



TACTICAL GUIDE

*75 Smart Productivity Hacks
to be 500% More Effective*



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TACTICAL GUIDE

75 Smart Productivity Hacks to be 500% More Effective

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| CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
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75 PRODUCTIVITY HACKS

T: TIME MANAGEMENT	9
E: ENERGY MANAGEMENT	23
M: MENTALITY	36
P: PROFICIENCY	49
O: ORGANIZATION	56
ENDNOTE	66
SOURCES	67
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	74

| INTRODUCTION

Being in a flow state is a great feeling. And can be highly productive.

Take McKinsey's ten-year study,¹ which found that executives are 500 percent more effective when in flow.

A leading author on flow, Steven Kotler, emphasizes, "This means, if you spend Monday in flow, you can actually take the rest of the week off and still get more done than your steady-state peers."²

My question is: what might your income (and life) look like if you were, in fact, able to get more done in a single day than you typically do all week?

Unfortunately, the same McKinsey study found that most of us spend less than 5 percent of our work-life in flow.

Why? Most people don't strategically manage the factors that influence flow.

If *productive flow* was an equation, it might look something like this:

Productive Flow = Time Management x Energy Management x Mentality x Proficiency x Organization

In my research (and personal practice), I've identified these five core categories of productive flow—and in the process, come up with a useful acronym: the first letters of the categories create the word **TEMPO**.

Stack these ingredients together, and you'll be a powerhouse of productivity.

See *infographic* on the next page.

T



TIME MANAGEMENT

Allocating time to do the right things.

E



ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Actually having the energy to do the right things.

M



MENTALITY

Being motivated to do the right things.

P



PROFICIENCY

Doing the right things well.

O



ORGANIZATION

Quickly finding the right things.

PRE-FLIGHT CHECKLIST

Now, a quick pre-flight checklist so 1) You can get the most out of this guide and 2) My mom won't worry (as much!) about me on Twitter:

- ❑ The 75 hacks are organized by their TEMPO dimension. Click ahead to any category that grabs you, right away, in the [Table of Contents](#).
- ❑ Being left out is about as fun as being the only kid at the fourth-grade roller skating party wearing a helmet. (Which I may know something about. Thanks A LOT, Mom and Dad. No, seriously, thank you! Brains are good.) All to say, I know the feeling of being left out when someone recommends an app that's incompatible with your platform (i.e., Apple vs. Windows). While my workplace happens to use Apple products, I see the pros to both sides. Typically, my service promise is only to recommend products that I regularly use. But in this app-loaded guide, I do my best to be inclusive and note Android and Windows options.
- ❑ Many of the hacks in this PDF have accompanying links to recommended products or services. If any links break in this offline guide, you can refer to [this webpage](#)—where I'll do my best to keep a functioning list of all the links.

Passengers, it's time! Please put your tray table in the upright position for liftoff...

| TIME MANAGEMENT

Allocating time to do the right things.

01. USE A DESKTOP APPLICATION LAUNCHER INSTEAD OF TIME-CONSUMING MOUSE NAVIGATION (SPOTLIGHT FOR OS, POWERTOYS RUN FOR WINDOWS)

Spotlight is a built-in search feature for Apple's Mac OS and iOS. Simply hit Command+Spacebar on your desktop and type in the beginning letters of an application, file, or website you'd like to open. For Windows 11, download [Microsoft PowerToys](#) and hit Alt+Spacebar to launch PowerToys Run. With either application launcher, you'll work more efficiently by eliminating the drag of mouse navigation.

02. USE AI SPEECH-TO-TEXT DICTATION SOFTWARE TO EFFORTLESSLY CAPTURE MEETING NOTES ([OTTER.AI](#))

Otter is an AI-powered speech-to-text translation application that offers real-time streaming of transcripts with searchable text. Perhaps most valuable is the tool's ability to identify unique voices and organize text by Speaker ID (perfect for capturing meeting notes). Otter.ai can also be used to dictate memos faster than you can type them!

03. STAY AT INBOX ZERO WITH SMART EMAIL BATCHING USING THE 3-21-0 SYSTEM

3-21-0 is a popular system for batching email processing in time blocks.³ The method involves processing email in three sessions per day, 21 minutes per session, to reach inbox zero. By batching your email into three processing blocks, you'll limit distracted attention and protect non-batching times for valuable "deep work" activities. Know this: a proven process like 3-21-0 for email (or anything for that matter) is better than no plan at all.

04. PROCESS YOUR EMAIL WITH AN OPTIMAL SUB-FOLDER SYSTEM (UDEMY COURSE: EMAIL NINJA)

Email Ninja is a Udemy course that teaches a powerful method for organizing your inbox.⁴ The system will show you how to set up three sub-folders (action, reading, and waiting) to manage your inbox like a to-do list—and stay at inbox zero. Pair productivity Hacks #3 and #4, and you'll be in the top 0.1 percent of email efficiency.

05. | USE KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS TO QUICKLY INSERT TEXT SNIPPETS (TEXTEXPANDER FOR DESKTOP, WORDBOARD FOR MOBILE)

TextExpander (or WordBoard's functionality for mobile) is a desktop application that allows users to program keyboard shortcuts for commonly used messages. Save time by setting up custom snippets that automatically expand into larger text. For example, instead of typing out your address each time someone asks, simply program the snippet “;ad” in TextExpander—and afterward your full address will appear if you ever type those three keystrokes. Here's an [article](#) with some other great use cases.⁵

06. | SET UP A KANBAN BOARD FOR TACTICAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT (TRELLO)

Trello is a Kanban-style project management board that visually displays tasks. Easily organize everything you need to complete your personal and professional projects (attaching related files, personal notes, integrated calendar deadlines, etc.). There's a reason agile teams use Kanban boards: they allow you to visualize work, limit work in progress, and stay motivated. You can see the same results in broader strokes, when you use this tech to manage your life.

07. CONNECT YOUR APPS, DEVICES, AND SERVICES ([IFTTT](#)) TO AUTOMATE TIME-CONSUMING TASKS

IFTTT (if this, then that) is an application that helps you automate your workflow by connecting the apps and devices in your toolkit. Just a few of the possibilities...

- IFTTT lets you sync Uber with Philips Hue lighting—to blink the lights in your home when your Uber is arriving.⁶
- IFTTT allows me to activate an “applet”—an integration that connects two or more apps—that automatically uploads my iPhone screenshots into a processing folder in Evernote.⁷ (I’ve found mobile screenshots require an extra level of organization to ensure I don’t overlook important items.)

And that’s just scratching the surface of IFTTT potential. Have a look.

08. | TRACK YOUR “DEEP WORK”-TO-“SHALLOW WORK” RATIO TO AVOID DRIFT (RESCUETIME)

Cal Newport defines **deep work** as “professional activities performed in a state of distraction-free concentration that push your cognitive capacities to their limit. These efforts create new value, improve your skill, and are hard to replicate.”⁸ On the other hand, **shallow work** is defined as “noncognitively demanding, logistical-style tasks, often performed while distracted. These efforts tend to not create much new value in the world and are easy to replicate.”⁹

RescueTime is a desktop application that automatically tracks and categorizes your time (based on browser and application use). With the help of RescueTime, I track my *Deep-Work-to-Shallow-Work Ratio* (the current balance is about 1:1).

Note: I only follow this ratio in the context of my career, allowing more spontaneity elsewhere. Admittedly, this is the most time-intensive metric that I track. It combines metrics from RescueTime and adds work that I may do offline (like in a physical journal) or on my mobile device (iOS Screen Time). Our time is all-important, and this uncommon activity will train you to invest it well.

09. | SET A GAMIFIED POMODORO TIMER TO BENEFIT FROM PARKINSON'S LAW (FOREST APP)

The Forest App is a gamified mobile timer for productivity. The longer you stay focused, the healthier the trees in your virtual forest will grow. Navigate away from the app due to phone distraction? The trees wither. Set a Pomodoro timer in the app (25 minutes on, 5 minutes off) for a cadence of optimally focused energy. Chunking down work to 25 minutes of pure focus is useful because the time period is cognitively challenging but psychology feels attainable. You'll also be tapping into Parkinson's Law—which teaches that work expands to fill the allotted time for an activity.¹⁰ By introducing a Pomodoro deadline, you'll get more done. Simple—but an advanced idea.

10. | BUCK THE DEFAULT 30- OR 60-MINUTE MEETING; THINK SHORTER!

We've mentioned Parkinson's Law—work expands to fill the allotted time—already. Well, just as it applies to you individually, it also applies to meetings. You know the default "time blocks" for these: 30 or 60 minutes. But are all discussions so equal that they fit into one of these two spans? Of course not. Reclaim time in your day by setting meetings in 5-minute increments (5, 10, 15, etc.). And make every one of those minutes count by sending a quick agenda beforehand.

11. HATE FEE HEADACHES? AUTOMATE BILL PAYMENTS, SAVINGS, AND INVESTMENTS

I Will Teach You To Be Rich, a life-changing book by Ramit Sethi, shows readers a system for automating their personal finances. The system involves setting up a monthly process for reviewing/automating your credit card payments—as well as funneling paycheck allocations into designated categories of savings, investments, and retirement.¹¹ Set these up to save time, limit anxiety, and set your future self up for success.

12. BLOCK DISTRACTING SOCIAL MEDIA NOISE SO YOU CAN CONQUER PROCRASTINATION (NEWS FEED ERADICATOR)

Cal Newport says in *Deep Work*: “In this new economy, three groups will have a particular advantage: those who can work well and creatively with intelligent machines, those who are the best at what they do, and those with access to capital.”¹² Blocking out distracting social media noise helps to address those first two points—and that’s where News Feed Eradicator comes in. This Google Chrome plugin replaces the news feed on common social media sites with an inspiring quote. The takeaway: you can use the other functions of your social media tools without getting sucked into an attention black hole.

13. LEVERAGE VOICE-DRIVEN SMART DEVICES TO QUICKLY COMPLETE TASKS (AMAZON ECHO)

I try to minimize phone pickups throughout the day—to limit inbound distraction—and voice assistants like Amazon’s Alexa, Apple’s Siri, and Google’s Google can be great productivity partners. Amazon Echo is my personal choice; it helps me avoid distraction without missing need-to-know information. Request your calendar details, check a package delivery, scope out the weather, re-up on personal inventory, set a handsfree timer, control lights and music—the possibilities are virtually endless. And all completed through voice more quickly than a hands-on lookup.

14. IMPROVE “TOP-OF-FUNNEL” TOOLS TO MINIMIZE BOTTLENECKS AND INCREASE ACTIVITY FLOW

Upgrade “top-of-funnel” tools that have a positive, cascading effect on your productivity.¹³ Two compelling examples: increasing the speed of your device’s trackpad (or mouse) and the speed of your Internet router. As a result, you’ll remove bottlenecks of information flow and be able to complete all associated downstream activities more quickly. These are one-time decisions that lead to returns in efficiency, again and again.

15. PRIORITY ONE DAILY “HIGHLIGHT” THAT— IF COMPLETED—MAKES EVERYTHING ELSE EASIER OR UNNECESSARY

Pareto’s Principle says that 20 percent of our actions lead to 80 percent of our results. You can take this a step further and ask: *What’s the ONE thing I can do today that will make everything else easier or unnecessary?*¹⁴ Imagine what your life might look like if you completed your ONE most important task of the day, every day. If there’s only ONE thing to take away from this guide, it’s this: have a single “daily highlight¹⁵” that you complete at all costs.

16. USE A DEFAULT “NO” SCRIPT TO AVOID LOW-VALUE INBOUND REQUESTS

James Clear teaches that the ultimate productivity hack is saying, “No.”¹⁶ Another way to think about this from entrepreneur Derek Sivers: If your immediate reaction to an inbound request is not a “hell yeah!,” then your answer should be “no.”¹⁷ Realize this: saying, “No, I’m on a deadline” is always honest. Because when it comes to creating the life we choose...we *are*, in fact, on a deadline.

17. DEPLOY AN EMPATHY-WORTHY “DO NOT DISTURB” SCRIPT ON YOUR MOBILE PHONE TO AVOID DISTRACTION (SETTINGS>DO NOT DISTURB FOR IOS, AUTO MESSAGE FOR ANDROID)

The author of *Indistractable*, Nir Eyal, provides a helpful autoresponder script for your mobile phone to minimize distraction during your deep work. He suggests:

Hi! This is an automated reply to let you know I'm indistractable at the moment. I will not see your message right away but I'll get back to you shortly. (I'm not receiving notifications. If this is urgent, reply "urgent" to send a notification through with your original message.)¹⁸

You can also replace the words “I'm indistractable at the moment” with “I'm on a deadline” ([#Hack 16](#)). Activate automated replies in iOS by going to *Settings>Do Not Disturb*. You'll have the ability to customize several factors: pre-scheduling your autoresponse, unsilencing a second call from the same person within three minutes, allowing only select contacts to message/call, and more. For similar functionality on Android, check out [Auto Message](#).

18. VALUE YOUR TIME WITH A HIGH ASPIRATIONAL HOURLY RATE; AVOID LOW-VALUE ACTIVITIES BY DELEGATING (UPWORK, FIVERR, TASKRABBIT)

Specifically, how much do you value your time? Before Naval Ravikant—founder of AngelList—became wealthy, he prized his time at an aspirational rate of \$5,000 per hour.¹⁹ In the words of Naval, “You will never be worth more than you think you’re worth.”

By setting an absurdly high aspirational rate and outsourcing activities that fall outside your specialized skill set, you can ruthlessly save time for high-value activities. Naval advises:

*If you can outsource something or not do something for less than your hourly rate, outsource it or don’t do it. If you can hire someone to do it for less than your hourly rate, hire them.*²⁰

Then the question becomes: how will you invest your newfound time—so that you can *begin to realize* your aspirational rate?

19. DEPLOY TIME LIMITS ON ADDICTIVE MOBILE APPS AND STRIKE A BLOW AGAINST PROCRASTINATION

As shared in the documentary *Social Dilemma*: “There are only two industries that call their customers users: illegal drugs and software.” The takeaway: we need to set guardrails to ensure we use technology as a tool, rather than being a tool of technology. Consider deleting social media on your phone entirely (and reserve for desktop use only). Or set a 10-20 minute daily time limit for social media on your mobile device. **For iOS:** Settings>Screen Time>App Limits; **For Android:** Settings>Digital Wellbeing & Parental Controls. Tracking your social media use (via app limits) is a great first step toward breaking the addiction.

20. IMPLEMENT TIME BLOCKS TO ELIMINATE DISTRACTION AND ENSURE HIGH-VALUE OUTPUT (“MAKE IN THE MORNINGS, MANAGE IN THE AFTERNOONS”)

Protect time for high-value work by organizing your calendar for 1) *deep work* in the mornings and 2) meetings/managing in the afternoons.²¹ The goal here is to direct your highest energy state to your most important task(s) for the day. (So, if you experience your peak energy state later in the day, flip the order so that your most important task is slotted then.) In the next section of this guide, you’ll learn how time and energy management are a recipe for breakthrough results.

21. CREATE A THEME FOR YOUR DAYS TO BATCH SIMILAR WORK AND AVOID SWITCHING COSTS

Batching is a productivity principle that involves grouping similar activities together for efficiency. Jack Dorsey—the current CEO of Square and former CEO of Twitter and Square at the same time (!)—takes advantage of batching by setting themed days.²² Dorsey shares:

On Monday, at both companies, I focus on management and running the company... Tuesday is focused on product. Wednesday is focused on marketing and communications and growth. Thursday is focused on developers and partnerships. Friday is focused on the company and the culture and recruiting. Saturday I take off, I hike. Sunday is reflection, feedback, strategy, and getting ready for the week.

As revealed in [Hack #20 \(Make in the Mornings, Manage in the Afternoons\)](#), you can also try batching strategic work in the morning and managing/meetings in the afternoons. Another idea: batch your weekly food preparation on Sundays. With batching, you'll work smarter, not harder.

| ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Actually having the energy to do the right things.

22. USE AN AROMATHERAPY DIFFUSER TO STIMULATE OLFACTORY ENERGY TRIGGERS (DIFFUSER: VITRUVI STONE; ESSENTIAL OILS: DOTERRA)

Scent can be powerful in creating a productive state, so take advantage of this power by using an aromatherapy diffuser. From Jim Kwik's book *Limitless*, I learned that peppermint and lemon promote concentration.²³ As I'm writing this, my Vitruvi Diffuser is exhaling geranium (which is known to have a unique effect of both calming and stimulating). As for the essential oils, I like the brand Doterra.

23. AUGMENT "BLUE LIGHT" IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT TO BECOME MORE ALERT (LIFX SMART LIGHTS)

Research shows blue lights suppress melatonin, a chemical that makes us sleepy.²⁴ So, I strategically use blue light throughout my home office in the morning and early afternoon to stay alert. I like LIFX smart lights because their bulbs are full-spectrum—offering brighter levels of daylight blue up to 9,000 Kelvin (K), whereas Philips Hue lights only go up to 6500K. In the later afternoon, I wind down with warmer tones (2500-3500K) so that exposure to blue light doesn't affect my sleep. Pair smart light bulbs with a voice assistant (#Hack 13), and you'll be a few words away from a high-voltage, energized day.

24. | BENEFIT FROM SCIENTIFICALLY-OPTIMIZED PRODUCTIVITY PLAYLISTS—INCREASING YOUR FOCUS (FOCUS@WILL)

Scoring your day (like a movie) is a great tactic to elevate your mood and encourage focus. Recently, I was fortunate to stay at a Four Seasons Resort, where I fell in love with the hypnotic ambiance that resonated throughout the property. I've recreated that feeling in my home with Sonos One speakers, which are wirelessly connected by Bluetooth 5.0. For music, I recommend focus@will—which is scientifically optimized to induce flow states. Just about any task is more enjoyable with music—so tap into a great soundtrack to enjoy!

25. | SET A COOL TEMPERATURE FOR YOUR WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Cooler room temperature increases concentration—as evidenced by the following Scientific American Study²⁵: Researchers asked participants to proofread articles in 67- or 77-degree temperature rooms. The ones who worked at the cooler temperature found twice as many errors as the warmer-room group. As James Clear says in Atomic Habits, “Environment is an invisible hand that shapes our behavior.”²⁶ The good news: we can often train the invisible hand to achieve our desired behaviors. Perhaps the easiest place to start is controlling the thermostat.

26. | ELIMINATE EARLY-MORNING GROGGINESS BY JUMPING ROPE FIRST THING—QUICKLY WAKING UP YOUR MIND AND BODY

How much time do you waste in a state of morning grogginess? I used to waste A LOT. Now, I jump rope for two minutes to instantly become alert in the morning (hat tip to author and podcaster Tim Ferriss for the suggestion²⁷). The hand-eye coordination required will wake up your mind. Plus, the movement will get your blood flowing. Complete the activity outside? Even better. Health experts Dr. Huberman shares that a *healthy* tide of cortisol is released when we step out at daybreak, allowing us to become more alert and tackle the day.²⁸ P.S. I use the SR-343 Mach Speed Rope by Rogue.

27. | USE A SMART WATER BOTTLE TO GAMIFY YOUR HYDRATION (HIDRATESPARK)

As much as 75 percent of us are regularly dehydrated.²⁹ And it turns out that even being dehydrated by as little as 2 percent can significantly limit cognitive ability.³⁰ For this reason, I use a HidrateSpark smart water bottle to track my hydration automatically. Its mobile app gamifies the experience, showing a dial with markers of current intake vs. recommended pace. And like Google maps, you better believe I'm trying to beat that ETA!

28. | EXPERIMENT WITH A KETOGENIC DIET TO INCREASE HIGH-COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING

In the words of Tim Ferriss, “The ketogenic diet, often nicknamed ‘keto,’ is a high-fat diet that mimics fasting physiology. Your brain and body begin to use ketones (derived from stored or ingested fat) for energy instead of blood sugar (glucose)—a state called ketosis.”³¹

One benefit of the ketogenic diet is promoting high cognitive function and mental clarity. To confirm I’m in a state of ketosis, I use the Precision Xtra by Abbott (another recommendation by Ferriss) to measure the mmols/l of ketones in my body. What’s the recommended target? According to Dr. Dominic “Dom” D’Agostino: “I like to promote mild to moderate ketosis for health and longevity, which is between 1-3 mmols/L.”³² The ketogenic diet takes a lot of discipline, but I’ve found the cognitive boost to be well worth it.

29. TRY BULLETPROOF COFFEE TO BOOST DEEP WORK

I'm a big fan of drinking "bulletproof coffee" (often referred to as "butter coffee") throughout my morning deep work time block. I've found bulletproof boosts my cognitive function by fueling my brain with the essential fats it requires to operate at its best. My bulletproof potion of choice? Ghee, MCT Oil, and Death Wish Coffee. I like using ghee instead of butter, as it has a higher fat concentration and is shelf-stable. For MCT Oil, I use BulletProof brand's Brain Octane. This "tech tonic" is delicious and goes well with the ketogenic diet (#Hack 28).

30. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MEAL REPLACEMENTS FOR EASY DIGESTION AND NO-FUSS PREPARATION (SOYLENT)

Soylent is a comprehensive meal replacement shake. There's a reason soylent became so popular in the coding community. Software engineers could drink soylent and stay "plugged-in" on coding activities for hours on end. Digesting physical food can be energy draining. Taking a non-emotional approach to nutrition can be helpful, especially when your sole focus is a savage work session. Sidenote: if you're looking for a tasty keto-friendly option, try the Keto MealShake by KetoScience (in chocolate).

31. | ENGAGE IN HIGH-INTENSITY INTERVAL TRAINING (HIIT) TO IMPROVE OXYGEN CONSUMPTION (PELOTON APP)

With HIIT, users alternate between intervals of high-intensity and low-intensity exercise. (Example: 60 seconds high, 45 seconds low.) HIIT offers many benefits. My favorite? Efficiency. You can both tone and burn an optimal amount of calories in the least amount of time. Next on the benefits list: naturally raising your energy levels—by boosting endorphins and improving oxygen circulation. I prefer doing HIIT workouts in the early afternoon (often a HIIT-designated Peloton ride instructed by Alex Toussaint) to propel me into the second half of the day.

32. | STEP INTO A COLD SHOWER TO INSTANTLY BECOME ALERT AND EXPERIENCE NEWFOUND ENERGY

Wim “The Iceman” Hof teaches that cold showers improve metabolic rate for weight loss, reduce stress levels, and increase immune response.³³ If you’re new to cold immersion, Hof recommends beginning with a standard shower and finishing with the last 30 seconds with cold water. I’ve made the process more enjoyable by using a shower timer and bench to sit on. After a dose of cold shower therapy, you’ll be alert—guaranteed. While working from home, I target a cold shower between 1-3 PM...after a HIIT workout (#Hack 31). Stacking a HIIT workout, followed by a cold shower, is a powerful combo to K.O. the afternoon slump.

33. | TRACK YOUR SLEEP TO LOG 7.5-8.5 HOURS OF SLEEP DAILY FOR PEAK PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE (OURA RING)

Arianna Huffington's Sleep Revolution opened my eyes to the fact that our society wears sleep deprivation like a badge of honor, when lack of sleep is really a badge of misplaced priorities.

So, how can we get the sleep we need without overdoing it? I like Oura — a smart ring that automatically tracks total sleep, time in deep sleep + REM, and efficiency of sleep (among other things). Oura's associated mobile app gamifies the sleep experience, providing a sleek dashboard and net score—out of 100—for your prior evening's sleep performance.

One thing you'll learn using Oura: not all sleep is created equal. Realize that 8 hours of high-quality sleep (REM and Deep) can be better than 8.5 hours of light sleep. Optimize for quality sleep and reclaim hours in your day—without sacrificing energy levels.

34. | TAKE WALKING MEETINGS WITH OTHERS—OR YOURSELF—TO PROMOTE CLEAR THINKING AND CREATIVITY

What do Steve Jobs, Nietzsche, and Aristotle all have in common?³⁴ Each used walking as a strategic tool for clear thinking. In the words of Nietzsche, “All truly great thoughts are conceived while walking.” The next time you’re stuck on a decision or looking to brainstorm an idea, put your best foot forward and go for a walk.

35. | USE A STANDING DESK TO LOWER STRESS AND FATIGUE WHILE ALSO IMPROVING ENERGY LEVELS (UPLIFT OR FULLY)

“Sitting is the New Smoking” is a phrase coined by Dr. James Levine, director of Mayo Clinic at Arizona State University.³⁵ I wouldn’t go that far...but there are many benefits to spending more time upright via a standing desk. Not only is standing better for your muscular alignment and posture; standing at a desk all day burns 170 more calories than sitting.³⁶ Also, according to *Healthline*: “87 percent of those using standing desks reported increased vigor and energy throughout the day.” I use Fully Jarvis in my home office. With its remote-touch height adjustment, I can quickly alternate between standing and sitting. I’ve found alternating is a great reset when I’m stuck on a problem and need to (literally) reapproach from a new angle.

36. CHOOSE A SOCIAL WORKING ENVIRONMENT TO INCREASE MOTIVATION WHILE PRODUCING DURING OFF-HOURS

Building a blog can be lonely. There are a lot of unseen hours in isolation, developing original thinking and new content. I've found that going to social environments—like libraries or coffee shops—boosts my motivation, especially when overtime is required in the evening or during the weekend. If you're like me (and find these environments to be more stimulating than distracting), you might also consider recreating a social “buzz” in the comfort of your home—by listening to ambient coffee shop noises.

37. | STREAMLINE LOW-VALUE DECISIONS (BREAKFAST, CLOTHES, ETC.)

From iconic entrepreneurs to presidents, outlier performers have streamlined their decision-making around clothes. Some notable figures that come to mind are Steve Jobs and Barack Obama. The former president sums it up well:

You'll see I wear only gray or blue suits. I'm trying to pare down my decisions. I don't want to make decisions about what I'm eating or wearing. Because I have too many other decisions to make.³⁷

Paring down decisions can also be applied elsewhere, like automating choices around breakfast. The simple rule of thumb: if optionality for the given decision brings you joy, then, by all means, express your options. If options don't provide happiness, make a one-time decision for utility.

38. | TAKE A 20-MINUTE MIDDAY POWER NAP TO CATCH A PRODUCTIVITY SURGE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE DAY

Winston Churchill credited his daily nap as an invaluable tool in raising his effectiveness: “You must sleep some time between lunch and dinner...You get two days in one—well, at least one and a half, I’m sure.”³⁸

So, try a 20-minute power nap around 1 PM—restoring energy levels without impacting your evening sleep. Keep in mind: Anything longer than 20 minutes may induce sleep inertia³⁹ and grogginess (which may be unpleasant to overcome midday).

39. | UPGRADE YOUR DAILY MULTIVITAMIN TO INCLUDE SCIENTIFICALLY-PROVEN NOOTROPICS (TOTAL HUMAN by ONNIT)

A few months ago, I was looking for a daily vitamin to round out my wellness system. Thankfully I came across Onnit's Total Human. More than a typical multivitamin—Total Human is reimagined with vitamins, minerals, and nootropics.

Let me unpack that last word: nootropics. It means any substance that boosts brain performance.⁴⁰ Total Human combines the best of Onnit's supplement line, including its highly rated nootropic, AlphaBrain. According to Onnit, here's how that product works:

In Alpha BRAIN®, for instance, we give you a good dose of vitamin B6, which aids neurotransmitter production to stimulate cognitive speed, but we also provide huperzia serrata, a clubmoss that helps stop the breakdown of neurotransmitters. Think: more in, less out.⁴¹

While the current price of \$4.60 per day is a bit steep, I've found the investment to be well worth it. Now, here's why: I used to hit an afternoon wall, like most people. But now I feel clean and focused energy going into the second half of my days (even if just a placebo, I'll take it!). Give it a test run. Then, consider signing up for the monthly subscription (#Hack 69, Automating Personal Inventory) to save time and 15%.

| MENTALITY

Being motivated to do the right things.

40. | MAKE THE IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES IN YOUR LIFE DEFAULT “OPT-OUT”—ENCOURAGING HIGHER COMPLETION RATES

Consider the following statistic: In countries where organ donation is the default selection (also known as “opt-out”), more than 90 percent of people register to donate their organs. Compare this to countries with an “opt-in” policy, where fewer than 15 percent donate.⁴² A default “opt-out” is powerful because people typically follow the path of least resistance and stick to the status quo. So take advantage by calendaring the most critical things in your life as opt-out: calling your family, focusing on deep work, exercising, etc. You can always opt-out, but you’ll be more likely to stick with the default—your desired behavior.

41. | PRACTICE DAILY MEDITATION TO PROMOTE STRATEGIC THINKING (WAKING UP APP BY SAM HARRIS)

A 2012⁴³ study found that people who practice meditation develop more folds in the outer layer of their brain. This development (known as gyrification) is thought to increase the brain’s ability to process information. Sam Harris’ *Waking Up* is the least woo-woo, most science-driven meditation experience I’ve encountered. Also, the educational modules in the app are very insightful for understanding theory (which cultivates belief). I follow a 10-minute guided meditation in *Waking Up* each morning. Get a free trial [here](#) and realize newfound clarity and levels of strategic thinking.

42. | SET THE ALARM OUTSIDE YOUR BEDROOM TO QUICKLY RISE AND RECLAIM 60 HOURS A YEAR (PHONE CHARGER CHALLENGE)

The Phone Charger Challenge is a quick win that will kickstart your day in the best way possible. Discover the simple behavioral hack of moving your phone's charger outside your bedroom. By forcing yourself to rise from bed every morning to turn off your phone alarm, you'll notice that once you're standing, it's much easier to stay vertical. And the day is on!

43. | SAY A MANTRA TO "THE MUSE" BEFORE ANY CREATIVE ACT—EXILING YOUR EGO TO THE SIDELINES

The ritual of calling upon a muse before a creative act is powerful. Here, we put our ego aside and become open to receiving higher universal knowledge. In the words of author, Steven Pressfield:

Artists have invoked the Muse since time immemorial. There is great wisdom to this. There is magic to effacing our human arrogance and humbly entreating help from a source we cannot see, hear, touch, or smell.⁴⁴

Inspired by Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way*—every morning, I begin by writing: "Muse, I will supply the quantity; you supply the quality."⁴⁵ My job is to consistently show up with positive attitude and effort. The score? Will take care of itself.

44. COMPLETE A TIMED “CELEBRATION BLITZ” TO ACHIEVE A SMALL WIN AND BUILD MOMENTUM FOR YOUR NEXT IMPORTANT TASK

Create momentum in your day by completing a celebration blitz. In the words of Stanford Professor BJ Fogg, in *Tiny Habits*:

One of my favorite techniques for feeling positive emotions—the Celebration Blitz. I encourage everyone to do this if you need a score in the win column: Go to the messiest room in your house (or the worst corner of your office), set a timer for three minutes, and tidy up.⁴⁶

Then, the most crucial part: celebrate. Fist pump, do a little jig, or say, “Ohhh yeah!” Whatever best primes a feeling of success—because there’s more of that to come. I’ve found that a celebration blitz starts a domino effect—supercharging me with the psychological momentum to knock down the next heftier task.

**45. ESTABLISH A SELF-IMPOSED DEADLINE—
WITH STAKES—TO INCREASE THE ODDS OF
COMPLETING YOUR IMPORTANT PROJECTS
ON TIME (STICKK)**

StickK allows users to set a public or private commitment and add monetary stakes to increase accountability. One notable feature is setting negative stakes: if you fail to follow through with your commitment, you can tell StickK to donate money to a cause you dislike. Most people will take extreme measures to avoid the “cognitive dissonance” of donating money to a cause against their identity. For example, perhaps someone is an avid fan of Arsenal Football Club AND wants to exercise four times per week. They might create stakes to donate money to *Chelsea Fan Club* (an intense rival) if they fail to hit their goal. What stakes would motivate you to follow through?

46. BATCH NEWS CONSUMPTION ON A DAILY OR WEEKLY BASIS TO PRACTICE SELECTIVE IGNORANCE AND LIMIT UNWANTED DISTRACTION (MORNING BREW OR THE ECONOMIST)

Realize this: emotional management is vital for productivity and staying focused. I've found selective ignorance of the news is often helpful towards this end. A couple of quotes I like from Ryan Holiday's *The Daily Stoic*:

- *How much more rested and present would you feel if you were no longer excited and outraged by every scandal, breaking story, and potential crisis (many of which never come to pass anyway)?⁴⁷*
- *Which will help your children more—your insight into happiness and meaning, or that you followed breaking political news every day for thirty years?⁴⁸*

Batching news on a weekly cadence with *The Economist* helps me strike the right balance between selective ignorance and keeping a hand on the pulse. Now, if you feel like you need a daily news download, consider *Morning Brew*. When I subscribed, the newsletter was short, witty, and informative—providing daily need-to-know information while also keeping things rationally optimistic.

47. | USE A TOTEM TO ACTIVATE YOUR UNSTOPPABLE ALTER EGO

The Alter Ego Effect, by Todd Herman, teaches the power of creating an alter ego of your ideal self. He shares that creating an alter ego is a quick, impactful way to overcome the mental obstacles holding you back. The reason? You can make an alter ego that's simply not fearful...of public speaking, sinking the high-stakes putt, attending a networking event, etc.

One tactic to activate your alter ego is using a totem (like glasses or a piece of jewelry). In the words of Todd Herman:

Your alter ego is real, and it needs to be grounded in a physical presence. That's what your totem or artifact does. It's what you use to represent or connect to your alter ego, giving it a form and a shape.⁴⁹

I have a particular watch that serves this purpose. What will you use for your totem?

48. | FOCUS ON SHOWING UP WITH THE TWO-MINUTE RULE; MAKE YOUR DESIRED BEHAVIOR EASY/SMALL TO DO MORE THAN YOU ORIGINALLY ENVISIONED

Atomic Habits' author James Clear shares the two-minute rule: "When you start a new habit, it should take less than two minutes to do."⁵⁰ For example, instead of setting out to read 20 minutes every day, set out to read 1 page. The reason: once you find the activation energy to start, you'll be likely to stay on the path and do more than 1 page. The takeaway from Clear: first, standardize the beginning of your desired behavior with the two-minute rule—and then, you can optimize for performance.

49. WRITE AN IMPLEMENTATION INTENTION FOR YOUR NEXT DAY'S MOST IMPORTANT THING SO YOU CAN DOUBLE YOUR ODDS OF COMPLETING

An implementation intention is “a plan you make beforehand about where and when to act.”⁵¹ A study by the *British Journal of Health Psychology* found that—without a stated intention—only 38 percent of participants followed through on their exercise goal. However, 91 percent of those who used an implementation intention did hit their objective. One simple action more than doubled their odds of success.

Like a software engineer writing an “If..., then...” statement, people can program themselves to perform an action when a prior “if” condition is met. For example, before going to bed, write down your most important activity for the next day (see [Hack #15, Daily Highlight](#)) as an implementation intention. Mine this morning: *After I finish my morning meditation, I will edit 15 productivity hacks for my tactical guide.*

I write my implementation intention on a basic index card that I keep on my desk. I’ve had my eye on Ugmonks’ minimalist [analog wood cardholder](#), but I haven’t pulled the trigger yet.

50. PAY FOR THINGS IN ADVANCE TO TAP INTO THE “SUNK-COST FALLACY,” INCREASING YOUR CHANCES OF FOLLOW-THROUGH

The sunk-cost fallacy teaches that we tend to overvalue things we’ve already invested time or money in. Tim Ferriss recommends using the sunk-cost fallacy (in our favor) as a tool to improve our odds of follow-through.⁵² By paying for things in advance—like a gym membership, restorative vacation, or learning seminar—we’ll be more likely to take (and continue) the desired action. I love this hack because it flips the script on behavioral psychology that usually works against us into one that works for us.

51. DRAW ON A MENTAL VAULT OF MOTIVATING MEMORIES TO ACHIEVE UNCOMMON PERFORMANCE

Five-time Male CrossFit Champion Mat Fraser has a sign in his home gym that reads: “Success is the best revenge.”⁵³ CrossFit is a grueling sport. And life can be, too. Pushing ourselves to another level of performance may require drawing on painful memories: personal rejection, haters, etc.

Similarly, Ultramarathon athlete and certified badass David Goggins writes about pain as a key to self-improvement.⁵⁴ My take: I find it helpful to know that I always have a powerful force of motivation—however unpleasant—if I absolutely need it.

52. WRITE DOWN A COMPELLING “WHY” FOR WHAT YOU DO AND DISCOVER THAT PURPOSE FIXES NEARLY EVERYTHING

In sports, they say that winning fixes everything. Is there an equivalent for life? I believe it’s purpose—having a strong “why” for doing what you do. In *Man’s Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl writes about his ability to find purpose through unimaginable suffering (while in a Holocaust concentration camp). The one thing the Nazis couldn’t take from him? His attitude and ability to find purpose—like helping out his fellow prisoners.

No matter what you’re going through, or the difficulty of the task ahead, start with purpose, and you’ll discover mighty reserves of fortitude. My purpose: to teach people the power of life systems, so they can unlock their full potential and experience greater levels of wealth, health, and free time.

53. HACK YOUR MOTIVATION WITH THE “CHAIN METHOD”—A VISUAL CUE THAT TRACKS COMPLETION AND CREATES A DESIRE TO KEEP THE STREAK GOING

Jerry Seinfeld, the famous comedian, wanted to write every day. So, he started marking the completion of each session with a big “X” on a prominent wall calendar. In the words of Jerry:

After a few days you’ll have a chain. Just keep at it and the chain will grow longer every day. You’ll like seeing that chain, especially when you get a few weeks under your belt. Your only job is to not break the chain.⁵⁵

If you’re looking for an attractive wall calendar, [this one](#) by Stendig (Original Design of Massimo Vignelli) has a cult following. My question is: what streak will you start next?

54. REMIND YOURSELF OF DEATH (*MEMENTO MORI*) TO CREATE THE URGENCY TO ACT NOW, NOT LATER

Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson says, “It is the knowledge that I am going to die that creates the focus that I bring to being alive. The urgency of accomplishment. The need to express love—now, not later.”⁵⁶

One tactic to remind yourself of death: read a daily obituary (hat tip to author Austin Kleon⁵⁷). Or consider displaying a life calendar⁵⁸—which reminds owners of the number of weeks left in an average lifespan.

55. IMAGINE BEING FOLLOWED BY A DOCUMENTARY CREW TO INCREASE MOTIVATION AND HOLD YOURSELF TO A STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

Joe Rogan says the best advice he ever received: “Live your life like you’re the hero in the movie...Live your life like there is a documentary crew following you around, and you are analyzing your own behavior.”⁵⁹

Experiencing a lackadaisical workout? Try Rogan’s quick mental hack. I can almost guarantee you’ll do more reps at a higher intensity. Not showing up how you want with your family? Again, try this mental hack. Sometimes high-performance is as simple as “acting as if”... until you inevitably become the person you want to be.

| PROFICIENCY

Doing the right things well.

56. READ ON A KINDLE SO YOU CAN QUICKLY DIGITIZE YOUR NOTES AND HIGHLIGHTS FOR EASY FUTURE REFERENCE (KINDLE AND READWISE)

I read on Kindle because all my highlights are automatically digitized. You can access your device's Kindle notes [here](#) or use software like Readwise. I've found Readwise has a more robust search feature across the Kindle books in your library. It also has neat automations that surface your past highlights to review at an optimally timed cadence (using spaced repetition). As a result, Readwise can help to integrate your favorite book highlights and notes into your working knowledge.

57. LISTEN TO AUDIBLE BOOKS OR PODCASTS BETWEEN 1.2-2X THE NORMAL SPEED TO INCREASE KNOWLEDGE CONSUMPTION WITHOUT SACRIFICING MUCH, IF ANY, RETENTION

I've been listening to audiobooks and podcasts at 1.2-2x speed for many years—though I'm sure other productivity enthusiasts have recommended this tactic. The reason? It's simple and instantly valuable. On Spotify and Audible, you can adjust the playback speed in the bottom left-hand corner of the media player. For YouTube, click on the gear icon in the bottom right corner; the playback speed is the first option.

58. | READ A BOOK WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY LISTENING TO THE SAME CONTENT ON AUDIBLE—PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE RETENTION

Here's a pro tip I picked up from author and entrepreneur Alex Hormozi.⁶⁰ He says, "If you listen to the audiobook while reading the eBook or physical book, you will increase your reading speed and retain more information. The contents are being stored in more places in your brain."

Pair this tactic with setting a higher listening speed ([#Hack 57](#)), and you'll be on your way to learning faster—and retaining more information—than you could by simply reading or listening alone.

59. | LEARN HOW TO SPEED READ AND CONSUME 3X MORE BOOKS EVERY YEAR ([7 SPEED READING, KINDLE OASIS](#))

The simple truth is that—with the proper training—nearly everyone is capable of tripling their reading speed (without sacrificing understanding). It might just be the difference between you reading 20 vs. 60 books this year. (On average, CEOs read about a book a week, or 52 a year.⁶¹ I learned to speed read with [7 Speed Reading](#). Brain training expert [Jim Kwik's course](#) also comes highly recommended.

60. USE CHECKLISTS TO EXECUTE COMPLEX TASKS WITH GREATER ACCURACY AND EFFICIENCY

Doctor Atul Gawande elaborates on this hack in the Checklist Manifesto: "...the volume and complexity of what we know has exceeded our individual ability to deliver its benefits correctly, safely, or reliably."⁶²

While I might not be performing surgery or operating an aircraft, I use checklists to be more consistent: a publishing checklist, grocery shopping checklist, travel packing checklist...the list goes on. What complex activities do you consistently do where you'd benefit from having a go-to checklist?

61. READ BOOKS LIKE A BLOG POST TO GET HIGH-VALUE TAKEAWAYS; ALLOW YOURSELF NOT TO FINISH IF YOU ARE BORED OR THERE ARE NO MORE USEFUL IDEAS

It seems that learning *how* to read a book is an undervalued skill. Here's what I recommend: start reading the table of contents—which acts as a class syllabus and is available for free via Amazon preview. If the book looks interesting, purchase the book in eReader format so you can eventually digitize your highlights/notes. Next, I picked up from Naval Ravikant to read books like a blog post.⁶³ If it seems like there's only one big idea in the early chapters, allow yourself NOT to finish the book.

Afterward, consider reading a 7-minute professional summary of the book on [getAbstract](#). This extra step will help you synthesize insights, and perhaps, help you catch anything valuable you might have missed.

62. | CREATE A DIGITAL CHEAT SHEET FOR IMPORTANT LIFE TOPICS (EVERNOTE)

In Evernote, I've created a cheat sheet for every life topic of interest to me—ranging from negotiation to the ketogenic diet. Only the best of my Kindle highlights (and other learnings) enter my cheat sheets. This system is the 80/20 of my self-learning and how I distill information overload into wisdom/truths at my fingertips. It's also how I curated these hacks...from my productivity “cheat sheet.”

So, what life topics—with personally meaningful insights—would you want to have available to you anytime, anywhere?

63. **PERFORM DUAL N-BACK TRAINING TO IMPROVE YOUR FLUID INTELLIGENCE (DUAL N-BACK FOR IOS AND BRAIN N-BACK FOR ANDROID)**

*Lethologica*⁶⁴ is the inability to recall the right word—also known as the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon. Very common, very annoying. But get this: how would it feel if you could retrieve those words with ease? Where the right words just...

I've found Dual N-Back training to help. With this brain training tactic, you'll improve fluid intelligence⁶⁵ and prime your brain to operate at peak performance. Dave Asprey, the founder of Bulletproof and author of *Game Changers*, shares some tips for getting started with Dual N-Back⁶⁶:

- Do it for at least twenty days, but forty is best.
- Do it at least five days a week, when you're not tired.
- You may get stuck for a couple of weeks, but do it anyway.
- Do not subvocalize (mutter to yourself) when you're training so that you're only activating the right side of your brain.
- Push yourself to failure every time—move up a level even if you're only at 70 to 80 percent at an existing level.

To better understand the rules, I recommend watching this short how-to video.⁶⁷ **p.s.** My personal best is Level 4. (I've found Level 5 to be harder to penetrate than a plastic package of scissors.)

| ORGANIZATION

Quickly finding the right things.

64. USE SMART FOLDERS VIA A DESKTOP “HOUSEKEEPING” APP TO EFFORTLESSLY DECLUTTER YOUR DIGITAL HOME (HAZEL FOR OS, FILE JUGGLER FOR WINDOWS)

Does your computer’s desktop look like a cluttered antique store? Fix it by creating a “desktop to review” folder on your desktop, where you can drag all of your screenshots (and other desktop-saved files). This folder acts like an inbox where you can process your files later.

Know this: You’re able to automatically declutter your desktop (and other folders) using Hazel or File Juggler—smart housekeeping apps for OS and Windows, respectively. For example, enable Hazel to move files from your desktop into a “desktop to review” folder after a certain amount of time. I like another Hazel feature: color-coding files based on their last modified date for more intuitive retrieval.

65. TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR MENU BAR— PROTECT DIGITAL MINIMALISM AND IMPROVE YOUR WORKFLOW (BARTENDER 4)

Mac OS users: you know those icons in the top right corner of your computer? That's the menu bar. Improve your workflow by organizing your menu bar with Bartender 4. Menu bar applications might include work VPNs, do-not-disturb notification controls, or blue light management with [f.lux](#). Show only the apps that you want, when you want. You'll be one step closer to digital minimalism.

Sidenote: There's no menu bar equivalent for Windows 11. Instead, I've included an article [here](#) you might find helpful in configuring a more minimalist Windows Taskbar.

66. SET UP A PASSWORD MANAGEMENT TOOL; AVOID TIME-CONSUMING ATTEMPTS OF WRONG PASSWORDS AND RESETS (LASTPASS)

Let's talk about the dreaded password reset process. How much time do you routinely lose trying to remember passwords? It's about as fun as identifying fire hydrants in pictures. I used to have a tough time remembering passwords (while also ensuring password diversity/security). Then I discovered LastPass, a browser plugin that encrypts your passwords online and allows seamless auto-fill. So why is LastPass better than Chrome's Google Password Manager? LastPass syncs across multiple browsers (not just Chrome) and multiple devices (including mobile). All to say, I can get started faster with the activities that matter—and you can, too.

67. ORGANIZE YOUR MOBILE APPS INTO FOLDERS FOR YOUR OWN INTUITIVE USER EXPERIENCE

I never used to have a system for managing my mobile apps. I believe that sloppiness spilled over into other areas of my life. My plan now: put the 16 most used apps on the home screen. The remaining apps then go in well-organized subfolders (e.g., productivity, finance, travel, etc.) on the second and third pages.

Note: I once saw a friend label her folders with mantras. For example, Fitness becomes “I am fit.” Travel becomes “I am well-traveled.” Building identity, while staying organized. Love that.

68. OFFLOAD MOBILE DEVICE PHOTOS TO THE CLOUD FOR EASY RETRIEVAL; MAINTAIN DEVICE PERFORMANCE (GOOGLE PHOTOS)

Maxing out storage on your mobile device can lead to poor battery life and performance. One of the biggest data Draculas? Your photos and videos. I recommend systematically offloading this media to the cloud via Google Images. The search capabilities of Google’s recognition AI are second to none...so you can quickly find THAT image you need to show your friend. Plans currently start at \$1.99 per month for 100GB of storage (solid capacity for me and most users).

69. BUILD A SYSTEM TO MANAGE PERSONAL INVENTORY (FOOD, HOUSEHOLD, AND PERSONAL CARE ESSENTIALS); AVOID INEFFICIENT LAST-MINUTE TRIPS TO STORE FOR SOLO ITEMS

Consider all the times you've needed to go to the store for a single item that's run out. This can be avoided by automating purchases and maintaining a buffer of reserves, so you're never out of stock.

Understanding your “burn rate” for everyday essentials is useful. How long do your razors typically last? Perhaps you'll subscribe to Harry's, once you know. Having a process for personal inventory management (whether manual like a checklist, automated, or hybrid) is one great way to always be prepared and save time.

70. STAY MINIMALIST BY DONATING, SELLING, OR THROWING OUT ONE ITEM FOR EVERY NEW POSSESSION YOU ACQUIRE

Know this: your environment is either creating clarity or complexity. Stay minimalist by throwing out or donating one item for every new thing you acquire. Algorithms We Live By offers guidance on what to throw out: Least Recently Used (LRU).⁶⁸ The protocol means “evicting the item that's gone the longest untouched.” When it comes to the usefulness of our possessions—sentimental items aside—the algorithm teaches: “Sometimes the best guide to the future is a mirror image of the past.”

71. ESTABLISH A HOME FOR EVERY ITEM AND AVOID LONG BOUTS OF UNNECESSARY SEARCHING

Are you constantly losing your car keys? How about the drill for that home improvement project? The hard truth: these misplacements steal your time. And we know time is an all-important resource. So imagine what would happen if every home improvement tool you owned had an established place on this board? You'd be less likely ever to misplace a tool again. In the words of organization expert Marie Kondo, "Ensuring that each one of your belongings has its own spot is the only way to maintain a tidy and clutter-free home."⁶⁹

While I don't think inventorying every single thing you own and establishing a designated spot is the *best* use of your time, it's an insightful exercise to consider. My advice is: start with your most misplaced items (20 percent of objects that lead to 80 percent of lost time) and standardize a home for these things now.

72. APPLY A TRACKING DEVICE ON YOUR EVERYDAY CARRY—SUCH AS PHONE, WALLET, KEYS—to avoid losing something that could otherwise blow up your day (TILE OR APPLE AIRTAG)

If establishing a home for every item fails (#Hack 71), use a tracking device as a contingency plan for your most important things. For example, after losing my passport in Shanghai (long story), I've been ever-vigilant in tracking my essential items. With a Bluetooth-enabled Tile, you can simply chime whatever the tracker is attached to and access a map of the item's location. Or, if your phone is lost, you can ring it from one of the tracked items. Yeah—it's already saved my dumb ass multiple times.

73. | INVEST IN BACKUP GEAR TO ALWAYS HAVE A FALBACK PLAN

Some people get really into survivalism: life preparation for worst-case scenarios (freeze-dried food, generators, etc.). Many of those precautions are worthwhile to take if you're financially able to. But first, let's avoid the more probable derailing events. What about preparation for a productive life? There's nothing worse than being ready to work at a coffee shop, but your phone or laptop battery is dead. Or wanting to take a picture on your SLR camera, only your SIM card is out of memory. Stay in the game with a contingency plan: backup gear.

What this means in practice: I aim to store extra provisions (phone chargers, laptop power banks, healthy snacks, etc.) in my car, suitcase, and work bag. As a wiser Ben once said, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

74. HAVE A SYSTEM FOR MANAGING BROWSER TABS BY ORGANIZING THEM INTO GROUPS AND LABELING (CHROME)

For the record: I am not a tab person. I'm a little OCD about keeping my workflow clean and minimal. I prefer to bookmark my highly used tabs or clip them using an [Evernote Chrome extension](#) for future reading. That said, I know tabs are popular, so this tip is for all you tab goblins out there who want to stay more organized...

Google Chrome has several little-known organizational features you can discover by right-clicking on any tab. Pin tabs, add them to a reading list (stored under your profile), and create groups of color-coded tabs. The final tabulation: being intentional and having a system for organizing your tabs will save you time and peace of mind.

75. USE AN EMAIL MANAGEMENT TOOL TO QUICKLY UNSUBSCRIBE FROM UNWANTED EMAILS AND CLEAN YOUR INBOX (UNROLL.ME)

Unroll.me is a tool you can use to manage and declutter your inbox. Quickly unsubscribe from unwanted subscriptions or “rollup” your favorite subscriptions into one email. I typically clean up my subscriptions twice per month. Rather than simply reacting to an unwanted email by deleting it, you can attack the root cause by preventing the email from ever occurring again. The bulletin: addressing root causes is how we work smarter, not harder.

| ENDNOTE

Congrats on finishing *75 Smart Productivity Hacks to be 500% More Effective!*

I love learning new productivity hacks. If I missed any of your favorite tips, let me know on [Twitter](#).

ONE FINAL THING: If you enjoyed this free tactical guide, please share it with others. Share this report on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), or via [email](#).

Thank you!

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- 55 “How to Stop Procrastinating on Your Goals by Using the ‘Seinfeld Strategy’” by James Clear.

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- 58 “Your Life in Weeks” by Tim Urban, *Wait But Why*.
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- 61 “Most CEOs Read A Book A Week. This Is How You Can Too (According To This Renowned Brain Coach)” by Brian D. Evans, INC.
- 62 The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right by Atul Gawande, p. 14.
- 63 The Almanack of Naval Ravikant by Eric Jorgenson p. 122.
- 64 “Lethologica or Tip of the Tongue Phenomenon” by Kendra Cherry, *Verywell Mind*.
- 65 Game Changers: What Leaders, Innovators, and Mavericks Do to Win at Life by Dave Asprey, p. 32. Below is an excerpt from Game Changers that explains fluid intelligence:
- “Your IQ score measures your crystallized intelligence, the sum of your learning and experience. You can raise it, but

it doesn't matter as much as fluid memory, your ability to learn and synthesize new information. Most scientists still believe that fluid intelligence is fixed, but it's not. So hack it. There are specific techniques to drastically increase your fluid memory that are waiting for you to use them. You can waste your time learning slowly or set yourself free by changing your brain and upgrading how you learn.”

- 66 [*Game Changers: What Leaders, Innovators, and Mavericks Do to Win at Life*](#) by Dave Asprey, p. 40.
- 67 “[*Dual N-Back Tutorial: Brain Training to Increase IQ*](#)” by Mark Ashton Smith, Ph.D., YouTube.
- 68 [*Algorithms to Live By: The Computer Science of Human Decisions*](#) by Brian Christian, p. 89.
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