



Staying Productive, Healthy, and Happy



A DN lifestyle allows significant flexibility in setting important parameters in your life including how you work, where you work, and when you work. This flexibility can be a big change for those used to the more rigid structures of school and a conventional office job. Thus, it is important that DNs adjust how they treat various aspects of their lives to ensure that they stay productive, healthy and happy.

In this section we will discuss various ways of accomplishing this, including:

- Maintaining a schedule
- Goal setting
- Basics of nutrition and exercise
- and continuing on with 1 real life example to show you how my friend handles some of these same issues

These topics would be an entire course in and of itself. Thus the information in this module is meant to give a brief overview of what is required in these areas to succeed as a DN. Many students will already incorporate various aspects of these

topics into their own professional lives. I recommend that you think about the gaps that remain for you and then look for the various resources available online, and at the end of this section that can help you fill in the gaps that are needed.



Maintaining a Schedule

- DN lifestyle has more independence
- Set your working hours
- Need to get organized
- Ensure important (not just urgent) tasks get finished
- Limit distractions and procrastination
- Ensure you spend time on what matters (goals)



A DN lifestyle gives you greater independence over your work schedule. Many times DNs work asynchronously - that is on a different schedule than their employer or client. Technology such as chat programs - slack, discord, zoom, and the like - or email allow you to communicate often just as effectively as face to face but from a different time zone or even the other side of the world. Many DNs are only required to attend certain mandatory work times for online Zoom or Microsoft Teams meetings.

However, setting your own working hours can be a double edged sword. Rather than having an employer that carefully schedules your day and supervises your work, this requires you to get organized yourself. This can be a large change at first for those who are not used to the personal independence.

Being judged on the results of your work requires you to prioritize your tasks and your time, based on what's most important rather than just what is the most urgent. Distractions and procrastinations have to be managed in order to make sure that you

spend the time on what matters.



Goal setting has been shown to produce a large number of benefits including producing greater productivity, focus, better productivity and more motivation.

Goal setting, particularly SMART goals that are:

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Relevant
and Time Based

can help to revolutionize your mindset, routines, habits and create concrete action steps to move towards what you find is most important for you.

Goals are particularly important for Digital Nomads in order to feel like you are moving closer towards what you feel is important and avoid drifting aimlessly. As discussed in the prior section, being a DN gives greater flexibility and if you have specific goal setting in mind you can ensure that your time is spent moving towards

what is most important for you.

Note that goals don't always have to be completely professional in nature. Your goal as a DN can be to get to know the area where you are living more. In such a case you would have to plan how to travel more while still meeting your job responsibilities.

The section on Resources at the end of this module will have some free resources for students to be able to access and learn more about this.



Focus on Nutrition

- Challenges when travelling
- Limit eating-out and alcohol
- Learn basic cooking and nutrition
 - Dependent on home base
- 80/20 rule is key, not perfection
- "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." Michael Pollan



Being a DN, particularly when away from your home base, often means living in hotels, hostels, or rental properties. These places often have no kitchens, or less-than-ideal kitchens, with limited or unfamiliar accessories. Similarly food shopping can often feel more time consuming when you don't know the neighborhoods or cultures.

Nevertheless, nutrition is the fuel for our bodies and eating well can be the difference longer term between feeling good and being productive, and not feeling like getting out of bed in the morning.

Any longer-term DN, or even business traveler, can tell you that eating out or drinking while traveling needs to be limited carefully as it's too easy to go overboard.

It is very worthwhile to learn a little bit of basic cooking abilities and nutrition knowledge. Some simple oatmeal with fruits in the morning, toast and eggs, or a salad made with local ingredients for lunch, can be good substitutes for eating out

and will allow you stay in optimal health while on the road.

It's also important to set realistic expectations and for the reasons discussed understand that you won't always be able to eat as healthy as you may like. Or that a dessert or beer while traveling can enhance your memory and experience of a trip. Aiming for the 80/20 rule in nutrition, like in many other areas of life, can be optimal between staying healthy and enjoying your lifestyle.

Remember as the author Michael Pollan said "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants."



Basic Exercise

- Benefits of exercise for DNs:
 - Counteract sedentary DN work
 - Improve mood and mental health
 - Improved thinking and focus
 - Lower risk of most diseases
- Focus on some activity each day
- Group activities can be more social and fun!
- Even walking makes a big difference!



DNs, as well as most knowledge workers, spend far too much of their lives sitting. Sitting has been shown to be linked to a number of health issues including:

- obesity and excess body fat
- heart disease and high cholesterol
- diabetes
- stroke

You should aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day. This can help to offset at least some of the risks from sitting for too much. Additionally exercise has other benefits, including:

- managing your weight
- reducing the risk of heart disease
- making you happier
- helping you think

You should focus on at least some activity each day, aiming to get to the 30 minute marker. And remember that even walking increases your heart rate and is a great easy way to see more of the areas that you will be visiting while also helping your

body to stay health.

Another fun alternative is to look for group activities, such as hikes, bike rides, or dance classes to help you both meet new people while getting some needed exercise.



Real Life Story, Continued

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Years as a DN | 5 |
| Occupation | Web Developer |
| Home Base | Ubud, Bali |
| Goals | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue his web development consultancy; he now has 2 remote workers that help him• Work no more than 6-8 hours a day• Exercise daily and keep his health in check |
| Schedule | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works generally Monday to Friday from a local coworking place in Ubud, Bali until mid-afternoon• Weekends are unstructured and travels around the island; generally leaves Bali every 2-3 months for 1-2 weeks |
| Nutrition and Exercise | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No drinking on weeknights• Run or yoga most mornings after waking up |

Continuing the example of my DN friend in Bali. His accomplishments are proof of the benefits of being organized and driven while living the lifestyle that he loves!

He has often talked to me about his goals including:

- growing his web development business in which he now has 2 people working for him
- at the same time achieving a work-life balance to enjoy his lifestyle and not working for more than at most 8 hours each day
- exercising daily - largely through riding his bicycle and doing group yoga classes

His schedule is such that he works Monday to Friday - working the same days to be able to talk to his clients when needed and be in sync with his girlfriend who works at a local firm. Then his weekends are more unstructured where he travels around the island and enjoys his days.

He also limits his trips outside of Bali to every 2-3 months for a week or two. He feels

that Bali is able to provide to him enough of natural beauty and beaches - things that he loves and values - and that vacations are a nice break a few times a year.