I know you might be thinking...50? 50 ways to be a better web designer? I confess, I wouldn't believe it if I hadn't wrote it... I actually never thought that this post would be so massive. In fact, this post idea was originally titled "10 tips for being better at web design".

Lol... I guess it's safe to say that I overshot the project's scope a little bit.

I started my writing process, and I realized that there's a lot more to consider than just code when becoming a good front end developer. Especially if you want to own your own business.

Some of these might surprise you. Some of you might even think "Why is exercising on this list?". Well, I'll tell you why. I am not a machine! No matter how much I want to just sit here and pump out work, eventually I get burned out, and exercising is one of the tools I use that helps me stay focused longer and better.

This list spans many topics, and each of them are an important aspect of making yourself a better Front End Developer and even a better business owner!

**First Some Basics...**

**#1) Be amazing at something**

This very basic, but you'd be surprised at how many developers don't pick an aspect of design or development to excel in. When I was interviewing web developers for the first time, I was asking questions like "What do you think your best strength in web development is?". I was so surprised to hear answers like "html..." and "Ummm... I don't know, I'm pretty well rounded". Needless to say, I was not impressed with these answers and I didn't feel comfortable leaving my clients and my reputation in their hands. So, pick something and be amazing at it! JavaScript, PHP or even designing awesome pop-ups or contact forms...anything is better than nothing! This goes for freelancers, web developers seeking a job, and also the budding agency that's trying to stand out from the crowd.

**#2) Develop "Your" brand**

Even if you are a freelancer, or just looking for a 9 to 5 gig, having Your own "branding" or even "style traits" can go a long ways towards helping you stand out from the crowd. This is where being amazing at something can really come in and help you shine! Having a "Niche" that you specialize in gives you an advantage whenever it's a preference for the job.

**#3) Improve your portfolio**

Improving your portfolio is a great way to show off the new JavaScript library that you've been working on (See my raining webpage example). Your portfolio is, a lot of times, the first introduction a future client or boss will have to you. Why not make it great?! I can't tell you how many times I've heard "yeah, I made my portfolio when I was in college, it needs to be updated." while I was looking for developers to work with on big projects.

**#4) Blog about it**

I was always to scared to do this. After all, who wants to look like a newbie in front of their peers, right?! Then, as I developed into a better business owner, I realized a few key things that really helped me push through my barriers and take action. I realized that there's always going to be somebody better, and there is always going to be someone worse at what you do. You don't need to know everything to be seen as an authority in your niche, you just need to know more than your audience and customers. That's what I'm doing here, my audience (you) and I share the common goal of being a better front end developer. So I'm sharing my experiences and solutions.

**#5) Help your clients understand you**

Make sure you're speaking English when speaking to your clients, or whatever language that they speak. Love it or hate it, a huge part of the job is educating the clients. I often forget that after "Seo optimized", "conversion focused ui" and "Responsive web design breakpoints" my clients eyes glaze over and they get the 1000 yard stare. I try to remember that they just want to know it works, not how it works...

**Learn more about the development languages...**

**#6) Take a community college course...Not crazy good with php or ruby? take a class!**

Education is by far the best investment you'll ever make. Taking a class at a community college is a great way to start or add to your skill set. Most community colleges offer classes for under $600, and most have certificates of completion that are only 3 classes. Investing $1,800 in your skill set that could give you a lifelong career? Sounds like a solid bet to me.

**#7) Know HTML5 Like the back of your hand**

[HTML5 Weekly](file:///C:\xampp\htdocs\FrontEndDeveloper\startbootstrap-blog-post-1.0.3\blog-post.html) is a great resource and has

**#8) CSS3**

Between fonts, coners the box model and shadows, the begining web developer may get pretty over-whelmed. Sometimes, it may result in a "I'll just look it up mentality". *DON'T DO THIS!!* Sure, I still Look things up from time to time, but 95% of the css I use I've tried my damnedest to memorize. If you've ever tried working with someone on a project that has the "look it up" mentality, well... let's just say I was pulling my hair out after ten minutes, and it's not very professional. Even if you use common responsive development frameworks like Bootstrap, media queries is still something you should know well and even memorize the common device breakpoints. [css weekly](file:///C:\xampp\htdocs\FrontEndDeveloper\startbootstrap-blog-post-1.0.3\blog-post.html) is one of many resourses I look at from time to time to stay on top of me CSS game.

**#9) JavaScript**

- libraries - JavaScript weekly

**#10) jQuery**

This is a staple for every [front end developer](http://www.front-end-developer-josh.com/), there's no way around it.

**Deployment and testing basics...**

**#11) Understand the breakpoints for common devices**

I mentioned it above, but it is a real testament to your professionalism to have a strong working knowledge of break points that work best for common devices

**#12) truly fluid vs media queries**

**#13) common browser bugs and nuisances**

**#14) Use a broken link checker**

I used to think that this was common sense, but I recently had a chat with someone who thought it was funny to check every link by hand... For the love of god use a tool like this [broken link checker chrome extension](file:///C:\xampp\htdocs\FrontEndDeveloper\startbootstrap-blog-post-1.0.3\blog-post.html) or [Xenuth](file:///C:\xampp\htdocs\FrontEndDeveloper\startbootstrap-blog-post-1.0.3\blog-post.html) to check the entire site at once. End Rant.

**Learn how to use pre-processors**

**#15) Sass**

sass sass sass

**#16) Less**

less less less

**#17) CoffeeScript**

CoffeeScript Rant here

**#18) PHP**

This is funny... a preprocessor for the Hypertext Preprocessor scripting language (PHP)... [POD, the PHP preprocessor](file:///C:\xampp\htdocs\FrontEndDeveloper\startbootstrap-blog-post-1.0.3\geal.github.io\pod\). Geoffroy Couprie blah blah blah

**Get intimate with some frameworks & CMS's**

(It sounds dirty because it is...no, really...this is where you get your hands dirty...)

**#19) Bootstrap**

If you haven't heard of Bootstrap by now, It's time to crawl out from under your rock and check it out.

**#20) Wordpress**

I recently worked with a client that Thought he was "pretty good" with coding... It was a nightmare

**#21) Joomla**

Joomla is lie the middle child of the cms world.

**#22) Drupal**

If Joomla is the cms middle child, then Drupal is the blacksheep misunderstood and hardly tolerated third child of the CMS community...lol

**Make your work flow Methodical & Repeatable**

**#23) Make sure you have a workflow...**

every step in your business should be mapped out and documented. Everything from how you get your clients to how you handle and schedule their website updates.

**#24) Don't say yes to every job**

When you first start out, it's easy to just take any job that comes your way, for me the excitment of making money with my skills was enough to turn me Super-Sayian, but, by the 5th crap job and the 2nd wy that you've been ripped off, you see the gleaming red flags a mile away.

**#25) Plan your business tasks well**

I believe it was Abraham Lincon who said "Give me six hours to chop down a tree, and I'll spend the first four sharpening the axe...". #23 is a part of this, but #25 is broader and even more important. I'm referring to planning the tasks that you have to complete in order to keep your business thriving. Set aside specific blocks of time for your various business tasks like social media, seo, client outreach, cold calling or whatever else you do to keep your pipeline full of prospects. Balance this with your client workflow, invoicing/accounting, family life and your self-care.

**#26) Schedule your client check-ins**

Having Client check ins at appointed times and dates might be your style or not, but it sure saves a lot of mess. It's great to communicate with your client and using a schedule ensures that you're not answering the phone every 10 minutes to answer questions, about different projects, from different clients. Nothing makes having a workflow impossible like the phone ringing 8 times, having 8 conversations about 8 different projects in two hours... except for having your kids in the room while you work...lol.

**#27) Realistic working hours**

Being Realistic about your work hour will save you about 15 headaches. Not only do you need to be realistic about the amount of work hours you can do per day, but, you need to be realistic about how much you can get done in that time period as well.

**Optimize your work environment**

**#28) Keep your work environment clean**

jhgjhg

**#29) Keep your work environment organized**

jhgjhb

**#30) Keep your work enviroment free of distractions**

ktdfghdr

**#31) Keep your work enviroment comfortable**

ljhbkhb

**Have some collaboration efficiency, standards, and organization**

**Know how to use Grub**

ljhbkhb

**Know how to use Github**

ljhbkhb

**Know how to use Trello**

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**Have good self care habbits**

**keep a good work schedule**

ljhbkhb reminder tools: Google calendar; Evernote.

**keep a good sleep schedule**

ljhbkhb

**keep a good eating schedule**

ljhbkhb

**eat healthy**

ljhbkhb

**workout on a regular basis**

ljhbkhb

**20-20-20 rule**

ljhbkhb

**Participate in perpetual learning and betterment**

**stay abreast of new trends-- Responsive design weekly; sidebar.io; web design weekly**

ljhbkhb

**get a mentor**

ljhbkhb

**read web design blogs**

ljhbkhb

**listen to web design podcasts-- Shoptalk Podcast, apply Filters Podcast, Boagworld Podcast.**

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**look for design inspiration on a regular basis**

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**keep a Pintrest board of ideas**

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**look for other design posts on social media**

ljhbkhb

**go to design and developer meet-ups**

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**participate in online forums-stack overflow-any with no comments**

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**honest peer review of work from developer friends.**

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**Use snippet sites for inspiration**

**codepen.io**

**boot**

**Be proud and show off your work**

**dribble**

ljhbkhb

**review sites**

ljhbkhb

**awwwards**

ljhbkhb

**business & growth**

**Stay on top of your invoicing**

ljhbkhb

**client management**

ljhbkhb

**widen your range of clients**

ljhbkhb

**outreach tracking**

ljhbkhb

**Employ legal help**

ljhbkhb

**Make and use a contract**

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