

Eloka Agu

Productivity Routine

The Method

- The first part of my method is to get rid of distractions. My primary distractions are social media and football. As such, I'm going to get rid of them immediately.
- The first rule of time management is prioritisation. The truth is that if we choose not to do something, it is *not a priority*. As such, as part of my routine, I have decided to cut the idea that "I don't have time" for something, and replace it with "it is not a priority".

Eisenhower Method

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	1. Do first. The first tasks should be the ones that are both important and need to be finished that day.	2. Schedule. If something is important but doesn't need to happen urgently, we should schedule it to be done another time.
Not Important	3. Delegate. If it's an urgent but less important task, delegate it to others.	4. Don't do. Tasks that are neither urgent nor important most likely don't need to be done at all.

Electronic Calendar

- The email and calendar servers of choice are Google. Electronic calendars allow us to book years in advance and get alerts closer to the time. Then we can move things around without having our diary look like a children's book.
 - A second benefit is that we can create different calendars for different areas of our work and keep our social life separate, which can be really helpful in cultivating the work life harmony we'll sort at a later date.

Paper Diary

- We recommend that our paper diary has a double spread full week view so we can visualise the entire week as a whole. On Sunday evening or Monday morning, before starting work, transfer everything from the electronic calendar to the paper diary. This will give us the birds eye view that we need to manage our workload, even if things change last minute.

To do Table (Daily)

Quick Ticks	Tasks	Projects

- **Quick Ticks:** These are tasks that will take 5 minutes or less. We list them essentially in a component based function, such as “respond to work WhatsApps”, “upload announcement to Instagram”, “send message to colleague”.
- **Tasks:** These are things that will take us up to 30 minutes. These will require some work and headspace, but don’t involve more than two or three mini tasks to get the whole task done. For example, “compose email to product team about sustainable fashion article”, “draft response to lawyer”, “review app development presentation”.
- **Projects:** These are the big boys. They may not be for today, but you still want to be conscious of them as you go through your day and carry them over into your week. For example, “design new collection”, “prepare full market research of competitors”, “prepare presentation on financials”.
 - These will then be broken down into tasks when you confront them in time blocks. For example, “design new collection” can be split into the following:
 - Perform seasonal trend research on WGSN
 - Create moodboard for collection
 - Decipher how many pieces the collection needs
 - Roughly design pieces
 - Write up spec descriptions
 - Send to product team for review

Time Blocking

- Once we have created our TDT, we choose the quick ticks, tasks and projects for the day before we start at work. This means that it all needs to be done by 8:45am latest for a 9am start to the working day.
- Have a look at the day in the calendar and slot the day’s worth of tasks in between fixed commitments.
- The best time to handle quick ticks is the 15 minute period between calls.
- The way we do this is called time blocking.

- The concept is simple: as much as I can, I divide my day into blocks of time and dedicate each block to accomplishing a specific task or group of tasks. If I have no control over the calls and they're littered throughout the days, the time around fixed commitments should still be time blocked.
- Most time blocks are 60 to 90 minutes long on average, especially for batched tasks and projects.
- I base my week around these time blocks.

Deep work

- In order to do the best work, it is important to do the following things to get to a period of deep work:
- **Don't start the day with admin**
 - Never start the day with admin. This should always be last on the list, if at all.
- **Set an email alarm**
 - Time blocking email checking into the day, limit it to two or three times a day, and turn notifications off. We might not be the quickest with the email responses, but the work will be of a much higher quality.
- **Estimate how long a task will take you**
 - You will find it very hard to plan effectively if the estimates are off. Spend a week or so monitoring and taking note of how long it takes me to compose an email or complete a longer project, and we'll be much more in touch with the working processes and capabilities in no time.
- **Make your own deadlines**
 - Having twenty things due on the same day is a recipe for overwhelm, but only because they are all due on the same day. It does not mean that you should be aiming to complete them all on that date.
 - Preparation is key here. Set deadlines according to time blocking, giving yourself a realistic amount of time to complete the tasks. The deadline is not *your* deadline. This will enable us to balance the fun things as well. If we prepare from far enough out, everything becomes more enjoyable.
- **Hold and engage in effective meetings**

- Meetings can be an absolute drain on effective time use. We recommend planning ahead of time to make sure you get the most out of them in the least amount of time. Write down your questions beforehand, and make sure that there is an agenda in place.
- It goes without saying that some meetings could be an email, so try not to be the person who schedules them to look official when it's not the most productive option. Concentrate, most people use meetings as catch up sessions for admin too much. If you're there, be present, be active and contribute actively. Make it a phone and laptop free zone, with minimal distractions and interruptions except for previously prepared notes and questions.
- **Use focus enhancing apps and blockers, and turn off notifications**
- Use newsfeed eradicating apps to get rid of the temptation to scroll and keep up to date with the news and the culture. Give yourself permission to be behind on the culture. Best believe your pocket won't be poorer for it.
- **Just say no**
- Practice saying **no** to meetings, lunches and new projects that wouldn't be the best use of your time right now. Of course, your ability to do this and confidence to do this will increase as you hit more milestones; but normalise saying **no**.
- **Tasks vs time**
- Work by task rather than by time where possible. Clock watching is boring and a waste of time. Understanding how much capacity we have, and work on tasks accordingly.
- **Transitioning from MSR to Working Day, and Working Day to NSR**
- In the morning every day, we exercise with a combination of cardio and weights to keep at peak fitness. Our goal is to maintain a weight of approximately 70kg based on lean muscle, and maintain a body fat of approximately 10%. After having prayed in the morning and gotten ready after gym, we transition into the working day.
- Look to listen to something inspiring or informative every day, typically in the gym. This is likely to come in the form of a podcast, a motivational or interesting video, a TED talk, or some great music.
- Eat well and stay hydrated. Understand that you're feeding your brain, not just your body. Learn which foods help and which foods hinder your concentration. Staying hydrated also often forces you up from your seat, which can help avoid feeling lethargic from not moving all day. This is especially important when working from home.

- In the evening every day, we put together our to do table for the following day, so that we have full visibility of what tomorrow will look like. This will also help us switch off easier in the evening, since we have written it all down and don't have to hold it in our head or worry about what tomorrow might bring. Visibility is key.

Routine Control

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