

7 Tips For Making The Most Of Your Online Work Time



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Jennifer Hazlett
Certified Online Business Manager
AltAdmin Online Business Management
27-1300 King Street East, Box 107
Oshawa, ON L1H 8J4
905-809-5809
jen@altadmin.ca

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7 Tips For Making The Most Of Your Online Work Time

Why do some people move mountains online in a day... and others end up wondering where the time went?

Good work habits are the factor that makes all the difference.

But -- face it -- "good work habits" sounds so boring. You're beginning to grit your teeth already.

Making the most of your online work time is worth the effort, however: If you don't believe me, take a moment to imagine yourself finishing that project in three days, instead of five.

What could you do with those extra two days?

But it's not just about the quantity of time you spend working online... it's also about the quality. Developing strong online work habits can increase the quality of the time you spend online in immeasurable and positive ways.

Working efficiently helps you to:

- Produce better and more well-thought-out projects
- Raise your own self esteem
- Gain confidence in your own professionalism
- Increase physical and emotional energy (Yes! It really does!)
- De-clutter your mind
- Increase your mental clarity and focus

- Enjoy what you're doing a lot more
- Find tasks easier to manage
- Make fewer mistakes

But even if you're not ready for the Big Overhaul, here are seven solid tips that will help you enjoy some of the above benefits -- right away!

Ready?

1. Identify your easiest tasks -- Whenever you're about to tackle any sort of change to routine, it's best and most encouraging to start out by listing what you love about your online work day.

- Make an actual list of all the things you do that you really enjoy - especially those activities that put you "in the zone", making time seem to fly by. (Important: Consider EVERY activity you normally do during online work time -- even if that's playing Solitaire.)
- Weed out any activity that is not legitimately work-related. (Move it to a **separate list** -- we'll need this shortly.)
- Prioritize the remaining activities in order of importance
- Put a tick beside (or highlight in yellow) any activity that **directly makes you money**
- Put an "X" beside (or highlight in blue) any activity that is **not directly billable to a specific client** -- the "maintenance" activities like cleaning out your inbox, for example.

Even if you don't have time or feel too pressured to overhaul your work life completely, this will allow you to tackle your "money makers" first -- then see how many "maintenance" tasks you can fit into the rest of your day.

2. Identify your most hated tasks -- If you actually made the list in Tip #1, you will be on a roll now, so you'll have less trouble facing this. Once you've compiled your list of "drudge tasks", think about each one and ask the following questions:

- "Why am I having so much trouble with this task? Do I feel inadequate or overwhelmed? Is it just boring or outside of my skills and interests?"
- "How can I eliminate this task? Will my business survive if I do?"
- "Who can I outsource or delegate this task to? What would it cost me? What benefit will doing so bring?"
- "If I decide I need to keep doing it, what could make it more fun or easier to manage? Changing the time of day I tackle it? Giving myself a reward when I finish? Putting music on? Tackling it in smaller increments, such as daily instead of weekly; or only working on it for fifteen minutes at a time? Setting a timer?"

Once you've thought about these questions and their answers, you may find yourself with a clearer vision on (a) how to better handle them (b) whether or not you need to do them at all and finally (c) where they fit in, and what you can do to make them easier and more enjoyable.

- 3. Identify distractions** -- The sad truth is that most of us plan our work days as if they are always going to run ideally. No telemarketer is going to call; a plumbing crisis is not going to need addressed and your daughter is not going to fall at school and break a tooth (yes, it happened!)

While the latter is admittedly a once-in-a-lifetime emergency, what you want to look out for particularly is the sort of distraction that occurs on a regular basis -- the ones that de-rail you on a daily basis.

And these can include the most pleasurable distractions.

For example, if you're a Facebook addict who habitually spends an extra hour or so chatting or checking out links after you've posted your daily post, schedule Facebook for the end of your workday, rather than the beginning.

And if that leaves you sweating with anxiety -- you're sure you'll miss that important private message that just might come in -- try **moving your Facebook or browser shortcut from your desktop to a folder in "My Documents"**. (It's amazing how dramatically that anxiety subsides, once you have to go to the trouble of opening folders to find your browser link.)

TIP: Keep ONE browser for social networking... and keep your other browser for all other online uses.

That's an admittedly inconvenient and drastic strategy -- but it *does* work, when it comes to reducing "Facebook Anxiety". (Or Twitter... Or email...) And you can easily re-instate your browser desktop shortcut, once you've created new, strong work habits.

The same goes for email: If you find yourself fatally side-tracked into answering messages instead of working, there is more than one strategy you can use to ensure that doesn't happen. Schedule your email activities for the end of the day, rather than the beginning... or use a timer with a bell (online or offline) and work on emails for **exactly the same amount of time per day**... at the same time of day. (Doing things at the same time every day, for the same amount of time, is the best way to turn an activity into a habit -- and habits are what keep us compulsive about certain activities, so use this tendency for "good".)

- 4. Set goals you can reach** -- Break projects down into bite-sized components; then schedule and tackle those components in a manageable number per day.

If you find you've over-estimated the number of "bites" you can manage in a day -- reduce them, one by one, until you've hit on the perfect number. (This will also help you price projects accurately, when you're preparing an estimate for a prospective client.)

If a long-term goal seems unattainable, the surest way to change that and bring it **emotionally within reach** -- a very important part of creating success -- is to break it down into easier, short term steps.

5. **Re-evaluate your daily priorities** -- If overwhelm is a big problem for you, pick just **three, single priority tasks per day**... and tackle those first, before you do anything else. (You'll be amazed at how much easier the rest of your day will flow.)

If you're a chronic "learner", spending time listening to tutorials and webinars or watching "how to" videos, limit these to a **specific number of minutes or hours per day** -- and set this for a **specific time**. (E.G. One hour after lunch, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.)

TIP: If a live webinar is happening outside of your daily "learning" period, check to see if it offers a recording. If so, download the recording and schedule it for your next "learning break".

And speaking of which...

6. **Take breaks** -- You'll produce your best work if you remember that it's all about balance in:
- Your emotional life
 - Your personal life
 - Your work life

Make sure you get up from the computer at regular intervals. Stretch, go look out the window, make yourself a cup of tea, go water the plants. Anything that gets you away from that computer!

Some people find it helps to **schedule small, regular household tasks** into each day as bona-fide "work breaks". For example, we just mentioned watering the plants. Or you could fold the towels, or fill the bird feeder. Working these tasks into your schedule makes them feel less like chores or distractions and helps make you feel more organized.

(And the chores get done!)

Some people swear by an **exercise break**, part way through the day. A quick jog around the block or twenty-minute walk instead of a cup of tea cooling on your desk while you "accidentally" resume working can help your brain release endorphins and can oxygenate your blood cells and refresh your muscles. If that feels like too much of a disruption, ten minutes of stretching exercises or Yoga can accomplish much the same thing.

Take a **music break** -- Have a folder with links to favorite YouTube videos handy and listen to one or two. It's astonishing how much a music break can uplift and refresh.

Music breaks are particularly effective if you're tackling a high stress project. And if you're too antsy to passively listen to music, have music playing in the background as you work!

Well-scheduled, quality breaks allow you to:

- Keep your sense of humour
- Feel less stressed
- Be more "in the moment" and notice the world around you
- Sleep better at night (believe it or not)
- "Distance" yourself from the forest. (Studies have actually shown if you keep working on a project for long, uninterrupted periods of time, you are more likely to veer off on tangents or miss important segments altogether.)

- 7. Recognize your rhythms** -- Every single person has an optimum time of day when they produce their best work, as well as a minimal time of day when they are most likely to fight the tendency to doze off or make mistakes. Fit your work around these periods -- and do your best to ensure your "peak" periods aren't interrupted by unnecessary distractions.

So if you're a bookkeeper for example, don't schedule an exercise break for 10 a.m. if this is when your mathematical powers are at their peak.

And don't take phone calls or check your emails during your "peak" period. They'll almost certainly jolt you out of your zone, if not downright distract and de-rail.

Also recognize other factors that affect your rhythms. For instance, if you have to be alert and on the ball for a live webinar you're running the next morning at 8 a.m., don't start watching a movie at 11 p.m. Get some rest instead!

And if you always get a migraine the day before a deadline, schedule your work time so you finish the project a day or two early. (Allowing "wiggle room" into every project should be a given.)

Implement these seven tips all at once... or one or two at a time. Even adding one of these simple strategies -- such as scheduling *quality* breaks regularly into your day -- can improve your online productivity.

And make your workday much more fun!

Turn The Page For More Tips and Resources > > >

Want More Tips and Resources?

I have so many more tips and resources I could share with you today but we've come to the end of this report.

To get more of the same great info I invite you to:

> **Check out my blog.** Visit <http://www.altadmin.ca/blog> where I post regularly.

> **Check out my free monthly ezine.** Watch your inbox for “**Home Sweet Home Office**”. Written from the perspective of my life as a home based business owner, you'll get practical and simple tips and tricks and no cost or low cost tools and resources - all to help you and your small business to be more effective, organized, efficient and profit-generating. It's a great way for me to keep in touch with you and continue to provide you with relevant and useful information and ways to make your workday much more fun! 😊

> **Check out my 6-week self-study course.** Take it one step further with “**Just Say NO To Work-at-Home Stress And Get Organized For Success! The Program That Gives You Everything You Need To Know To Reduce Stress, Increase Productivity And Enjoy Owning A Successful Business**”.

<http://www.altadmin.ca/services/say-no-to-stress>

It is a training program with lessons and exercises to complete each week. By the end of the full training you will have learned strategies and taken action steps for **reducing stress and getting organized for a more balanced business & personal life**. When the groundwork is done you will have built yourself your very own customized schedule to follow.

You can grab this course for a limited time for just \$67.00. That's **\$30 off the Regular Price** of \$97. **Use Coupon Code: NOSTRESS** to receive your **discount**. Coupon expires Jan 31, 2017.

For more information or to purchase this training go to:

<http://www.altadmin.ca/services/say-no-to-stress>

There are six lessons to this e-course. It is a self-study delivered by email, one lesson per week for six weeks, including exercises to help you implement what you learn :)

BONUS To complement the work in this e-course, I have included bonuses between lessons. We'll do an exercise on mindset and another on simple solutions to some common problem home office scenarios. And you'll receive accountability emails from me to keep you on track.

This program is for those of you who are serious about learning how to be in charge of your time and getting a handle on stress so you can achieve and maintain a more effective, organized and efficient, profit-generating business.

Here's the link to enrol now and start taking action:

<http://www.altadmin.ca/services/say-no-to-stress>

If you're working toward alleviating your stress, gaining control of your time and productivity and you know this program is for you, then enrol now to start making positive change in your business and your life.

I look forward to connecting with you again soon!

Warmly,



Jennifer Hazlett, Certified Online Business Manager
AltAdmin Online Business Management
<http://www.altadmin.ca>