Combating Procrastination

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Get back to work!

Any Questions?

This Talk

1. Make your life easier
2. Why productivity-systems fail
3. Some brain-hacks to try
4. A few productivity systems

Make your life easier

Eat well, and do a little exercise.

Your concentration will suffer if you're subsisting of junk-food and never getting your heart-rate above resting.

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Keep a todo-list, and manage it in a consistent way. . .

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. . . and remember to use it!

Try to establish a routine. Failing that, use a visible reminder: desktop wallpaper, brightly coloured Post-it note. . . anything eye-catching that you will see several times a day.

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Better

- Benchmark new compiler version
- Write 100 words of literature review chapter
- Phone president Obama to discuss world peace

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Introducing the Typical Mind Fallacy!

> *the mistake of making biased and overconfident*
> *conclusions about other people's experience based on*
> *your own personal experience*

`http://wiki.lesswrong.com/wiki/Typical_mind_fallacy`

The bad news: there isn't a one-size-fits all procrastination-beater, or everyone would be using it!

Some Brain-hacks (that work for me)

if-then planning

Formulate intentions in the form "**if** I have finished lunch **then** I will immediately return to my desk and work". Because *science*![1]

micro-rewards

Every time you think "...I'll just do x" where x is any non-work activity ("make a cup of tea", "put on some music", "go to the toilet"), write it down.

Work can be exchanged for these micro-rewards at a rate of fifteen minutes of work for one procrastinatory reward.

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[1]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Implementation_intention

Some Brain-hacks (that work for me)

the "just five minutes..." lie

I *always* fall for the "I'll just make a cup of tea before I start work..." lie. This gullibility can be turned into an asset: "I'll just do five minutes work before I make a cup of tea".

Don't set a timer: you'll usually do much more than five minutes.

goals-as-passwords

You probably type your most commonly used passwords several times each day. Most modern systems allow long passwords with punctuation and spaces, so use them to remind you of the most important things you have to do.

Added bonus: `rite UR ***king thesis!` is both a reasonably secure[2] and memorable password!

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[2] or at least it was, until I put it on a slide and showed it to a room full of computer experts...

A few productivity tools & systems

Autofocus (and others)

http://markforster.squarespace.com/tm-systems/

Getting Things Done

http://google.com/?q=GTD

Micromovements

http://planetsark.com/downloads/party/micromovements.pdf

todo.txt

http://todotxt.com/

Zen-to-Done

http://zenhabits.net/zen-to-done-ztd-the-ultimate-simple-productivity-system/