



It's impossible to implement all of these hacks into your life, and not all of them will apply to your specific situation, anyway.. So, try this -- choose three hacks to implement now. Rock them. Make them habits. Repeat this until several of the productivity hacks below are habits.

KNOW WHAT YOU'RE AFTER SO THAT YOU CAN PLAN WELL FOR THE LONG HAUL:

1. Be aware of your life priorities. When asked to participate in or help with something, decide for or against participation by comparing the event or task to your priorities - does it fit within them?
2. Work backwards from the end of your life - think about where you want to be when you die, then plan goals now that allow you to actually accomplish those things before the end of your life.
3. Write a personal mission statement or list out your personal values. What are you passionate about? What can you do better than most people? What do you want people to say about you at your funeral? How do you want to impact others? What's your "why?" Then be sure that the tasks and events that make up your life are a reflection of this mission statement.
4. Before starting a task, speak your "why" out loud.
5. Seek advice from those who know more than you. Find a mentor – ask someone in your field, or someone who has obtained the goal (or parts of it) that you're after, to fill this position in your life.

PLAN OUT YOUR WEEK:

6. Think in 168 hours (weekly) before thinking in 24 hours (daily).
7. When planning your time, create separate events on your calendar for your commute - this will help you arrive on time to events and avoid overscheduling.
8. Be mindful of where your time is going. Do a "time audit" of yourself for a week. Keep track of how you spend your time each day. At the end of the week, evaluate how well you used your time and aim to cut out the unnecessary tasks or "time wasters" for the next week (note - resting or "doing nothing" is encouraged - just make sure you are doing these things purposefully.)
9. Beware of idle time - idle time can suck our motivation. Again, resting and relaxing is encouraged, but when it's planned, we tend to be more purposeful with it than when we happen to stumble upon it.
10. Block time for the most important things on your calendar before other people do (play offense!).
11. Do a "Sunday Brain Dump." Write down everything that needs to happen that week, then prioritize.
12. At the end of the week, assess what completed by looking at the scheduled events or tasks on your calendar. Did you get done what you needed to? Why or why not? Use this information to change how you approach some tasks.

PLAN OUT YOUR DAY:

13. Follow the "two-minute rule" as you're planning your day. If you think of a necessary task that takes less than two minutes, Complete it immediately rather than planning it into your day. If the task takes longer than two minutes, plan for it later.
14. Create checklists for everything. Checking things off of a list releases dopamine into the brain, which gives you motivation.
15. Add sub-to-do's to your to-do list. Write out the steps to each to do. Do this at the start of your day each day.
16. Sort tasks by "must, should, and want," then tackle the tasks in necessary order.
17. Label your tasks as "energizing, neutral or draining" then schedule the draining tasks at times when you are most energized

or plan to work on them in an environment that will help them to be less exhausting.

18. Measure your results, not your time. A recent study found that "placing importance on hours and physical presence over action and results leads to a culture of inefficiency and anxiety." If you are an hourly-worker, shift your mindset to a project based-mindset, rather than a time-based-mindset. You will still work your required hours, but you will get more done.

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS THE NIGHT BEFORE OR MORNING OF:

19. Avoid "Decision Fatigue," which is defined as the deteriorating quality of decisions made by an individual after a long session of decision making. This can lead to irrational decisions and poor choices. Remove trivial choices from the parts of the day when you have the most energy. For example, lay out your clothes for the next day late at night when you're already tired. This decision does not require a lot of energy, so make it when you don't have any.
20. Take care of yourself and do things that bring you joy before the rest of the world wakes up and starts demanding your time.
21. Create a bedtime routine that makes you look forward to winding down. This could involve drinking your favorite tea, reading a fun magazine, doing stretches that relax you, or lying in bed and listening to soothing music.

GET YOUR REST:

22. Schedule in regular time to "do nothing" or rest - treat this time like a meeting with someone else so that you don't skip it.
23. Schedule in play and social time to life. This is absolutely crucial to being productive in the rest of life!
24. Figure out what "productive rest" means to you. There's a difference between "productive rest" and "escape rest." Productive rest involves engaging your mind in a way that recharges you, and brings you joy. For example, if you love cooking, productive rest could mean trying out a new recipe (where for someone else, that could be work and tire them out). "Escape rest" is not really restful at all. An example of this is watching a TV show by yourself for five hours so you can temporarily turn off the challenging thoughts in your mind. This often tires us out even more.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH:

25. Sleep seven to eight hours every night. Lack of sleep leads to an average of 11.3 days of lost productivity each year.
26. Go to sleep at the same time every night and wake up at the same time every morning (Challenge: Do this on weekends!)
27. Exercise regularly (you know this). Some tricks to making this a habit include exercising with friends or creating tiny habits that lead to an increase in difficulty. For example, start by running for two minutes a day, then increase to three, then four, etc. Start by exercising one day a week for 30 minutes. Do this for consistently, then add on an additional 30 minutes, etc.
28. Invest in a reusable water bottle you love and drink six to 10 cups of water each day.
29. Incorporate superfoods into your day, like blueberries, nuts, broccoli, avocado, mango, dark chocolate, green tea, chia seeds, and pumpkin seeds. If you enjoy heavy meals, opt to eat them at dinner rather than at lunch. This will keep you from getting groggy and sleepy after downing a BBQ sandwich and fries at lunchtime.
30. Cook at the start of the week, then divide the food into containers/bags that allow you to grab your lunch easily.
31. Limit your caffeine intake. If you are a caffeine lover, start limiting it in increments. Allow yourself to have your normal caffeine intake before noon. Then after 12 p.m., switch to decaf, or tea. Keep limiting the caffeine until you're down to one cup or so in the mornings. Also, short walks, breathing exercises, apples (the natural sugar in apples is what does it), spending a few minutes outside, taking breaks throughout the day and physical exercise are great caffeine replacements.

GENERATE ENERGY:

32. Know that managing your energy is just as important as managing your time.
33. Use the Calm app or Headspace app to meditate daily.
34. When needed, take a 20 or 30-minute nap. This boosts performance by 34%.
35. Eat these foods to boost your energy while working: Edamame (the crunch mimics the crunch of M&Ms or Skittles, and they are around the same size), apples + some kind of organic/sugar-free nut butter, almonds or nuts, hard boiled eggs, sunflower or pumpkin seeds, and/or dairy free/organic dark chocolate.
36. Rest your eyes. Do not look at a screen for longer than an hour at a time.
37. Consider working some on weekends when there is less pressure to get things done and less work-related interruptions. Consider scheduling in two hours to work on that one thing that could stress you out the next week.

CREATE AN IDEAL WORK ENVIRONMENT:

38. Use "noisli.com," to create the ideal vocal environment that helps you focus most - mix sounds like rain or nature noises.
39. Use "coffitivity.com" to work to the sounds of a peaceful cafe or coffee shop.
40. Sit by a window when working, when possible.
41. Work in an environment that's 70 to 77 degrees, ideally.
42. Know the best environment for you - the way the room looks and feels affects you whether you think it does or not.
43. Use plants, air fresheners or open windows to spark a smell that gives you positive thoughts.
44. Use music strategically. Your brain multitasks when you listen to music with words and work on a project simultaneously.
45. Communicate more by talking rather than emailing. Make quick phone and conference calls. A 30-minute meeting session can save you up to three or four days of delay communicating over email.
46. Get rid of the clutter in the room you're working in, even if this means moving it into a hallway, or stuffing it in a corner and throwing a blanket over it.

STAY FOCUSED:

47. Focus on one thing at a time. Focus only on one task during a 50-minute work slot. If you finish that task, move onto another. If you don't finish the task during a 50-minute work slot, and you're braindead, consider completing it during a later 50 minute slot rather than during the following slot.
48. Work thematically. When working on a project, do all tasks related to that one project in one slot of time. For example, instead of planning a slot of time to check your email, plan a slot of time to complete this particular project, during which you check only your email for that project.
49. Do a "dead battery sprint." See how much you can get done in the entire life of a battery on your computer.
50. Use "Rescue Timer." This tool tracks time spent on different apps and websites to give you an accurate picture of your day so that you are aware of where your time is going. It helps you monitor if you're being productive or wasting time.
51. Make sure meetings have a strict time limit to them.
52. Use "Get Pocket" or "InstaPaper" to save helpful websites you come across and want to read later. This way, you won't read them in the moment, distracting you from the task or project on which you're currently working.
53. Transition well from activity to activity. Do not let the events and thoughts from the last activity blur into the next one.

54. Set up triggers to help you with your transitions. For example, when you're about to walk into the front door after work, say to yourself, "I can't wait to see my family/roommates!" or when you shift from one meeting to the next, breath and bounce in place, telling yourself "this next group needs me on my A game!"
55. Start your day with a "power hour." Get in those tough projects and "deep work" before your brain melts.

TAKE BREAKS:

56. Take a break from work every 50 minutes. As soon as your butt hits a chair (etc.), set a timer on your phone for 50 minutes.
57. During your work breaks, do not look at a screen. Be sure to breathe deeply, drink water, go for a walk (even if it's around the office), get outside if you can, and consider meditating.
58. If you have a flexible work schedule or work remotely, consider working alongside another friend who has a similar schedule. This will allow you to take breaks together, working in some social time, which can refresh the brain. If you work in an office with co-workers, find time throughout the week to work alongside someone. As you all take small breaks throughout the day, take them together.
59. If you are in a season of work that involves working long hours, split shifts. Try to leave work at a reasonable hour, spend time with your family or on your personal life, then dial back into work. Do this rather than working all of your long hours at once.

ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS:

60. Turn off email when working on larger projects.
61. If you get distracted by things not related to the task you're doing (for example, you think of texting a friend, or you remember you need an additional ingredient for dinner, etc.) make a list of these thoughts on a piece of paper. Later, schedule in a time to "work on the distraction list" to complete those tasks.
62. Turn off your Wi-Fi when working on big-picture (or any kind of) tasks that don't involve internet use.
63. Move distracting apps to the last page of your phone. Or, consider deleting some of them for a period of time to eliminate the habit of checking them when you have a short break.
64. Use the app "SelfControl" to block you from time-sink websites, or "StayFocusd" to limit your time on certain websites.
65. Turn off phone notifications.
66. Stop trying to empty your inbox. If you treat your inbox like a to-do list, tasks of lower-priority can end up controlling your day. It has not been proven that those who have a "zero inbox" are the most successful.
67. Use a whiteboard to help solve problems. Visualizing complex problems will increase your ability to solve them.

AVOID PROCRASTINATION AND PERFECTIONISM:

68. Get it done first, make it perfect later.
69. Do your "procrastinated to-do list" when you have the most energy. For many people, this is the beginning of the workday. "Eat a live frog first thing in the morning and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of your day." -Mark Twain
70. If you need to work on an undesirable or complex task (and it's giving you anxiety or dread), try working on it for 50 minutes right before you work on a fun task or have a fun event on the schedule.
71. If you're struggling to get started on a big task, work on the small to-do's within that task for just 10 minutes. This will give you some headway and will spark dopamine in your brain, giving you more confidence to continue.

72. Keep a "done list," or a record of all of the tasks you have completed. This not only allows you to search finished projects, but seeing a list of your accomplishments can stir up motivation.
73. To flip all of this on its head, take advantage of procrastination. "Parkinson's Law" states "if you wait until the last minute, it only takes a minute to do." In other words, "tasks expand to the time allotted." This is the idea that shorter deadlines for tasks provide great leverage for efficiency. Sometimes we don't shift into high gear until a deadline is in the near future.
74. Watch a couple of YouTube videos at work. Studies show that this type of procrastination can be good, as zoning out for a bit can help you get your concentration back when your brain is tired.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SHORTCUTS:

75. Increase your mouse or trackpad speed on your computer.
76. Think of the programs you use most on your computer (i.e., Microsoft Word or email). Then schedule in time to learn the keyboard shortcuts identified with these programs.
77. Learn to type at least 80 words/minute - take typing tests to get faster (i.e., "freotypinggame.net").
78. Use "Alfred" (for Mac) or "Launchy" (for Windows) to never touch the apps tab or start menu again.
79. Get a virtual assistant for \$5/\$10 from "Upwork" or "FancyHands" to outsource consistent or simple tasks.
80. Consider your own salary on an hourly basis rather than assuming something expensive should be done in-house rather than outsourcing it. For example, someone with more experience and skills than you in a certain area can complete the project faster, and it might save you money to outsource rather than you putting in tons of hours in-house.
81. Use email organizing tools like "SaneBox," which automatically sorts your emails into folders according to importance or "Unroll.me," which allows you to unsubscribe to unnecessary emails smoothly and group some emails into one summary email you receive daily.
82. Invest in voice recognition software if you don't want to prioritize increasing your type speed right now.
83. Group your interruptions - make sure everyone on your team makes a list of questions they have for you throughout the day, rather than bringing each item to you separately. Then plan a time to go over all of these questions at once.
84. In order to say "no" kindly to things that keep you from saying "yes" when needed, create a "no" template email, and save it so that it's easily accessible. Use "Google Canned" or "TextExpander" to store the template. Here's an example of a "no" template from Hubspot.com:
Hi (name),

Thank you for writing to me – it's nice to hear from you (or meet you) via email.

Fortunately [my company] has started to take off in ways that I couldn't have imagined just a short time ago.

Unfortunately that means I don't have as much time as I used to have to take meetings with people.

I hope you'll understand. I'm now under a lot of pressure from my board to deliver against some pretty ambitious goals.

I do try to get to networking/social events from time-to-time so I hope we can catch up there.

Hope you understand.

- Your Name
85. Set up email rules so that non-urgent messages land in folders. Then schedule in time to peruse those folders.
86. Evaluate your internet speed. Run a speed test tool (i.e., "speedtest.net") to determine the speed of your internet, or use an internet speed estimate tool (i.e., "highspeedinternet.com") to learn what speed internet best fits your needs.

BE PRODUCTIVE IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE:

87. If you're a parent and there's another parent in the picture, consider giving each parent a weeknight "off." This will give the kids quality time with one parent and will give the other parent time to him/herself to reenergize.
88. Be sure that you and your household are on the same page about weekends. Some families like to stuff the weekends with sporting events for the kids, running errands and catching up on things around the house. Other families like to plan nothing and spend time online, enjoying each other, watching TV, or engaging in idle time. Strike a balance. At the end of the weekend, ask each member of the family what he or she liked about the weekend. Keep this in mind for the next weekend. As you're planning the week, get input from each family member about the way he/she wants to spend the upcoming weekend. Check in again midweek and start to make plans.
89. Parents, keep in mind that extra-curricular activities are not just for kids. Adults need creative and fun outlets just like kids do.
90. Be sure to tend to things you love, including hobbies and personal projects. If you feel that these get pushed to the backburner, engage in a hobby or personal project 10 minutes each day after work. If you're in the mood and have the time, keep working on that hobby or project. If not, at least you are engaging in this activity at least daily.
91. Do life with people rather than adding more commitments into your life. For example, most people eat each day. Rather than scheduling various times to hang out with friends, invite your friends to come to your house and eat with you. They bring their own food, and you provide your own food, keeping it casual. This way, you're doing life together, and not adding anything else to the calendar.
92. Schedule in fun activities with those you love. There's evidence that shows close friendships can help slow brain deterioration as we age.
93. Use the random, unplanned idle time to spark joy. For example, if the person you're meeting for a dinner or a meeting are running 10-minutes late, know ahead of time how you will use that time – you could open a book you always carry with you, write poetry, make a list of fun life dreams, catch up on your favorite podcast, or go for a walk outside.
94. Remember there is no such thing as doing "nothing." Even sitting and staring at a wall counts as doing something. We typically feel like we are doing "nothing" when we end up engaging in a low-key activity we didn't plan on doing in the first place.

CELEBRATE AND LOVE YOURSELF WELL!

95. Write in a gratitude journal and serve others as much as you can!
96. Forgive yourself when you're not productive - let go of guilt and instead work on a small or easy goal to launch dopamine in your brain. If you're stuck in anxiety, work on something completely different than the item you're anxious about until your anxiety has passed or lessened.
97. Reward yourself. Remember that the brain can be trained. Rewarding yourself for completing something creates a positive mental cycle in your brain. This inclines you to do the next task.
98. Take a lunch break and use it wisely- exercise, meet with a friend, listen to music or stream a podcast.
99. Write out a list of 100 dreams for your life. These can be anything from "cleaning out my personal email" to "traveling to all seven continents." Make sure there are tasks within your week that help you reach at least one of these dreams.
100. Do what you can to serve in a job you absolutely love, or focus on the things that bring you joy in the job you already have.