

title: **How did you/do you survive being a junior? (ft. confessions of a junior)**

num_comments: 8

num_up_votes: 32

upvote_ratio: 0.94

Post Text

(this is my first post here - REALLY excited to come across this sub!) I recently transitioned into tech in the past year and got my first job a few months ago! I currently work for a startup and it has been tough on me because of the challenges ADHD comes with: * Forgetting what was just discussed (used to record meetings and now take notes on everything) * Hyperfocusing on tasks and neglecting important conversations and sometimes eating?? (Bought an Alexa machine to remind me to do things throughout the day) * Impulsively diving into tasks without slowing down to think of a process/approach * Having a ridiculously hard time with organizing a process/approach * Trouble with communicating succinctly and explaining things in a way that could be understood * Comparing myself to my neurotypical colleagues * Breaking down the logic of each ticket without being paralyzed by branches on branches of tangential thoughts * Etc! Some background:I went to a full-stack bootcamp that introduced me to a lot of different technologies but unfortunately the curriculum was crap and ur instructor was a recent graduate that couldn't answer all of our questions. I self-studied afterwards (not dopamine inducing at all and reading docs are hard) and was very lucky to meet my mentor-turned-manager randomly and work for them. Started with an internship that transitioned into an apprenticeship and now working as an associate (pre-junior). They were hesitant about hiring me bc the role isn't particularly junior-friendly and I had a weak foundation but took a chance on me bc of my work ethic. Now our company is cutting costs and I was told that my job isn't safe. **The only way for me to stay on board is to learn what I need so that I can increase my output rate, be more independent, and fix my process on approaching tickets (I tend to go down paths that either end with the wrong logic). Currently, I have a decent shot at staying but need to make good progress with these things.** My manager has gone above and beyond to accommodate me and I've become a partial reason why they've become burnt out so I NEED to learn how to work smarter than harder ASAP. **Here are some things I'm already doing:** 1. Created a note-taking system on iOS notes and Obsidian for information being fed through messages, 1:1s, Slack channels (btw if you have any tips on how to organize an Obsidian vault that is all about learning the ins and outs of each technology, would LOVE to connect with you) 2. Building healthy habits around sleep, exercise, and diet to increase quality of energy 3. Scribble diagrams on the notes app to organize my thoughts 4. Message/say my thought process through messages to piece things together 5. Started building toy projects on the side (again!) to get practice in **I'm curious to know what you did (or are currently doing) to keep up with the company as a junior.** I'm interested in any hacks you used to get to where you are today (and avoid being fired hehe). Would love to hear about your workflow and any tips you have for me! **Thank you for your time!** Edit: I'm also on medication c:

Comments

Commenter_2

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 14

My best advice to avoid being fired is make the right friends. If people like you more over your competition, chances are they're more likely to overlook your shortfalls. This is why companies tend to hire external contractors when doing major restructuring, so if it's an internal review and they're choosing between you and other people, make good friends. If it's external reviews, do good work.

As for surviving as a junior, you need management that recognises potential, and recognises that you're already doing your best and improvement takes time. There's no hacks about it if you have all the right habits and tools at your disposal. In my case I'm lucky that they value progress over perfection, it has saved me multiple times over the years. I'm not medicated and open about it with my managers, they're aware that my productivity varies on a weekly basis, and it's irregular, but they also know that I will hit deadlines (mostly) and do good work when I am in a productive phase. I got stuck in to some of the hardest

work around and tried my hand at everything. Unfortunately there's no one solution fits all here, and if your management isn't understanding of your condition, you're going to have trouble down the line as well.

Commenter_3

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 6

>My best advice to avoid being fired is make the right friends

Half the work of being an engineer is just being pleasant enough that people enjoy working with you, instead of dreading it.

Unknown_User

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 11

[deleted]

Commenter_4

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

I second everything here. Learning as much as possible and keeping notes of conversations has really helped me. I try and make my TODO list for the next day as the last thing I do before I sign-off for the day. That way I can capture the context of where I'm at, or where my thoughts were on a particular thing

Try not to get emotionally attached to your job or the company you work for. They might treat you extremely well but at the end of the day its still a business and that means putting the needs of the business before your needs. Consequently you should be putting your needs before the needs of the business.

Commenter_5

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 3

The five things you've mentioned all sound like they will help a great deal, so I think you're on the right track!

The "confirming instructions" part was huge for me - I made a lot of progress rather quickly once I started "recapping" the instructions and my plan after talking with my supervisor. That gave him a chance to help me course-correct before I went too far down the rabbit hole.

It sounds like developing a good process for handling tickets would be the most efficient place for you to start, because that may help with some of the other issues as well. Is there anyone you work with who could show you their approach? It's hard to make concrete suggestions without knowing the nature of the work you're doing (and I actually haven't worked with a ticket system myself in a while), but in general I find it helpful to start by taking a moment to envision the end result of what I need to accomplish and working backwards from there to come up with a plan. Planning backwards helps me avoid getting lost in all those branches of possibilities of directions I **could** go and helps me stay focused on the one that will get me to the end goal most(ly) efficiently.

Hang in there and good luck!

Commenter_6

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 9

"How did you survive being a junior?" I didn't, lol. But thank you for your tips :D

Back then, 4 years ago, I've quit to move abroad. It was part of the plan from before, but I've quit earlier because I just couldn't handle it, I was burning out, working all day to at least have something to say during the next day's daily scrum. I was always feeling behind and underqualified.

However, I wasn't medicated. Now 4 years later, I'm trying to give it another try. I want to avoid getting a job for which I'm not sure I'm qualified or not. It's a hard journey and I am still never sure if I'm a right cut for software dev. I possess many of the necessary qualities, but sometimes I can't bear with the frustration and the need of constantly having to learn stupidly abstract and complex topics.

Anyway, sorry for digressing. I think the items you're listed are great. Rests, sleep, time-frames, exercise, are really valuable things that many people tend to overlook.

Commenter_7

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 2

I'm an associate software engineer struggling to keep up and defeat imposter syndrome, and I find this entire post VERY useful! Thank you for reaching out and thank you to everyone who has given advice! I've installed Obsidian and am going to implement note-taking IMMEDIATELY to help me with paying attention in meetings and retaining what I learn.

Commenter_8

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: 1

Hey OP! I'm currently a junior with about a year of experience, plus a year ish of internships that I got diagnosed in the middle of.

First, I would absolutely just look for a different job. **Do not let imposter syndrome stop you from doing this. Imo if a startup is having financial issues right now, I think it's a safe bet it's going downhill.**

They basically already told you they're going to be laying people off. Remember that even though it seems like they're just being generous taking a chance on you, companies benefit a lot from cheap junior labor because you still get work done. You also get work done that seniors are too highly paid to do.

For actual ADHD tips, the best thing you can do is experiment with a bunch of tips to see what works best for you! Unfortunately this is definitely a lifelong process and not something hack-able.

Things that I've learned help me a lot:

- * Actually taking my meds
- * A bullet journal style planner where I keep track of actual work items
 - * Tickets I work on/need to work on
 - * *Important* meetings (to reduce clutter and keep things on-topic, I just have a habit of referring to my calendar for meetings and keeping it open all day, but big ones like presentations go in the planner)
 - * Really important notes
 - * Daily to-do list
- * Practicing holding myself to a set-ish schedule
 - * Eating around the same time every day
 - * Starting/stopping work at the same time
 - * Doing administrative-y work like code review, certain types of tickets, etc. in the morning
 - * Doing deep work in the afternoons when I feel more booted-up (not a hard and fast rule though, if I need to get into deep work mode all day, I do it, or if I have additional code review in the afternoon, I do it)
- * Eating food around the same time every day
- * Taking notes on what I'm working on in something like Notion/Google Docs/OneNote (I prefer OneNote) and organizing it by ticket/project
- * Leaving my phone in another room while I'm trying to focus
- * Keeping clutter off my desk
- * Trying to catch and stop myself from switching tasks a lot (finish things)

Commenter_9

ID: REDACTED! ~(o.o)~ <3, Upvotes: -1

Lemme guess, you went to a DevMountain bootcamp