LASER FOCUSED
SUCCESS

ELIMINATE PRODUCTIVITY-KILLERS AND ZERO IN ON THE TRUE SECRETS TO SUCCESS!

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Introduction

We live in an era of information overload. We are bombarded with media, technology, entertainment, and notifications every day. It seems there are hundreds of people and things competing for your attention at any given time. There is no wonder why in the last few years, our attention spans have become shorter and our ability to focus has decreased.

Your time is valuable. Not being able to focus can have a negative effect on how successful we are at work and in our personal lives. Focus is a skill that we develop by training and practice. Productivity requires intention and strategy to help make your time work for you!

Let's begin by examining time killers that make us less productive. We will discuss tips and techniques to help improve your focus.

Then let's create your plan will that will get you started on improving your productivity now!

Indentify Focus Killers

"Focus can only occur when we have said yes to one option and no to all other options," says James Clear in his article on Focus.

Time killers are activities that distract us from what we really need to do. They don't contribute to helping us achieve our goals.

Time killing activities are "noise". They are distractions that kill our ability to focus. Laser focus requires to limit them as much as possible while you are working.

The key to focus is to choose one task to do and get rid of the rest. Anything that is not essential for completing that task is a distraction.

To help you get started on your journey on maximizing productivity, let's identify those things that are distracting you from completing your work.

Tomorrow morning when you start work, try taking a written (or mental) note of every time you stop from what you are currently working on to do something, then come back to your work. Keep a tally.

Once they are identified, let's write those activities down to put in our plan later. We will look for ways to set boundaries to prevent it from happening in the future. Here are a few examples of the most common distractions and how they affect our ability to stay focused.

Your Mobile Device/Phone

It is with you when you wake up, while you are driving, in meetings, at dinner, and by your bedside at night. Our mobile devices have become another appendage to our bodies. Some people find it difficult to be away from their phones, even for a few minutes. Constant notifications from apps and texts can

quickly distract you, causing a delay in getting your attention focused back on the task at hand.

To help us be more aware of our phone usage, some mobile devices (like the iPhone) will track home many times you pick up your phone a day. This can be a scary number to see. Once you are aware of how many times you pick up your phone to check notifications, you can start making some adjustments to how often you pick up your phone.

Multi-Tasking

Some people use multi-tasking as a badge of honor to feel accomplished. That person may feel that the busier they are, the more things they are getting done. The truth is we can work on more than one thing at a time, just not as well.

When we can focus on one task at a time, we can give it our full focus. It takes time for our brains to switch between tasks which

results in time wasted. Focus on the completion of tasks rather than getting many tasks done quickly. How often are you multi-tasking? Write down if you feel multi-tasking helps you feel accomplished.

Social Media Traps

Have you ever fallen into the rabbit hole of YouTube or become so engaged with Instagram that you found yourself there for hours? It happens often. The chemical rewards we get from our brain when we get likes and comments on our posts keep us engaged.

As consumers, we enjoy viewing the millions of videos and content posted every day. However, if we are working this is a hindrance to our productivity. The best way to stop this time killer is to set boundaries for social media.

- Put time on your calendar for checking/posting social media. maybe in the evening an hour before bedtime.

- Use the time limit features on the apps to set daily time limits. This will help you realize when you are past your limit.

- Turn off your social media notifications. Only check your social media during your scheduled time.

Putting Too Much on Your Calendar

Do you ever feel the need to fill up every time slot on your calendar? There is no reward in having a calendar full of events. Too much of a schedule can hinder your ability to complete the most important things to get done for the day.

To limit distractions, make sure only essential events are placed on your calendar. A final product review with your team or doctor appointments are examples of events that are essential to attend. Most of us know the events we must attend. Allow the rest of the

time to work toward your goals. This gives you the flexibility to be able to complete your tasks in however long it takes. This brings us to the next big time killer!

Not Learning How to Say No

Many people struggle with approval addiction or have a difficult time telling people no. This leads to having more things to put on your schedule than you need or want. To start taking back your time, it means having to turn down invitations from people you care about. Sometimes it means turning down meeting requests.

Your time and energy are valuable. If you don't respect it, then other people will not either. The best thing to do is, to be honest with them. Let me know you are working on an important project and will get back in touch with them later.

It is hard to say no; however, it is a necessity when you need to focus. Find ways to collaborate with others using methods like

email, online conferencing or conference calls in place of traditional meetings.

Do you have a time-waster not listed here? Make sure you jot those down in your plan so that you are mindful of them. Let's create barriers around those distractions to help you stay focused on completing the important tasks of the day.

Focus Hacks

Here are a few important "mind hacks" to help you improve your focus for the day.

Taking Care of Yourself First

Our priority should be making sure we are whole healthy human beings. When our physical and mental health is declining, there is no way we can give our business our full potential. Here are some important self-care tips to improve your focus.

- **Make sure you get enough rest (7-8 hours of sleep).** Your brain will not function at capacity when you are tired. While you sleep, your body can re-set and heal.

- **Eat well-balanced meals.** Healthy snacks help your brain function at its best. Try superfoods and increase your amount of green leafy vegetables. Meal planning is extremely helpful as well as trying to go to the grocery store

only once a week. Use stores that offer online pickup or delivery for extra productivity points.

■ **Drink more water.** Dehydration can cause loss of concentration and focus, according to a [study at Georgia Tech](). Most authorities recommend at least eight 8-ounce glasses a day.

■ **Exercise regularly.** Moderate exercise can increase alertness and energy that will help you be [more productive at work](). Regular exercise is also important to prevent diseases that can cause you to miss out on work. If you can't make it to the gym, try taking the stairs at work. Aim for 30 minutes a day at least 5 times a week.

■ **Spend some time outdoors.** Being in nature helps us bring our mind and body back into balance. Take a few minutes out of your schedule to take a walk outside. Look at the trees, listen to some water flowing, or just take in some sun.

- **Try meditation**. Mindfulness is a great practice to help clear the mind of clutter and be in the present moment. There are paid apps like [Headspace](#) and [Calm](#) that can help you practice mindfulness in under 10 minutes a day.

Clear Your Space

A great way to declutter your mind is to declutter the space around you. Set up an environment in your office that promotes focus.

Begin with clearing out your workstation from all paper and materials not related to the task you are currently working on. Organize papers into folders and set them aside for later. You don't have to be a neat freak! Just reducing the clutter in your work area will help reduce the number of distractions around you.

Check to make sure the temperature in the room is not too hot or too cold. Having a please office space can [increase your productivity by up to 15%.](#)

Take Breaks

This is also a part of self-care. Our mind is a muscle that can get tired. Sometimes, taking a short break from a task helps us to rejuvenate so that we can come back with a fresh perspective.

We guilt ourselves into thinking that the harder we work without breaks we can get projects done efficiently. However, we are cheating ourselves and our work by not being good to our bodies.

Working without taking breaks leads to a decrease in performance. Take a ten-minute break at least to bring some clarity to your mind.

Practice the Two-Minute Rule

According to Entrepreneur Steve Olenski, completing short tasks right away actually takes less time than having to go back and do it. Here is his [two-minute rule](). If you see a task that can be done in two minutes or less, just do it immediately.

Listen to Some Music

Turn on your favorite music station and plug in your headphones! Music is inspiring. It keeps our brains engaged and helps to keep us motivated. Music also engages the part of our brain that drives our attention. For maximum focus, you may want to stick to classical or music with no lyrics.

Focus Maximizers

The burnout is real. We can come up with a lot of great ideas for being more productive, but it won't be helpful if you get burnout and quit. Here are some helpful hints to help you manage your time and hopefully decrease your chances of burnout.

Compact Your Daily To-Do List

Created a to-do list is an important part of time management, but often we create too large of a list with unreasonable expectations for the day.

Create your list with the **top 3-5 most important things** to accomplish that day. That goes on the top of the list. Next, you list out a few items that can be done that day but are not as important or urgent.

Create your to-do list for the next day right before you leave for the evening. When you get to the office in the morning, you will be ready to start!

Deep Work

Cal Newport describes [Deep Work](#) as "the ability to focus without distraction on a cognitively demanding task". If you have an important task or project at work that requires a lot of brain power, set aside a few hours on your calendar that you intend to not be bothered unless it is a real emergency.

During this time, shut down your email applications and put your phone on do not disturb. In fact, put your phone in a safe place as far away from your reach as possible. Minimize all possible interruptions during this time.

Set up intervals during your day to check email outside of this period where you will solely focus on one task.

Find Your Peak Work Period

This may be different for every person. For some, this may be the first thing in the morning once you get to the office. This is the time of day where you are physically and mentally more focused.

Trying to get an important report done right before bedtime may not be optimal because you are tired and distracted by things going on at home.

Create a routine around this time period where you perform the day's most important tasks during that time period. Creating routines will train your body to be ready for being productive. Leave the tasks that do not require the same amount of focus for later in the day or during your less optimal period.

Focus on the Result, Not the Task

The key here is to commit to finishing the work. Focusing on just performing a task may result in having to perform the task over again, wasting more time.

Start tracking the about of time that you are spending on tasks. Chances are we are not estimating the amount of time it should take to complete it. Focus on what it is that you want to complete.

By focuses on the end goal, we can make sure that the things we are doing are meaningful and make the best use of our time.

Set Deadlines

Although setting deadlines may sound stressful, they are helpful in setting healthy boundaries. We tend to be more productive and focused when there is a time limit. When there is an on-going project, try to make some short-term deadlines to work towards. Break large goals into smaller projects. For instance, if you want to write a book, set a smaller goal to write the introduction paragraph this weekend, and next weekend write 10 pages for Chapter 1. It is rewarding when you feel you have completed a goal on time!

Use Productivity Tools

Use this helpful list of tools that are designed to help you focus on what is important to accomplish for the day.

- **Hootsuite**: cut down your social media time by scheduling your social media posting.

- **Evernote**: Take your notes with you wherever you go. It is cloud based so you can access your notes from your phone, home, or office. If you can't jot down your idea, try using the voice memo on your phone to remember to jot your ideas down later.

- **Dropbox**: Dropbox or any other cloud-based storage like OneDrive or iCloud will also help keep your most important documents close by for review and sharing at any time.

- **Asana**: This is a great project management tool for individuals and businesses. You can plan you plan and

organize your work or choose a plan that will help you collaborate with a team.

- Rescue Time: This app helps track time spent on different applications to give you a sense of how you are spending your time. The paid version will even help to block distracting websites while you are working.

Productivity is more of a Journey than a Destination

As an entrepreneur, you may feel that if you can get that speaking engagement, hit your sales projections, or open your brick and mortar shop that this event will signal your success. However, it is the commitment to the process that makes you successful.

It's getting up every day and doing something toward your goal. If you want to become great at anything, you must practice it every day. You must love not just the outcomes, but the process in creating the outcomes.

Have some Fun!

Don't forget to reward yourself. In project management, we have celebrations after completing big projects. Schedule that vacation or put that concert on your calendar.

Having something to look forward to is a great motivator for getting your goals accomplished.

Creating a Focus Plan

Now let's create an action plan to improve focus and productivity. Research says it takes 4 weeks to develop a new habit.

Let's break down our plan into four weeks.

Week 1:

- Find out how you are currently spending your time. Productivity apps such as RescueTime will send you a report based on your activity. This will help you identify those time killers. Otherwise, you can just use a note pad.

- Find the screen time usage stats on your phone. See what apps you use the most and how often.

- Clean up your workspace. Organize tasks into folders or notebooks.

- Set your clock to wake up the same time every day.

Week 2:

- Review results from RescueTime or your results from screen time monitored on your phone.

- Start setting some goals. Write down some daily, weekly, monthly and yearly goals.

- Add dates to those goals and put them on your calendar. Try using Google calendar if you don't have one already.

- Set one goal you want to accomplish over the next 3 weeks.

- Find someone to share those goals with. Accountability is a huge motivator to make sure you accomplish your goals.

Week 3:

- At the end of each workday, make a list of 3-5 things you want to do the next day. Only the most important goals that you need to accomplish.

- Find a helpful project planner notebook or try Asana or other project management apps.

- Practice some self-care. Plan your meals for the week and don't forget to schedule some time for exercise.

Week 4:

- Review your calendar. Are there items that are essential? Are there things you can take off?

- Time to celebrate! Make sure you reward yourself when you complete the goal you set at week 2.

- Review your RescueTime and your phone usage stats at the end of the week to see how much time you have saved.

Final Words

Creating Laser Focus takes practice and effort. The steps outlined here will help you find ways to help minimize those distractions that may be holding you back from focusing on what is most important. Here are some next steps to take.

Keep in mind that you'll need to:

- Identify those time killers
- Don't forget that the best way to be productive is to take care of yourself.
- Clear your workspace of clutter.
- Use some of the productivity apps listed.
- Practice Deep Work techniques that will help you focus.
- Don't forget to reward yourself!

Congratulations! You are one step closer to becoming more focused, more productive and achieving your goals!