

# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO PRODUCTIVITY



Productivity is the foundation of success. It is the ability to effectively utilise tools and resources to generate progress and underpins the outcome of all opportunities. While it is widely understood that productivity is hugely important, cultivating and sustaining productivity can sometimes prove challenging.

This guide will explore the deeper, holistic aspects that significantly influence productivity as well as some surface-level strategies to complete tasks.

In part one we delve into cultivating the ability to be productive. In part two we go back to the surface and highlight some strategies for task completion.

# PART ONE

## CULTIVATING PRODUCTIVITY

# PURPOSE

## Find Your 'Why'

Purpose refers to underlying meaning, it is the 'why' behind doing something. A lot of what we do can feel innately purposeful, like eating, maintaining relationships and completing tasks that connect to our passions.

On the other hand, some tasks can be more difficult to find the underlying meaning of, and harder to feel motivated for.

Finding your "why" is essential to unlocking full potential. Purpose provides a sense of direction and intrinsic motivation and acts as a guide towards meaningful goals. It connects the completion of tasks to a bigger picture, enhancing focus, innovation, and drive to continue.





# Uncovering the 'why'

It's easy to find purpose in things that feel important to us.

Here are three strategies to uncover the 'why' in a task that doesn't immediately ignite passion.

## 1. Connect Your Core Values

Core values are personal guiding principles that shape our beliefs and behaviours. Knowing our core values allows us to connect external actions to internal beliefs. You can find these by reflecting on what matters to you, your meaningful experiences and the people who inspire you. Core values examples include; integrity, openness, compassion, success, freedom, creativity, wisdom, family, courage.

Aligning the outcome of a task with core values can bring purpose to those that don't immediately ignite passion.

For example, if one of your core values is success, completing a task that helps in building success aligns with what you truly value.

## 2. Look At The Bigger Picture

By considering how a task, role or job contributes to overarching goals or fits into a larger project can help create a narrative of purpose.

Focus on overarching goals such as project completion or progression and achievement. Looking at a task as a component of this can easily giving meaning to completing it as well as making it seem smaller and more manageable.

## 3. Growth Mindset or Gamify

Adopting a growth mindset allows you to view every task as an opportunity for learning and personal growth. By embracing the idea that the 'why' behind any task is to acquire knowledge, purpose can be found in even the most mundane tasks.

Gamifying tasks is another way to ignite purpose. Viewing a task as a game can ignite fun or challenge. There are many ways to gamify tasks; such as creating time challenges, competitions or deciding a reward for task completion.

## Mental Health and Productivity

Mental health refers to vitality of the mind and how our thoughts and feelings are operating. Many people experience poor mental health at some point throughout life. We can all have some days that feel better than others. With good mental health we are able to work to our full potential, maintain positive relationships and cope with challenges.

Mental health plays a crucial role in productivity. Poor mental health can diminish focus and performance, while taking care of mental well-being can enhance productivity and overall work experience.



# Taking Care of Mental Health

Mental Health is important for our capacity to be productive.

Here are three strategies to support your mental health to enhance productivity.

## 1. Check In With Yourself Often

Self-reflection is a powerful tool. It can enlighten us to what we think, how we feel and how we behave. Often, it can be when things become too much, overwhelming or broken that thoughts and feelings are finally addressed. Checking in with yourself regularly can help to prevent the escalation of poor mental health.

Take time to assess your thoughts, feelings, and behaviours through tools such as mindfulness, journalling, meditation and talking with trusted people. The insight gained through self reflection can also help us to know if the way we are living is aligned with our values and aspirations, both of which are important components in mental well-being and productivity.

## 2. Prioritise Physical Health

Physical health and mental health are interconnected. A healthy body supports mental energy, resilience, stress management, and focus.

Taking care of diet, sleep and exercise facilitate overall health. Eating well ensures that the body and brain are able to perform. Adequate sleep facilitates rest, recovery and recharging for our brains. Exercise is a natural way for the body and brain to have an enhanced sense of well-being and clarity.

## 3. Lean on Your Support Network

Don't hesitate to seek support from those you trust when facing challenges. This could be colleagues, friends, family, or professionals.

Their insights, assistance, and listening ear can help to provide balance and ignite clarity in your thoughts and feelings.

Building a strong support system at work and in your personal life can contribute to a healthier and more productive mindset.

## Rest and Productivity

Rest is often underestimated but is another important component of productivity. Rest is how we recharge our batteries, ensuring there is enough energy to perform at our best.

Ideas need time to incubate and great ideas are often generated when the brain is wandering. Taking breaks, getting enough sleep, and engaging in enjoyable activities can revitalise the mind and body, foster creativity, and act as a buffer against burnout.



# How To Incorporate Rest

Preventing our batteries from running on empty is vital for peak productivity.

Here are three strategies that ensure rest is incorporated in and around the day.

## 1. Sleep and Relaxation

Quality sleep is the foundation of productivity. It enhances problem-solving abilities, focus, memory, and decision-making skills. Cultivate good sleep habits and aim to consistently get an amount of sleep that leaves you feeling refreshed.

On top of sleep, intentional relaxation techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, or yoga can help recharge your mind and body. This can help the brain to approach daily tasks with a more clear and fresh outlook.

## 2. Taking Time Off

Taking breaks and time away from work is essential for maintaining productivity. It allows you to recharge, gain fresh perspectives, and facilitates the prevention of burnout.

Utilise flexible working arrangements and plan ahead to ensure you have dedicated time off to focus on other aspects of life.

## 3. Enjoyable Activities

Though work can be enjoyable, engaging in activities outside of work that bring joy and fulfilment can help to recharge and energise us.

Whatever it is that you enjoy, whether it's hobbies, socialising, reading, travelling, or sports, these activities can provide a break from work. By finding personal fulfilment outside of work, you can enhance your innovation, creativity and productivity when you return to your tasks.



# PART TWO

## TASK COMPLETION STRATEGIES



Addressing the holistic aspects of productivity is important to build a foundation to be able to meet all tasks with more focus, clarity and innovation. Individual tasks can come with their own challenges.

Here are 8 ways to generate more immediate productivity to facilitate the completion of individual tasks.

# 1. REMOVE DISRACTIONS

It's easy to reach for the phone to check the time and end up scrolling through social media for the next two hours. It can be helpful to put smartphones away until tasks are complete or a dedicated break time. If this isn't possible, perhaps turn off notifications or distracting apps.

Remove other distractions such as TV, noise or socialising until the task is complete.



# 2. TIME BOXING

Dedicate a certain amount of time to the task before a break. If it's a short task, give yourself a certain amount of time to complete the task and stick to it.

If it's a larger task, give yourself certain timeframes, such as 20 minute intervals to complete bouts of work before taking structured rest time. Ensure that you stick to the time boxing and hold yourself accountable. This will help reduce procrastination and encourage focus.

# 3. REWARD

Give yourself an incentive to complete the task. Reward yourself with something you enjoy after completing the task or at certain milestones.

Don't allow yourself this reward without the completion goal that you have set yourself and use this incentive to fuel productivity.



# 4. MINDFULNESS

Take a short time away from the task for a quick mindfulness session. This can help to clear the mind in a short space of time, enhancing clarity and energy for focus.

Short mindfulness options can include breathing exercises, focusing on an object, listening to Yoga Nidra or guided meditation.

# 5. SMALL STEPS

Break the task up into smaller bitesize chunks. Some tasks can feel daunting and large. Looking at ways of breaking the task up into sections or shorter steps can help the task feel more manageable.

This can be combined with time boxing and reward incentives to help enhance productivity further.



# 6. PEAK TIMES

Our bodies naturally operate on cycles of higher and lower alertness. Perhaps you feel energised and focused in the morning and work better during early hours. Or perhaps you feel more energy in the afternoon or evening.

Analyse your own rhythm and the times that suit you better for creating your best work, or try different timings to find what fits. Once you know this information, utilise the times where you feel more alert for productivity.



# 7. EXERCISE

If you have time, taking a break to do some exercise can re-energise focus. This includes any form of movement such as taking a walk, going to the gym or for a run.

Exercise can help by increasing mental clarity and creating space within mind and body. After a bout of exercise, the body can feel more relaxed and able to maintain mental focus on a task.

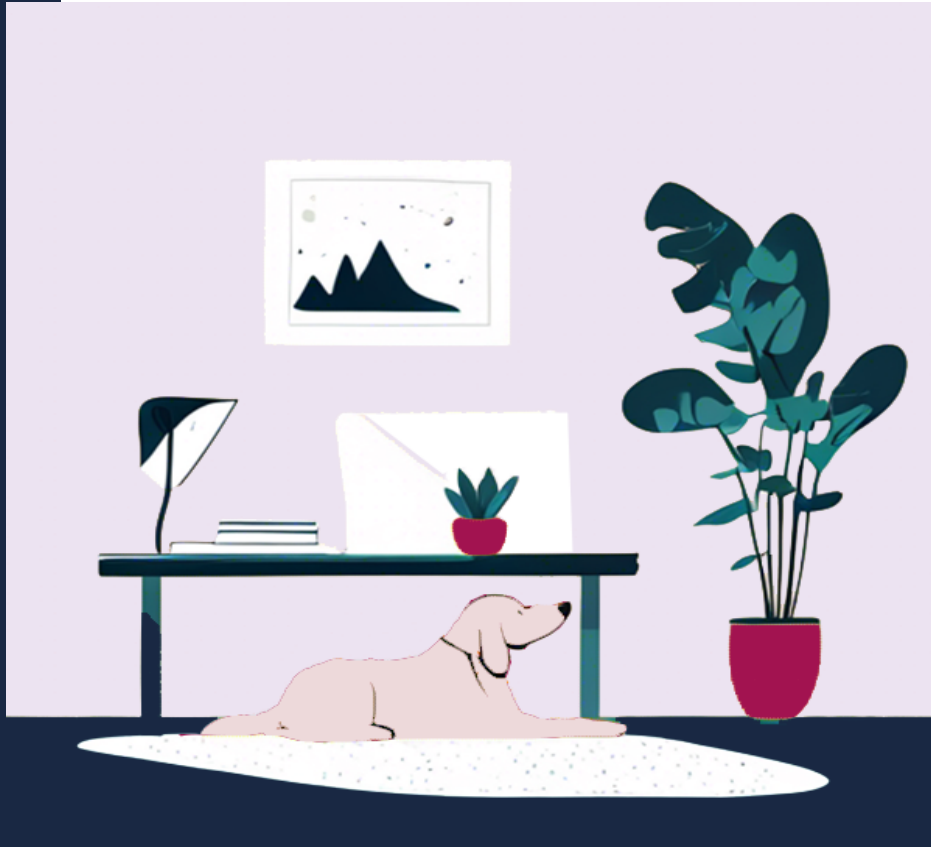


# 8. ENVIRONMENT

Try to work in an environment where you can perform at your best. Ensure that you are comfortable and that your setup is suited to how you work.

Factors that contribute to environment include silence, sound, people, lighting, organisation, temperature, indoors, outdoors, seated and standing. Understanding what environmental factors help you to propel will enable your best chances of focus and productivity.





Productivity is generated through a combination of personal factors and immediate task strategies.

The capacity to be productive goes deeper than the surface level and can fluctuate depending on task, timing, personal feelings, health and restfulness.

Cultivating the internal well-being to boost productivity helps build a strong foundation for success. Using task completion strategies for individual tasks or when energy feels low can accelerate getting the work done.

Visit our website for more information about productivity, well-being and tips on optimising the workplace:

[www.empathrive.com](http://www.empathrive.com)

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