

REGISTER

♥ FEEDBACK

Learning can be hard!

No matter if you're learning to code, learning a new (real) language or you're getting into drawing - **at the beginning (and for quite some time), you're going to fail and encounter setbacks.**

Staying motivated is super important. You can only grow if you pull through, learn the right things, pause when you need to and find learning techniques that work for you.

Here are **seven great techniques** and tips that work for me - I hope they also work for you!

1. Find a Learning Partner or Community
2. Set Ambitious Long-Term Goals
3. Set Simple Short-Term Goals
4. Use Your Knowledge As Often As Possible
5. The "5 Minutes" Trick
6. Understand That Everyone Is Showing Off
7. Don't Read Too Many "Motivational Guides"

Find a Learning Partner or Community

Want to join a learning community? We got one! Jump on board of the [Academind Community on Discord](#).

Learning on your own can be very challenging - it is a lonely thing after all.

You can trust my words - **I learned web development on my own**, I started my business on my own. It IS challenging. And you need to have a plan or idea regarding how you deal with this challenge.

For me, the strongest growth happened when I looked for partners - in my family and of course also in my circle of friends. Growing alone is hard and probably only possible to a certain extent.

I would argue that for the vast majority of people (everyone?) **many things typically get easier if you're NOT on your own.**

For learning, it is definitely true. No matter if it's your girlfriend or boyfriend listening to your successes in the evening or a good friend to whom you can talk - being able to share doubts, fears or that you currently lack motivation can be very helpful. The same goes for successes of course - you wanna share those as well!

When learning something, there will be phases where you see little progress. Sometimes, it even feels like you're going backwards - that's when you need someone who validates whether you're still on track or if you need to adjust your strategy. Sometimes you also just have a bad time like we all do from time to time. In such phases, **it can also be**

helpful to have a learning partner that goes through that time with you.

That partner, however, doesn't have to be a close friend. It can be anyone - and sometimes, a stranger who shares your interest in some topic might be even more helpful than a close friend who's not interested in the topic at all.

We also have to differentiate between "motivational partners" (i.e. people that cheer you up) and "learning partners" (i.e. people that follow the same goal as you are and learn together with you).

Having a learning partner, someone who shares your passion and goals, **can be extremely valuable!** Having a **community or group** of such people is even more amazing. With a learning partner, you can not just discuss motivational or strategic issues, you can also dive into technical discussions and double-check on your knowledge and understanding.

That's also why we started the [Academind Community](#) - a Discord channel with a **friendly community** where you can find like-minded people.

You can start discussions there, share doubts, problems or simply your progress and of course you can also discuss on-topic (i.e. coding, data science) and off-topic things there.

We think that this community can work for many people - because we've all been there!

No matter if you have a single partner or you're part of a community, you should use it to stay motivated and share both your successes as well as failures. When you hit a road block, you can discuss it and find ways around it. When you're down, you'll find people who felt the same and can pull you up. If you're not sure about your strategy or path ahead, you can validate (and possibly adjust) it with the help of other people. If you got something exciting to share (e.g. a project you built) you can share it with other people and inspire them - or get inspired by what they share!

The options literally are endless and I think that there is nothing more important than having a partner or being part of a community when it comes to learning and growing.

SUMMARY

- Find a partner or community
- Share doubts, problems and also successes
- Learn together, grow together
- Find inspiration and validate your strategy

Set Ambitious Long-Term Goals

Here's a phrase which I like a lot:

"People overestimate what they can do in a day and underestimate what they can achieve in a month."

You'll find different variations of that phrase but the message should be really clear: **Be ambitious regarding your long-term goals and be humble when it comes to your short-term goals** (see next point as well).

When it comes to learning, the way ahead can seem very daunting and long. Wouldn't it be great if you could build an entire website, with all the cool features we have in our mind, tomorrow already?

Well, it certainly would - but unfortunately, it's rather unlikely to happen.

If you still only pursue goals like this, you'll probably face a lot of frustration. **Hence you should adjust your goals!**

Often, we plan very conservatively for the long-term future but quite aggressively/ optimistically when it comes to a short-term horizon.

Be more realistic!

Set **long-term goals where you're not sure** whether you can make them or not - chances are that you will!

For the **short-term (see next point)**, you should try to be more realistic.

Here's a thing I sometimes like to do: I come up with five to-dos for tomorrow and five goals I want to have achieved in a year from now. I then cross off the two least-important to-dos of the "tomorrow list" and add two different long-term goals to the long-term list.

Turns out: This works.

Whenever I create a list with a lot of to-dos for the next day, I almost have a guarantee of going to bed in a frustrated mood once that day is over - simply because I overestimated what I could do.

When it comes to long-term goals, I'm always astonished when I think back about the time a year ago and what happened during that year. It's so much!

SUMMARY

- Be more realistic about tomorrow, more optimistic about the long-term future
- Remove to-dos from the "tomorrow" list
- Add more goals to the "in a year" list: Dream big!

Set Simple Short-Term Goals

This point of course is related to the previous one, where I already talked about goal-setting in the long- and short-term. Let's take a closer look at these short-term goals or to-dos.

As already mentioned, we tend to **overestimate what we can get done in a day or two**. We push ourselves to do ten different things and then get frustrated if we can only cross off one thing on that list.

This is human, this is how we are. But that does not mean, that you can't change things. You set your own goals and expectations, and even though it's a continuous process, you can work on setting more realistic goals and expectations.

Try my suggestion regarding the to-do list where you first write down everything you want to get done and then remove a couple of points from that list.

We also **tend to forget things**, so remember what you were able to achieve in one day in the past. Remember the days where you were frustrated because you didn't reach your original goal. **Take these experiences into account when you plan your tasks** for the next day. Of course you might think that you should be faster now than you were a year ago but keep in mind that we're talking about a problem of equal complexity (e.g. learning something new). You'll probably be equally fast.

But it's not just about tasks - sometimes we also just want to be able to "do something" in a week or so. And of course you should be ambitious!

Why don't you simply **double your expected timeframe** though? If you want to be able to build a basic online shop website in a week from now, why don't you make that two weeks?

That's still a short timeframe but it already gets more realistic.

If you then are faster and are able to do it earlier than within the doubled timeframe: Great! You'll get a motivational push for free.

If you need the full time: Great, you set a realistic goal.

And in case you fail and you're not able to do what you wanted to do in the given timeframe: Check why you weren't able to? External factors you can't influence (e.g. you got sick)? Distractions? Be real

honest to yourself here and see what you could change in the future to stay within your timeframe.

Also **split your goals into smaller sub-goals!**

Want to build an online shop? Well, the plan for tomorrow could be to build one part of the backend (e.g. the user authentication). The day thereafter, you work on the frontend for that feature. And so on...

By splitting bigger goals into smaller ones, you end up with more realistic targets and as a side-benefit, you get a clearer path to follow.

SUMMARY

- Remove tasks from your “tomorrow” to-do list
- Double your expected timeframe for near-term goals
- Don’t forget the past and don’t assume that you’re going too be much faster now
- Split big goals into smaller ones

Use Your New Knowledge As Often As Possible

Learning can be frustrating when you don’t feel like you’re progressing.

Hence the best trick is to simply change that feeling: **Use your knowledge, do something with it.** Show off your new skills (to yourself)!

If you're learning web development, use the knowledge you already got and build a website, no matter how basic it is.

Learning to draw? Draw something you know you can draw already. Or go back to an older drawing and add more details which you're now able to draw.

Use your newly gained skills as often and early as possible, because after all, you are learning to do something with them! There's no better time to start using your skills than whilst you're in the learning process.

A nice side-effect is, that you don't just stay motivated but that you also practice what you learn - this will make the learning experience way more efficient!

SUMMARY

- Use what you learned - often and early
- Take pauses from binge-learning and practice

The “5 Minutes” Trick

This one is an old trick - but it is really helpful. And maybe you didn't know it yet.

Whenever you don't feel like doing something (e.g. continue learning or practicing), **try doing it for only five minutes**.

Set yourself a clear “deadline” - a point of time where you will stop doing that task (and where you will do something fun thereafter). That

could be in five minutes - or 20 minutes. It does not matter, but you need a clearly defined time where you will stop.

With that deadline set, **you don't have to look at the huge pile of work ahead of you**. You know that you'll only be working on it for a couple of minutes, so there's no need to worry about the rest of the pile for now.

Why is this a good technique?

Well, as soon as you start working, chances are that you'll just "get into it", that you **enter some "flow state" and you don't feel like quitting** when the time is up. Or maybe you don't even keep an eye on the time and suddenly you find yourself working for an hour or two.

You basically trick your mind - once we start doing something, we typically have no issue continuing with it.

Well, and if you do find yourself in a state where you really don't want to continue after the five or 20 minutes, you can just stop. That was the agreement after all and it's absolutely fine to adhere to it. We all have such days - take a break, read a book, go for a walk and maybe try again tomorrow.

SUMMARY

- Set a time when you will stop working on something (e.g. five minutes from now on)
- Do something fun when that time is up - or continue working if you get into a "flow state"

Understand That Everyone Is “Showing Off”

Everyone is only telling you about their successes or how much they work.

Rarely, people will tell you about failures, motivational problems or that they only worked three hours today.

That's okay - this is how we are. **You just have to be aware of it!**

Of course, this does not mean that everyone is lying all the time. But it is important to realize that nobody - really absolutely nobody - has a perfect day every day. People just don't tell you about it on a regular basis.

So whenever you feel like you're lacking behind or other people seem to be more productive than you are: Keep in mind, that **everyone has the same feeling** from time to time.

You should not try to work as hard as other people, put in more hours because “everyone does it” or become as good in X as someone else is.

Simply because **you never see the full picture** - you only see what someone else wants you to see. And you can't win there!

SUMMARY

- Don't think everyone is smarter or more productive than you
- Keep in mind that you only see what other people want you to see!

Don't Read Too Many "Motivational Guides"

This one is a bit ironic: After all, you read kind of a "motivational guide". At least I hope that this article helped a bit.

There's **nothing wrong with articles like this one** - otherwise I wouldn't have written it. And I also occasionally read about tricks (or "life hacks") shared by other people.

It's just important to **not overdo it**.

Because reading such articles alone often makes you feel better (you feel like you're already doing something, yay!) but **it doesn't actually make you do something**.

It is important to keep in mind that in order to learn and grow, **you need to get stuff done**.

Reading is nice (and of course also important) but it's not all.

Of course, "do something" does not just mean that you need to write code in order to learn coding. Reading tutorials or watching video courses is also a crucial part.

The same goes for learning groups or communities. Being part of them, discussing with others is super important (see above).

But these are things that are more closely related to your goal. You are in a developer community. You are taking a web dev course. And so one.

Diving into motivational guides is only loosely related to your goal. It can help, it can raise motivation but it also is a bit generic.

SUMMARY

- Don't read too many "how to become productive" guides
- Get stuff done instead

Summary

That's it, these are some of my most important techniques to stay motivated, learn new things and get things done.

I hope it was helpful and I'd of course love to hear about your ideas, tricks and experiences - why don't you [join our community](#) on Discord and share them there? :-)

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