

WHAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE DO BEFORE BREAKFAST BY LAURA VANDERKAM | BOOK SUMMARY

Productivity researcher [Laura Vanderkam](#) has combined her three mini e-books into one comprehensive guide. Through Laura's research and interviews, [What the Most Successful People Do Before Breakfast](#) reveals how to plan your mornings, weekends and work time to be achieve greater productivity and happiness.

WHAT THE MOSR SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE DO BEFORE BREAKFAST

- "The madness of mornings is a key reason most of us believe we have no time"
- "Successful people have priorities they want to tackle, or things they like to do with their lives, and early mornings are the time when they have the most control of their schedule. It's real time to yourself with no distractions."
- Exercising by 6am is a common trend.
- "If it has to happen, then it has to happen first". If you leave the important tasks until the end of the day they're unlikely to get done.
- Willpower is like a muscle. If it is overused it will run out of effectiveness. All activities during the day require willpower and so stuff done in the morning is normally more productive. But like a muscle, it can be strengthened.
- "Getting things down to routines and habits takes willpower at first but in the long run conserves willpower," says Baumeister.
- "Once things become habitual, they operate as automatic processes, which consume less willpower." Successful people turn important tasks into habits.

Important But Not Urgent Things

"The best morning rituals are activities that, when practiced regularly, result in long-term benefits."

1. Nurturing Your Career – Tackle the most important work tasks before getting distracted with email, meetings and drop ins.
2. Nurturing Your Relationships – Use mornings to talk to your loved ones and have quality time together.
3. Nurturing Yourself – Exercise is more effective in the mornings than evenings.

How to Make Over Your Mornings

1. Track your time – Keep a record to find where in the day you're wasting time so you can make changes.

2. Picture the perfect morning – Ask yourself what a perfect morning looks like so you know what to aim for.
3. Think through the logistics – Work out the timing of activities, what time you have to be up and go to sleep. Give yourself time for tasks e.g. Showering.
4. Build the habit – Turning a desire into a ritual requires a lot of initial willpower, and not just for the first few days. Start small, don't try and do everything at once.
5. Tune up as necessary – Life changes and rituals change. Let it happen and adapt.

WHAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE DO ON THE WEEKEND

- "This is the paradox of weekends: "You have to set an appointment to go off the grid as surely as to go on it."
- "There are sixty hours between the moment you crack open a beer at 6:00 p.m. Friday and the time the alarm goes off at 6:00 a.m. Monday. Sixty hours is a decently high percentage of a 168-hour week. Even if you're asleep for twenty-four of those hours, that still leaves thirty-six hours for waking rejuvenation. That's the equivalent of a full-time job—and this is a helpful mind-set to have."
- "As you look forward to something good that is about to happen, you experience some of the same joy you would in the moment. The major difference is that the joy can last much longer."
- Planning creates this anticipation.

How to Plan a Weekend

- "What do you want to do more of with your time?"
- Create a list of dreams and peg the items on the list to significant times at the weekend to tick them off e.g. Saturday night, Sunday daytime.

Six Tips for Planning Your Weekend:

1. Dig deep – just because you haven't done something in years, doesn't mean you can't do it now.
2. Use the mornings – often this is wasted time, use them!
3. Create traditions – e.g. Pancakes on Saturday mornings.
4. Schedule downtime – e.g. Nap time at scheduled times.

5. Make time to explore – travel round some new places on a walk or bike.
6. Plan something for Sunday nights – use this valuable time as well.
7. Remember to plan the week ahead with jobs you have to do, and things you want to do.
8. "What the most successful people know about weekends is that life cannot happen only in the future. It cannot wait for some day when we are less tired or less busy."

WHAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE DO AT WORK

- "If you make certain choices in your work, though, if you develop certain disciplines and invest your time instead of squandering it, you can do more with the time you have."
- "How do you build your career so that hard work feels lovely? How can you spend your hours to make a prodigious amount of your best work possible? How can you invest your time so that your work then speaks for you, multiplying what you can do on your own? How can you experience the joy of doing what you feel matters?"
- We shouldn't boast about the number of hours we work as commitment to a job. What matters is what you achieve in your time.

DISCIPLINE 1: Mind Your Hours

- Time is a non-renewable resource. You're given a certain amount each day/week/month/year and it's up to you how you decide to spend it.
- Try keeping a time log. This will help you realise how long tasks take and evaluate whether you agree with this allocation of time.

DISCIPLINE 2: Plan

- Dedicate planning time. This allows you to always have time to plan... Duh.
- What are your immediate goals, long-term goals and how are you going to achieve them.
- Get stuff off your mind and into a plan.
- "With my annual goals in mind, I then make a priority list every Sunday night of what I plan to accomplish in the next week. That priority list will include both immediate assignments and steps toward my annual goals. I tightly schedule Monday and loosely schedule the rest of the week. Then on Monday night I schedule Tuesday more tightly, based on what's left on the priority list and

what's come up on Monday. Tuesday night I schedule Wednesday, and so forth. I've usually gotten most things done by Friday, which can be a mop-up day or a time for more planning."

DISCIPLINE 3: Make Success Possible

- "You'll think of a hundred new people you want to meet. You'll think of a hundred new ideas for growing your business. But, as counterintuitive as it sounds, resist the temptation to put all these wonderful ideas on the to-do list for Monday. Pace yourself. Successful people tend to view their primary to-do lists a bit differently than others do. They aren't just lists. They're more like contracts. Whatever is on the list will get done, often as a matter of personal pride."
- "Since life comes up and emergencies happen, making success possible hinges on two things: being choosy about each day's priority list and developing an accountability system that works."
- Set six priorities each day: three to be completed that day and three longer-term goals.
- Make these goals accountable. Get someone to keep you on track.
- When ever you see the number 11 check your to-do list (mental trigger).

DISCIPLINE 4: Know What Works

- Don't let trivial tasks that look like work distract you from your priorities. E.g. Checking email, meetings or not delegating work to other capable people.
- One CEO always tries to replace them self. It frees up time and gives employees a sense of responsibility and they work harder for it.
- Regular breaks, runs, stretches etc can help regain focus and result in more productivity even if they don't look like work.

DISCIPLINE 5: Practice

- "Practice is, simply, performing or working at something repeatedly to become proficient."
- Sportsman or musicians even though they spend time managing and marketing their business's spend half their time practicing their profession to get better.
- Be careful not to put your skills into auto pilot.
- What are the things you do most often? Practice these skills and review your work to get better.
- Critique yourself and get others to critique you to.

DISCIPLINE 6: Pay In

- "What all this means is that it is no longer sufficient to be employed—one must remain employable. That means monitoring that excellent concept of career

capital. Career capital is a convenient way to think about the sum total of one's experience, knowledge, network, and personality characteristics. When your career capital level is high, you can cash in your chips at any point for a new situation, to take your career to a new level, or even to take a break without destroying your ability to earn a living. Successful people develop the discipline of paying in to this account every day."

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- These deposits also take the form of a website or blog. Publicise yourself.
- "And finally, the best way to pay in is to build up a network of people who are loyal to you."
- "Real career capital comes from having lunch, and sharing your network, with someone who's just been fired from a job she loved. These are the moments that matter."
- "You never know when you might need your career capital—and maybe you never will—but, as with health insurance, you'll definitely be better off having it than not."

DISCIPLINE 7: Pursue Pleasure

- "As she puts it, "I can't imagine what it would be like to live for the weekend." This is the key insight that successful people have about how they spend their working hours"
- "Productivity, we are discovering, is a function of joy. Joy comes not from free M&M's, but from making progress toward goals that matter to you."
- "Successful people constantly look at their days to evaluate what brings them pleasure and what does not, and they figure out how they can spend more hours pursuing pleasure and fewer hours doing what they don't care about."