

title: **Scoped Improvisational Focus Time: What I do to focus and get some work done**

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Post Text

Obviously, I've always had a hard time with focus and procrastination as a frontend developer, and over the years I've tried all kinds of things to help me get started, get into flow, and stay on track while I'm there. From all the techniques I've used, I've set up a simple way of working that helps me a lot, and I'm hoping it'll help some of you. I'm also just curious to see if it resonates with other people. I call it **Scoped Improvisational Focus Time**, or **Sift** for short. The first part is Scoped Improvisation. Before you start, scope what you intend to work on. Create some constraints. It might be working on a feature, exploring a new toolkit, learning a new paradigm, etc. Write the "scope" down. Then, when you start working, you're free to roam around, explore, and improvise, as long as it's within the scope. I like to create a running list of tasks, bugs, ideas, and questions, which helps me to get into flow because I can move around freely between items on the list until I've done what I want to with them. The next part is the Focus Time, and this is all about whatever works for you. Start by creating an environment that blocks out as much distraction as possible. I use sound cancelling headphones playing quiet lofi beats or classical piano, and that's pretty much enough at this point for me to ignore the rest of the world when I don't have a closed office to work in. Then, pick a time and set a timer. This is also based on your personal preference and capabilities. I think it should be set to your personal edge for the amount of time you can stay focused. I started at 25 minutes (standard Pomodoro), but gradually increased it to about 45 or 50. Now, once you're set up, all you have to do is try to stay in the scope until your timer is done. There are no rules about how long a break should be, or how many times you should "sift" in a day, because arbitrary rules are demotivating. Do it again if you liked it the first time. If you have a hard time staying in scope, broaden your scope next time. If the scope is too narrow (*do this one task*), it feels oppressive and there's not enough freedom to play to get into flow. If it's too broad (*anything goes*), all roads lead to reddit, and you'll can't get anything useful done. If anyone's up for trying it out, let me know how it goes, what you changed, what you liked, didn't like, etc.! Hope it helps :)

Comments

Commenter_2

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

I've been seriously analyzing how I get stuff done lately, and this could be a game changer for me. I feel like I'm _almost_ doing this, but usually I'm missing one piece, which means I'm spending a lot of time feeling *nearly* successful but still frustrated.

I especially love "No rules, just do it again if you liked it". Gonna take this to my ADHD coach this week thanks!

Commenter_3

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

Thanks for this great framework! Do you have a suggestion for when to end the Scoped Improvisational part?

Unknown_User

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I try to set a timer for however long I think I can focus fairly easily, plus 5 minutes, then do scoped improvisation till the timer goes off. It helps me to use some kind of visual timer so I can glance at it and see where I'm at once in a while.