earplugs; it'll save your sanity!
- 6. Get a comfortable chair.** Did you know that productivity and comfort go hand-in-hand? It's true. Having a comfortable chair makes a *huge* difference in how you think, feel, and perform. If a new chair is out of the budget, get one of those chair cushions. You'll find that it's a purchase that pays for itself.
- 7. Clean up your workspace.** When your desk is clean and organized, it's much easier to stay focused on the task at hand. Why? Because you don't have to wade through the stacks and clutter to find what you need.
- Even seeing the piles of junk in your peripheral vision may increase your internal tension! Keep only what you need for your current task and put everything else in its place.

Do you think you can implement some of these simple tips in your workflow? I know you can!

You'll experience a huge difference in your productivity and - more importantly - your happiness, when you apply even just a few of these time-saving techniques. You'll be able to get more done faster than ever, leaving you with time for more important things, like having fun!