

Master Your Time

Action Guide

I. Understanding Productivity

1. The importance of meaning

Are you making a meaningful use of your time right now?

For each statement below, rate yourself on the scale from 1 to 10 (one being false, ten being true). Be honest! You're doing this for you.

I find the time I spend at my work meaningful:

1 10

I'm using my personal time in a meaningful way:

1 10

I'm having meaningful relationships (friendships and/or intimate relationships):

1 10

Write down what you'd like to change below (if anything)

2. Productivity isn't only about time management

Write down how well you're using your time. Answer the following statements using a scale from 1 to 10 (one being false, ten being true):

I make the most of my peak hours each day.

1

10

I work on each task with focus while eliminated distractions.

1

10

The tasks I work on usually move me closer to my long-term goals.

1

10

I'm excited about most of the tasks I'm working on.

1

10

The energy cycle and its six phases

Your productivity level depends on your energy level and how effectively you can channel your energy towards activities that matter. Remember the six phases below:

1. Protect energy. Your energy is limited, and the best way to protect it is to increase the quality of your sleep, eat more healthily, and exercise more regularly. When you fail to do so, your available energy decreases.

2. Channel energy. Energy that is not directed toward a specific purpose will dissipate and be of little value. Once that energy dissipates, you'll *never* be able to get it back. Therefore, make sure the way you use your energy today helps you move closer to your ideal future life. To do so, you need a clear vision and a sound strategy.

3. Allocate energy. You don't have enough energy to do everything at once. According to the 80/20 principle, twenty percent of your activities will generate eighty percent of your results. Using this principle, make sure you focus on the tasks that absolutely matter.

4. Invest energy. Your energy must be invested otherwise it will be lost. Once you've identified your key tasks, put all your energy into them while eliminating any distractions.

5. Refill energy. Take breaks regularly so as to maintain good energy levels.

6. Restart the cycle. You can then restart the cycle all over again the following day.

The point is, the more you can preserve energy and channel it toward the achievement of your most important goals, the more productive you'll become.

Now, let's go over the five levels of productivity to give you a better idea of how productivity works.

3. The five levels of productivity

Below is a quick overview of the five levels of productivity. Keep these levels in mind as you strive to make a better use of your time.

Level 1—destroying distractions and improving your focus

Level one is about eliminating distractions and putting your undivided attention into your major task.

Level 2—increasing your level of energy

Level two is about increasing your energy. To boost your productivity further, you must channel all your energy into the completion of your key task(s). This will enable you to inject more intensity into your time and to accomplish more as a result.

Level 3—clarifying your long-term vision

This level is about focusing on the correct things. You can complete as many tasks as you like, but if they don't move you closer to your goals, what's the point?

Level 4—planning your day effectively

This level is about optimizing your system and becoming a more effective planner. Through effective planning you can reduce distractions and increase the amount of focus you have available throughout the day.

Level 5—having an active social life and building meaningful relationships

The fifth level is about building meaningful relationships. How often and how well we interact with others has a big impact on our levels of productivity.

4. Productivity doesn't require complex systems

Write down what your current productivity system is (if you have one).

Is it working for you? If not, how can you make it simpler and more effective?

Write down your answer below:

5. What is procrastination and how to overcome it

We usually procrastinate for the following reasons:

- A. A lack of clarity
- B. Insufficient awareness
- C. Poor focus
- D. Fear
- E. Lack of urgency
- F. Lack of effective routines
- G. Unnecessary friction
- H. Mental overload

Complete the exercise below to help you overcome procrastination”

1. Rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 10 (one being false, ten being true) for each statement below:

I lack clarity regarding what I need to do or how to do it.

1 10

I wait for motivation to arrive.

1 10

I'm distracted unable to complete hard tasks.

1 10

I'm afraid of not doing a good enough job.

1 10

I have no clear deadline or sense of urgency.

1

10

I have no daily routine to help me start work.

1

10

My environment encourages unproductive or toxic behaviors.

1

10

I have too many things to do, and I feel stuck.

1

10

2. Select one task you've been procrastinating on recently. Write it down below:

My task: _____

3. Write down the specific reason(s) you're procrastinating on this particular task (lack of clarity, insufficient awareness, poor focus, etc.).

4. Finally, write down one specific thing you could do to start that task.

II. Updating your perception of time

1. Using past and future properly

A. Using your past effectively

Here are some ways you may misuse the past:

- You feel sorry about yourself for what happened in the past.
- You waste tons of energy trying to change things from the past.
- You feel ashamed or guilty for what you did in the past.
- You idealize your past.

Instead you can:

- Focus on all the things you did well.
- Remember times when you had courage.
- Give empowering meaning to negative events.
- Be self-compassionate.
- Practice letting go of difficult events.
- See your past as detached from your present.

Now, write down the specific ways you may be misusing your past.

Then, write down what you could focus on instead

B. Using your future effectively

Here are some ways you may misuse the future:

- worrying about a future event that hasn't happened yet
- focusing on all the things that could go wrong, and
- making future events into a much bigger deal than they really are.

Instead, you can

- Visualize your goals and get excited about them.
- Imagine future events going as you have already planned them. Think of all the ways things can go well in the future.
- Identify all the things that could go wrong.
- Avoid making future events a bigger deal than they probably are.

Write down below a few ways you're misusing your future.

Now, spend a few minutes visualizing yourself achieving your most exciting goals.

2. Using your present effectively

A. Be grateful for today

Start acknowledging your day using the provost below (or create your own):

- Thank you for this new day. I'll make the most of it.
- Today is a new opportunity to start afresh and let go of everything from the past.
- Today could very well be my last day. I'll act as if I hold my entire life in my hands.
- I'll make the most of today. By doing so, I know I'm building the best life possible.
- Today is always the most important day of my life, because it's the only day I have control over.

Write down one thing you could do every day to express your gratitude:

Every day:

- Write down the date each morning and take a few seconds to acknowledge your day (using the prompts described earlier).
- Practice completing your key tasks through to the end.
- Try awareness, meditation and/or breathing exercises to calm your mind before working on your designated tasks (see below)

Awareness exercise

Below are some awareness exercises you can try:

- Isolate one sense and practice focusing on it for a moment (start with hearing for instance). Try to hear things you've never noticed before.
- Next, move your attention to another sense and do the same.
- Repeat this exercise for each sense (touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste).
- Finally, try to be aware of all your senses at the same time.

Breathing exercises

Breathe slowly, using the following frequency as mentioned by Gurucharan Singh Khalsa, Ph.D., and Yogi Bhasan, Ph.D. in their book, *Breathwalk*:

- Eight cycles per minute (offers relief from stress and increased mental awareness)
- Four cycles per minute (produces positive shifts in mental function, intense feelings of awareness, increased visual clarity, and heightened bodily sensitivity)

Meditating exercise.

Try this exercise as recommended by Brendon Burchard in *High Performance Habits*. A couple of minutes might be enough.

“Repeat the word ‘release’ in your mind over and over. As you do, command your body to release all the tension in your shoulders, in your neck in your face and jaw. Release the tension in your back and your legs. Release the

tension in your mind and spirit. If this is hard, just focus on each part of your body, breathe deeply, and repeat the word 'release' in your mind."

2. Perceiving time as an investment

When you *invest* your time, you will utilize all your available energy and transform it into something valuable. For instance, you can transform your energy into:

- memories that will stay with you for the rest of your life
- skills that will serve you for years to come
- knowledge that will make you wiser and improve your life
- products or services that will allow you to express your creativity and serve others, and/or
- mental/physical well-being that enables you to maintain and increase your overall energy levels.

Review your typical week and complete the following exercises:

Write down one daily activity you would rate as being a poor use of your time (as opposed to being an investment).

Calculate the total number of hours you'll have spent on this activity over a lifetime (extrapolate assuming you'll live until 75). Write your answer below:

Write down the most exciting thing you could be doing instead. Don't limit yourself and write what you really, really want to do.

Then:

- Feel the pain and regret you'll experience from not having achieved this goal.
- Visualize yourself having achieved it. Get excited about it!
- Visualize how much progress you could make toward that exciting goal in the next year or the next decade if you free up the time by removing that single unproductive activity.

3. Understanding compound effect and long-term thinking

Complete the following exercises.

What is the one daily habit that would have the biggest impact on your productivity long-term if you were to implement it? Imagine what the impact would be if you stuck to it for the next five to ten years.

My one daily habit: _____

Practice visualizing your long-term goals for a few minutes every day.

Develop the habit of acknowledging your small daily wins. Write down below what you could do to celebrate your wins.

To celebrate my win I will:

4. Creating urgency

Imagine you had only ninety days to achieve what you usually do in one full year. Feel the sense of urgency this creates and imagine how much more you'll achieve with such a mindset.

Now, choose one long-term goal and write it down below:

My one goal: _____

Break it down into one ninety-day goal. Make sure it is a tangible goal you can picture. Make it a little challenging (to create urgency).

My ninety-day goal(s):

Then, add specific milestones by setting monthly and weekly goals.

My monthly goals:

My weekly goals

Finally, write down what you need to do today to start making progress toward that goal.

Today's goal(s):

III. Making a meaningful use of your time

1. The most dangerous five words you must stop using

Rate each statement below on a scale from 1 to 10 (one being false, ten being true):

I don't take full responsibility for my time.

1

10

I position myself as a victim, complaining I don't have time.

1

10

I fail to work on my goals because my reason isn't compelling enough.

1

10

I feel the need to look busy to fit in with others and avoid having to think more strategically.

1

10

Whenever you find yourself complaining you don't have time, do one of the following things:

- Say to yourself, "I choose not to make the time for this thing right now."
- Ask yourself, "How *can* I make the time for this thing?"

It will help you uncover your priorities.

2. Keeping a time log

Write down in detail all your daily activities for the next seven days. Make sure you include everything you do before, during, and after work. Use the time log available at the node this action guide.

3. Being productive the right way

A. Fifteen key questions to help you gain clarity

a. Eliciting desire

1. What do I really, really want?

2. If I were to wake up tomorrow, completely alone without any family member, friend, or colleague to influence my decisions, what would I do differently?

3. If I were to be totally honest with myself, what would I start doing now? What would I stop doing?

4. If I was guaranteed to succeed in everything I do, where would I want to be in five years?

5. If I could spend my day exactly the way I wanted to, what would my ideal day consist of?

6. If I could focus only on doing one thing for the rest of my life, what would it be?

7. If I understood and truly believed I could achieve absolutely anything I wanted to, by sticking to it for long enough, what would I pursue in the next three to five years?

b. Finding your strengths and unique abilities

8. When am I the happiest at work and what am I doing?

9. What do I find so easy to do I genuinely wonder why others struggle to do the same thing?

10. What do people around me say I'm great at?

c. Uncovering your passion

11. What did I enjoy doing when I was a kid?

12. Who do I envy and why?

13. If I had all the time and money in the world, what would I do with it?

14. If I had complete confidence and were already my absolute best self, what would I be doing with my life?

15. How do I want to express myself to the world?

B. Characteristics of a good vision

Write down your vision while keeping in mind the point below (don't worry if it's still vague as you can refine it over time).

- a. It's exciting to you (obviously).
- b. It's crystal clear.
- c. It is aligned with your values.
- d. It allows you to feel alive and to express yourself the way you wish.
- e. It pushes you to challenge yourself

My vision:

4. How to use your time well

When trying to assess how you use your time, keep in mind these 7 criteria:

1) Meaningful:

- Does the thing I work on have meaning to me? Does it align with my values, personality, or goals?
- Is the time I spend with this person or this group of people meaningful? Do I enjoy the conversation? Do I experience a sense of connection?
- Does what I do enable me to express my creativity? Does it nourish my soul? Does it make me come alive?

2) Enjoyable:

- Do I genuinely enjoy what I do?
- Is it fun? Does it make me smile or laugh?
- Does it help me relax?

3) Challenging:

- Is what I do challenging? Does it require me to move beyond my comfort zone and try things I've never tried before? Does it require me to stretch my current skills?
- Does it engage my creativity and my problem-solving skills?

4) Memorable:

- Does what I do create great memories I'll remember for years?
- Is it exciting or new?
- Is it playful or even somewhat silly?

5) Self-worth enhancing

- Does it enhance my self-worth?
- Does it build my character and improve me as a person?

6) Effective (For work/study)

- Is it the most effective way to approach my task or work on my goals, or could I do it more effectively?

7) Health enhancing

- Does it help me stay healthy or improve my health?

Look at all the activities you engage in during a typical day/week. (To help you, review the time log you created earlier.) Then, using the seven criteria described above, assess how much value you're actually gaining from each activity.

Finally, select one unproductive activity and replace it with a new more meaningful one. Write them down below:

Old activity:

New activity I'll replace it with:

B. Thinking smartly

To think smartly:

- shorten your learning curve
- adopt a mastery mindset
- ask yourself empowering questions
- approach your tasks smartly, and
- Schedule thinking time.

Complete the exercises below:

Select one goal you'd most like to achieve.

My goal: _____

Shortening your learning curve

Now, write down what you could do to shorten the learning curve and reach it as quickly as possible.

Adopting a mastery mindset

Write down what you would do differently if you were to adopt a mastery mindset.

Asking yourself empowering questions

Come up with at least one question in each category and answer it (“What if”, “How”, and “Who”).

Approach your task smartly

Choose one task and go through the seven-step process to approach it smartly (See “Approaching a task the correct way” at the end of this action guide)

Scheduling thinking time

Block thirty to sixty minutes this week to think.

2. Improving your skills

Write down the key skills you could learn or improve on in order to boost your productivity long term.

How could you use deliberate practice to improve your current skills or acquire new ones? Write your answers down below.

6. How to store time

A. Using money to store time

Write down below what you would do if you could store time (for example, retiring early, changing your career, dedicating more time to your hobbies, etc.):

What I would do If I could store time:

B. Becoming a smart consumer

Write down below a few things you'd like to buy

Then, calculate how many hours you must work to buy them

Finally, Write down alternative options below (Can you buy something less expensive while getting more or less the same benefits? Or should you merely give up on buying those things?)

7. Disconnecting time from money

A. Saving money vs. saving time

Write down all the ways you're giving more importance to money than to time. Then, write down what you would do differently if you perceived time as far scarcer than money.

I give more importance to money than time when:

If I perceived time as scarcer than money I would:

C. Leveraging your time

To master your time, you must learn to leverage it instead of selling it. Outlined below are the main things you can use to make more effective use of your time:

- Other people's time.
- Other people's money.
- Other people's knowledge.
- Other people's influence, or
- Technology.

Write down one important goal below. You can reuse the goal you wrote earlier.

My goal: _____

Now, write down how your network could help you achieve this goal faster.

V. Developing extraordinary focus

1. The best productivity tool you'll ever have

The 80/20 Principle

Identify the twenty percent of your activities that bring eighty percent of your results. Then, write them down.

My 80/20 activities:

-
-
-
-
-

2. Developing focus

Create your daily routines following the step below:

- 1) Be at the same place, at the same time every day.
- 2) Have a trigger to kickstart your routine.
- 3) Decide the type of work you'll do
- 4) Just start.
- 5) Commit.

My daily routine:

C. How to boost your ability to focus

Write down at least one specific thing you will do to sharpen your focus.

To sharpen my focus I will:

Additionally, to make it even easier to focus:

- Allow yourself to be bored to lower your stimulation level and tackle difficult and unappealing tasks more easily.
- Read more to develop your concentration.
- Batch minor tasks to free time to focus on your most important work.
- Take breaks frequently and deliberately to recharge your battery and increase your focus.
- Practice deep work whenever you have a few minutes during the day, and
- Never feel guilty but be self-compassionate instead.

3. Eliminating distractions

A. The distraction matrix and how to work distraction-free

During your day you can be distracted in mainly four different ways. That is, you can be:

1. Dragged,
2. Interrupted,
3. Seduced, and
4. Fooled.

Write down all the ways you're being dragged, interrupted, seduced, and fooled. Refer to the following grid.

B. Identify your biggest distraction

Make a list of the distractions you're a victim of for each type (dragged, interrupted, seduced, and fooled) using the table below

<p style="text-align: center;">1. Dragged</p> <p>Q: is this activity likely to derail me?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2. Interrupted</p> <p>Q: is this hampering my activity to do focused work?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3. Seduced</p> <p>Q: Is this activity really what I should be doing now?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4. Fooled</p> <p>Q: Am I still looking for fancy productivity tools? Is my current system sustainable over the long term?</p>

Now, underline the ones you tend to waste the most time on.
Identify the one activity with the biggest power to distract you and create a plan to eliminate it or reduce its impact.

Your biggest distraction:

How exactly you will eliminate it or reduce its impact:

C. CEO/COO/employee framework

Practice asking yourself the following questions at the start of each day:

CEO:

- Exactly what tasks do I need to complete today?

Employee:

- Do I know how to do the tasks?
- Do I have the skills/tools to complete them?
- Do I know why I need to do these tasks?
- Am I on board?
- Am I committed to doing them?
- If I feel inner resistance, what can I do to overcome it?

COO:

- What did I do well today?
- What could I have done better?
- What could be improved and exactly how?

Then, take a pen and piece of paper and write down the three main tasks you'd like to complete today and begin to work.

Approaching a task the correct way

Refer to this page before starting a new task. Alternatively, you can also print it out and put it on your desk.

Step 1. Prioritizing my task

- If I could do only one thing today, what task would have the most impact?
- Is this task moving me closer to my main goal?
- Do I really need to do it right now?

Step 2. Assessing the validity of my task

- Do I *really* need to do this task?
- Is right now the best timing?
- Do I work on it because I need to or because it makes me feel good?

Step 3. Clarifying what needs to be done

- What exactly do I need to do here?
- What does the finished product look like?

Step 4. Determining whether I should be the one doing it

- Is this task really worth my time?
- Is there anyone who could do it better than me? If so, can I ask for help?
- What would happen if I simply remove/postpone this task?
- Do I enjoy working on this task?

Step 5. Finding out the most effective way to tackle that task

- What tool(s) can I use, people can I ask or method can I rely on to complete that task as fast as possible?
- What skill could I learn or improve to complete this task faster in the future?

Step 6. Batching the task with other similar tasks

- Can I batch that task with other similar tasks?

Step 7. Automating/systematizing your task

- Can I create templates I can reuse every time I work on that task or similar ones?
- Can I create checklists?

The 7 pillars of the mastery mindset

Pillar #1—Mastering repetition. To become truly adept at a skill, you must practice over and over until the skills become second nature. You must adopt the mindset that you will practice as many times as necessary until you achieve the results you want.

Pillar #2—Mastering the fundamentals. The most successful people on earth are obsessed with learning the fundamentals and there is a reason for this. Without strong fundamentals, your potential for growth is limited. Without the fundamentals, you can't become great, let alone world-class at whatever you do. Work on mastering the fundamentals.

Pillar #3—Having faith in the process. If you hire a coach, take a course or buy a book and believe it's *not* going to work, you've already lost half of the battle. You must have faith in the process and commit to doing whatever it takes to make it work for you.

Pillar #4—Being willing to learn. Your ability to humble yourself and to remain coachable is one of the keys to effective learning. The more personal responsibility you take for the results you achieve, the faster you will grow.

Pillar #5—Embracing long-term thinking. Masters always have a long-term plan. They know they cannot excel at anything without first spending years working on their craft. Make sure you think long term and make progress towards your goals each day.

Pillar #6—Being consistent. Consistency allows you to build momentum over time. It boosts your ability to focus, increases your self-esteem, and skyrockets your productivity. To become a master, simply start by doing something consistently every day, no matter how small the action may be.

Pillar #7—Focusing. When you fail to concentrate your attention on something that improves your life, you move away from the life you want to create. Eventually, what you focus on consistently day after day creates your life. So, make certain you get it right.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

I hope you'll make a meaningful use of your time and achieve all your goals and dreams in the coming years.

Let me wish you all the best with your new endeavors. I'm very much looking forward to hearing from you.

If you have any questions send me an email at :
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- Click [here](#) to connect with me on my Facebook page.
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Thanks a lot!

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