

# Blogging

BREAKTHROUGH

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THE TIME ISSUE

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# TEAM BLOGGING BREAKTHROUGH

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# NOTES FROM THE DESK

Hi friend,

Did you know that “time” is the most used noun in the English Language? Yet it remains a mystery. As this magazine is jam-packed full of all sorts of brilliantly written articles all about time, I’m not going to try and do a summary. Instead, here’s my version of a top ten list which has been inspired by this month’s articles: the things everyone should know about time.

#1 | Time exists. Of course it does. The real question is whether or not time is fundamental and the answer to that is: nobody knows. My bet is “yes”.

#2 | The past and future are equally real. This needs to be accepted. We think that the “now” is real and every event in the past and future is implicit in the current moment. But they are real.

#3 | Everyone experiences time differently. Time measured by clocks isn’t as important as the time measured by our internal rhythms and memories.

#4 | You live in the past. About 80 milliseconds in the past, to be precise. Experiments have shown that the lag between things happening and us experiencing them is about 80 milliseconds.

#5 | Your memory isn’t as good as you think. When you remember an event in the past, your brain uses a very similar technique to imagine the future.

#6 | Consciousness depends on manipulating time. Consciousness wouldn’t be possible without the ability to imagine other times.

#7 | Disorder increases as time passes. At the heart of every difference between the past and future is the fact that the universe is evolving from order to disorder.

#8 | Complexity comes and goes. And we’re far from having an understanding of it because it’s always increasing and decreasing.

#9 | Ageing can be reversed. We all grow old. But it’s only the universe as a whole that must increase, not every individual piece of it.

And for number 10, a lifespan is a billion heartbeats. In that very real sense, we all experience the same amount of time.

Grab a cuppa, take a moment and enjoy this issue. Then hit reply to my email and let me know your thoughts - I can’t wait to hear them.

To getting a breakthrough,

Holly







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# PODCAST OF THE MONTH

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## WHAT?

A podcast all about taking the leap and creating a career out of the hobbies you love.

## WHO?

Cat Byrne, creative designer. “I spend every day of my life working with amazing women who have moulded a career out of the hobbies they love and I want to help you do the same thing.”

## WHY?

This podcast is super inspirational and if you're thinking about taking the leap, this will help you decide to go for it. Cat is a natural host and is not afraid to talk about hard-hitting topics that are so important to bloggers and business owners.

## WHERE?

You can view the podcast on iTunes [here](#).





# 4 PEARLS OF WISDOM YOU'LL WANT TO MAKE TIME FOR

BY JUDITH BOND

It's time to talk about Solomon. Solomon is an unusual name in a world of Alfies and Brooklyns. I used to know a Solomon Parker. He was too cool for school and remarkably good at everything. If you're reading, Solomon - hello!

The most famous Solomon I know (not personally of course) was an Israeli king who hung out around 1000 BC. We know him for his wealth, but strangely, he was better known for his wisdom - hence the expression "the wisdom of Solomon".

Listen in - 2 new mums arrived at the court of King Solomon fresh from the maternity ward, fighting over a new-born, in the days before wristbands. Both claimed the baby belonged to each of them. How would you decide? DNA testing not available. What Solomon did next was genius. He ordered the baby to be cut in half and give 1 part to each Mum. Bit gruesome, but of course, before any surgery took place - the real mum gave the baby up immediately - she'd rather see her child live with another woman than be killed. And the matter was resolved. True story.

That's top wisdom right there from King Solomon. Give the man a book deal.

And that's what they did. He published a book full of his wise thoughts, it's called "Ecclesiastes" - not the catchiest title, but you're probably more familiar with it than you think.

Heard the expressions "eat, drink and be merry" and "nothing new under the sun"? - that's Solomon. How about "a time to be born and a time to die"?

Abraham Lincoln quoted this book to Congress during the Civil War. Shakespeare references Solomon's wisdom in one of his Sonnets. Then there's Leo Tolstoy, Robert Burns, Ernest Hemingway, and George Bernard Shaw.

So, as we're talking about TIME this month, I thought of Solomon, who has quite a lot of wisdom to share about time and how we use it.

"For everything, there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven."

Truth is - we only possess one thing when we're born - TIME. Everything else is about what we do with our time. How we spend it?

What choices we make? What things we give priority? Who we chose to spend our time with?

Wikipedia defines time as "the indefinite continued progress of existence and events that occur in apparently irreversible succession from the past through the present to the future".

In other words, time marches on regardless of what we think or do.

We manage our time in seasons. Weather seasons, family seasons, work seasons, even health seasons. Wisdom says that there is a season for everything and time for all the things that matter. Which rather implies that if we spend less time doing wasteful things that don't really matter to anyone, we'd have plenty of time to get on with the important things. Right?

But what does wisdom say about how to manage our time? Well, how about this from Captain Wisdom himself:

"I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live, also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil, - this is God's gift to mankind."

Simples, as our friendly Meerkat would say - but is it? Can our time really be broken down into just 4 pursuits, 4 simple instructions?

## #1 | BE JOYFUL

The first thing to notice is that having joy is first on the list. You might not feel very joyful today but don't make the mistake of confusing joy with happiness. You can be joyful and content and thankful, without necessarily being happy. Or you can be both. It depends on your circumstances.

So, here's an example. I get migraines reasonably often. I take hot baths, sniff peppermint, drink ginger tea, avoid hot sun, wear sunglasses around the house - but they still come. They're awful, I wouldn't wish them on anyone and they certainly don't make me happy. BUT, I can find joy in the fact that I don't get more of them - chronic migrainers suffer much more than I do. I can have joy in the fact that they nearly always come between cake orders, so I don't have to let my customers down. I find joy in my black-out bedroom curtains, the super comfy bed that I hide in and the knowledge that in 3 days I will enjoy a clear head again.

Sometimes, friends, it's joy in the darkness. But life is full of joy, and wisdom says we should look for it first and above all.

## #2 | DO GOOD

Doing good means something different to each of us. To me, it means looking out of myself and seeing what joy I can bring to the lives of others.

It might mean giving up some of your hard-earned cash to a needy cause or helping out with the local homeless charity in your town. We all help where we can.

How about thinking of goodness as a personality trait. Being good, showing goodness, reacting with goodness. Thinking this way will surely help to displace the envy, jealousy and bitterness that we all feel from time to time and would rather not.

Think of that person that we all know. No matter how hard you poke them - they just say nice things, they exude goodness and don't have a critical bone in their body. I think that's what wisdom means by "do good".

## #3 | EAT AND DRINK

So we've found our joy, we're pursuing goodness. Next, we're encouraged to eat and drink, relax, switch off, and enjoy leisure time. The simple truth is that if we don't eat and drink we'll shrivel up and die. And if we eat and drink too much, we'll have other problems! Nevertheless, eating and drinking is encouraged and there's no-one happier to hear that than me! I'm always happy for an excuse to try out a new restaurant, spend a few hours at a food festival, enjoy new foods on holiday, or sip a gin and tonic on the patio in the evening sun.

The Europeans are much better at community living than we are. There's a little village called Leran at the foot of the Pyrenees, our regular stop on the way to Spain. Every Friday evening through the summer they host a generous community feast. It's not fancy, but all the locals cram in from surrounding villages for an array of locally sourced freshly cooked street food and live music into the early hours. A long wooden trestle table is laid out the full length of the street, quickly filled by families clasp plates of grilled sausage, generous bowls of Catalan paella and pints of local ale. It's quite the local fiesta and showcases what the French do so well.

Food and drink are life-giving and mean so much more than just what's on our plate.

## #4 | ENJOY YOUR WORK

Wisdom says that if we've found our joy, if we're focused on showing goodness, and if we're well fed and watered - then there's no reason for us not to enjoy our work. Whether that be doing the laundry, getting the kids ready for school, dealing with emails, digging the garden, or making cakes.

Notice that work comes last in this list of 4. Is it more about working to live, rather than living to work? If our toil is everything we spend time on apart from eating and drinking, then we should make sure it's enjoyable.

I made the switch 5 years ago to a job I really enjoy, and I haven't regretted it for a moment. In a way, the choice was out of my hands, but circumstances pointed the direction and I walked the way. Best decision ever.

Maybe you're on the edge of a big decision. Leaving a reliable job that pays the bills, to embrace your own business and do something creative that you're passionate about. No-one can promise everything will be ok and you certainly won't make a profit in your first few months. But I can promise you this: your priorities will change, your lifestyle will change, and you'll be more content with the simple things.

Here's the summary. Print it out, keep it in your diary, pin it to your fridge - and maybe make some changes.

FIND JOY  
DO GOOD  
RELAX  
ENJOY WORK

Happy days xx

PS If you want to read more of King Solomon's Book "Ecclesiastes", you'll find it in the Bible - google it.







# PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE: HOW TO PRACTICE PATIENCE AS AN AMBITIOUS CREATIVE

BY CAT CRAWFORD

Trying to create your dream creative business isn't easy. You'll probably be working full-time while trying to build your brand, using every spare minute of every day to work on your own creative projects. You'll probably be exhausted and frustrated that things aren't quite where you want them to be, but that's completely normal for any ambitious creative trying to pave their own way.

When you have an idea in your head of the

life you want to live and the business you want to build, of course you want to be living it right here right now. The frustration often comes from seeing others in your field living that life for themselves. You watch on social media as they flaunt their freedom and success, leaving you feeling deflated and as though it will never happen for you.

As many an influencer has said, you shouldn't be comparing your beginning with someone else's middle!



Those business owners that you admire and aspire to be were once in your EXACT situation. They too scrolled through their Instagram looking at people living their dream life and feeling downhearted that it would never happen for them. But with time and hard work, they reached their goal and the same can happen for you. But it will take a lot of patience, understanding, and require you to put on your blinkers when navigating your industry.

## HOW TO PRACTICE PATIENCE AS A FRUSTRATED CREATIVE

When that dream business or life is all you can think about and everything you are working hard to achieve, it can be easy to be overwhelmed by the ideas floating around your head. Patience isn't something that comes easily to ambitious people, so practising this when you have such big dreams and plans can feel impossible.

Building any business is a learning curve; you will make mistakes, you will be forced to experiment, you'll have to learn new skills, do tasks you don't enjoy and meet a whole load of new people. It is a long journey and one that can teach you a whole lot about life and about you as a person. You'll be tested in situations you couldn't have possibly planned for, and you'll discover how you manage when under pressure with only yourself to rely on.

It's this journey that you need to focus on in those moments of frustration. When you are beating yourself up for not yet reaching your end goal, think about everything you've learned and how it has improved how you live your life, how you run your business and where you'd be had you not been through everything you have been through so far.

## TAKING TIME OUT TO REFLECT

When you're trying to grow your dream creative business, you'll be consumed by all things business-related, and it'll be all you think about from when you wake up until you finally crawl back into bed at an unspeakable hour.

It can be exhausting being switched on and always on the go 24/7, so it's extremely important that you take some time out to reflect on how far you've come and the things you've learned. Not only is this a form of self-care, giving your brain a much needed break, but it will also give you a second to just process everything.

When you're completely immersed in your business, it can be hard for you to see issues or areas that need attention. This is why having patience and taking things slow is so crucial to building a strong and successful business. Take a break to note down everything that has happened in your business since you launched, and think about your mindset when you first started - did you ever think you'd be where you are now?

## HAVING THE COURAGE TO EXPERIMENT

One of the best parts of being at the very beginning of your creative business journey is the freedom to experiment. If you've been working non-stop for months and you're starting to get restless with your progress, maybe it's time to test out something new. Whether that's a new marketing strategy, using a new tool, or switching up your branding, you have the creative freedom to do that.

Stick with your main business plan, but start to test out different ways of doing what you're doing and analysing the results regularly. Not only will this help you to ease

some of the frustration and help make you feel like you're actually being proactive, but it may even benefit the growth of your business.

The most important part of experimenting is giving it a realistic timeframe to allow it to have an effect. For example, when it comes to testing out SEO techniques, six months would be the ideal length of time. That gives you enough time to see results, make changes and re-adjust your strategy to get even more insight into your strategies.

The same applies for any new experiment or strategy you are trying out. Setting an end date and regular check-in dates will ensure you're being proactive and giving these tests a fair chance.

This testing period and experimentation is all part of your business journey. It is all a part of building a strong and successful brand that will be able to support you and whatever you want to achieve long term.

#### WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAD EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED?

Think about it, if you had everything you've ever dreamed of right now, how would you really feel? Would you feel happy? Fulfilled? Would you just resign to a life of consistency and the same thing day in day out? Probably not. Isn't that what we are all trying to avoid when we decide to start our own creative business?

If you are under the impression that once you have everything you want in this moment, that you'll have some sort of eureka moment and suddenly stop feeling that creative restlessness, then think again.

Once you reach your end goal, your creative ambition will start to think of a new goal

for you to work towards and that's how it should be! Life is for experiencing as much as possible; we should keep moving forward, continue to learn new skills and strive for even bigger dreams. This is what you should keep in mind the next time you feel frustrated with your progress.

Have patience with life, take your time and enjoy the journey that you are taking yourself on. Experience everything you can to the fullest, and dream big, but don't let yourself be swept up with what others have achieved. You will always get to where you are meant to be, so trust in the decisions you make along the way.



# DEALING WITH BLOGGER BURNOUT: TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

BY SHANNON CLARK

The blogging industry has both grown and changed exponentially since it first emerged, just a few decades ago.

What was once just a number of girls (and guys!) tapping out what were essentially online diaries to a handful of visitors, has now become an industry in its own right. There are bloggers across the world making a living from doing what they love. But with a rise in fame and with the ability to earn an income comes its own set of responsibilities.

Suddenly it feels as though it's not enough to simply write about what you have been doing lately. Every blogger out there seems to have a blog that is capable of rivalling the editorials you can find in magazines. In addition, they also have their own professional photographer, a carefully curated Instagram feed, well planned out Twitter and Facebook feeds, and a newsletter to tie it all together neatly with a bow on top.



Nowadays, writing a blog post (which was once a relatively simple task) can take days on end and while it's still fun for many of us, it often comes with an element of stress as we try to compete with the big guns. It's so easy to feel overwhelmed when you're faced with a to-do list as big as your arm for one blog post, but it doesn't need to be like that. It's fair enough that everyone is upping their game now. I like the sleek looking blog posts just as much as the next person but it's still meant to be fun too!

If you, like many of us, are feeling a bit stuck on where to go in the blogging world, then read on. I've put together a few tips to help you work your way through your blogging to-do list without burning out at the same time.

## TAKING THE PRESSURE OFF

We all dream of a world in which we could churn out three to five perfect blog posts a week, all complete with their own beautiful imagery. But in reality, not many of us have the time to do that. Instead of attempting to and burning out, ease off yourself and dedicate your time to writing one, really good quality post a week instead.

## PRE-WRITE YOUR EMAIL RESPONSES

Emails. Emails, emails, emails. It's the one thing all bloggers love to hate and hate to love. While they can contain some really exciting opportunities, more often than not they are spammy and without a doubt, no matter what they are about, they take up far more time than we are willing to dedicate to them. Instead of falling into the pit that is your inbox, set aside some time to write out some canned responses and then schedule out a few minutes to an hour each day for dealing with your emails. You'll find yourself feeling more relaxed if you know that you're regularly working your way through your

inbox and your pre-written responses will speed up the entire process. Have an email template ready for a variety of scenarios, from your response to which equipment you use to those pesky guest post requests.

## BATCH WORK

Once you get into the groove of doing one task, it can be really counterproductive to then move onto another one. In other words, if you've got several posts to finish then try editing all of the photos at once, writing the copy in one go and schedule all of your social media posts together. You'll find working in this way speeds up the entire process and you'll power through to the end of your to-do list far faster than you would if you were to focus solely on one blog post at a time.

## DON'T BE AFRAID TO OUTSOURCE

None of us became bloggers because we are fantastic at everything. Most of us became bloggers simply because we love writing and sharing our stories is something that we enjoy doing. But being a blogger is about so much more than that now. Unfortunately, though, we now have to be good at managing our finances, at promoting ourselves on social media, at being organised, at design, at taking photos, at editing photos – the list goes on.

In reality, very few of us are good at all of those things so don't be afraid to outsource some of the tasks that you're not so good at or that you simply don't enjoy doing. You'd be surprised to know just how many of the 'big' bloggers outsource tasks. It will ease up your to-do list and give you more time to focus on the parts of being a blogger that you do love doing, which will in turn help to keep the feeling of overwhelm at bay.

## GIVE YOURSELF TIME OFF

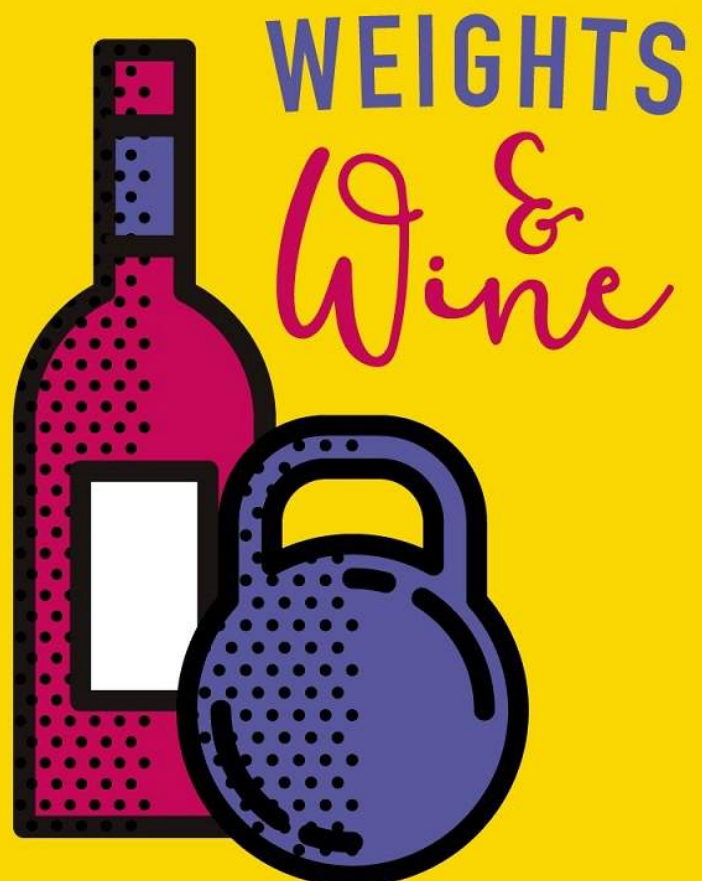
Blogging, whether you do so in your spare time, part-time or full-time can be fantastic, but it can also leave you feeling as though you never switch off. Holidays become great content opportunities, every meal is the perfect Instagram image and your Twitter is constantly being updated with any thought that you have during the day. It's no wonder so many bloggers can start to feel a bit stressed about the blogging lifestyle. So, while having a blog can be great as it often encourages us to go out and do things we might not have done otherwise, it's also so important to have some hours slotted out where we do nothing blogging-related at all. Leave your phone in your bag and really give yourself a chance to refresh – away from a screen. Chances are you'll come back feeling more motivated than ever too, so it's really a win-win situation.

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# IT TAKES TIME

BY PENNY HERNE

Time! Everyone uses this word differently, but you mostly hear people referring to not having enough “time” to do things. With 168 hours in a week, only 35-40 hours spent working, and about 50 sleeping, what do people really do with the other 78 hours that makes them say they “don’t have time” to try new things, cook a nice meal, exercise or see friends?

For me, I have 118 hours a week of constantly over-thinking, panicking and over-analysing every little thing in life and trust me, when suffering from a mental illness, you feel every minute of those 118 hours, sometimes more if you can’t sleep.

Since being diagnosed with depression and anxiety last year, I have found myself facing new challenges each and every day. So I thought I would share my top 4 tips that have helped me a lot over this last year. Yes top 4! (I like even numbers.) I hope this helps you as an individual that is also suffering, or maybe you just want to understand slightly what we go through in an average day.





## #1 | LEAVE YOUR HOUSE EVERY DAY

This may sound strange but I live by myself and sometimes could go a few days without human interaction, especially if I am feeling low. But it doesn't help if you cut yourself off. I find my mood getting worse and lasting longer. So each day I make a conscious effort to go out to the shop, library, a gym class or even just for a coffee. Somewhere that other people are and I can have even just 5 minutes of human interaction. I have found that really makes a big difference. That warm smile of a person as they put down your coffee can be all you need to see that day.

## #2 | TRY SOMETHING NEW EACH WEEK

I love routine to the point that I do the same things on the same days each week, take the same route to work, clean the house in a certain way, and if something got in the way of me doing this it would upset me and throw me into a bad mood. So to stop myself from getting worse and this overruling my life, I vowed to try a new thing each week. From a new food, drink, route around the park, class at the gym - you name it and I will give it a go. At first, I hated it and thought, "why am I doing this to myself?" But now after months of perseverance, I am starting to enjoy it and look forward to the new thing I get to do that week. Some weeks I have even tried two new things now I have gotten into the swing of it.

## #3 | YOGA AND MINDFULNESS

You're probably thinking oh here we go, another blogger preaching about yoga, blah blah! I don't blame you, but I honestly surprised myself when I tried it. For me, it's not about the flexibility, it's the feeling of complete relaxation I get when I am there for that 40 minutes or so. I feel at peace, my mind stops overthinking and I really

enjoy it. Don't get me wrong, this never happened from day one, but I got there. There are still days it doesn't work, when my brain will not stop, but at least once a week I get that feeling of peace. I have also started listening to Mt.Wolf -Burgs twice each night before bed, as it makes you go to sleep feeling grateful and wake up refreshed. Surely trying this for the next few weeks would be worth that 40 minutes of peace that you may find.

My final and probably most important tip is ...

## #4 | TALK ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL

Mental illness is still such a taboo subject so we, the people who suffer, need to take the lead in breaking this stigma and start talking about it to everyone and anyone. Even if it is just to tell someone at work you have had a bad few days or that you are struggling and do they mind helping you reach that deadline or pick up that shift for you. I could not have come this far without talking about it. Yes, it's scary that first person you tell that's not in your close group. I was so scared to say it out loud, but when I did it was like the fountain was turned on and now I can't stop talking about it. The reaction I have had from everyone has been so positive and words that come up all the time are PROUD, AMAZING and GO YOU! Luckily enough, so far I have had no bad reactions - maybe a few strange looks at first, but this is normally followed by a whirlwind of questions because they just don't understand. I am not saying you're never going to come across some "negative Nancy", but why listen to one person when there are thousands telling you how great you are? So let's stop the stigma and show them we can live great lives and achieve amazing things after overcoming even bigger molehills than most. Because after all, we are all GREAT STRONG INDIVIDUALS.



# THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

BY JANE BARLOW

During the past five months, I've had a lot of experience of being the new girl. As well as starting two new jobs, I also launched The Dream Job Blog and for the first time, I entered the world of professional blogging.

With the new jobs, there were the initial nerves, the getting to know people, discovering what the job involved, learning the ropes, figuring out how to manage my time, and also working out if I was capable. And it's been very similar entering the world of blogging.

With the office work, I'm the new girl. But with blogging, I'm most definitely the new

kid on the block. I say, kid, as it feels like I have so much to learn. I feel like a total novice and almost like I'm back at school. I look around and everyone seems so much bigger and better than me. It's a bit like starting secondary school and a slightly daunting experience.

I've had three attempts at blogging before, but I never approached them in a professional way as I have this time around. This is the first time I have tried to monetise a blog. I've even had contact cards printed. I also signed up to attend the Blogger's Bash in May, in the hope of learning the tricks of the trade, meeting some real-life

successful bloggers and being inspired. If there's chance, I hope to speak to other bloggers about how they find the time to blog alongside a full-time job and family commitments.

Two of my previous blogs were short-term charity campaigns. One involved collecting second-hand shoes to take to The Gambia (Someone Else's Shoes), and the other was to collect second-hand spectacles in the UK to take to the West African country (Through Someone Else's Eyes). Blog number three, I wish I'd have kept at it. That was called Plain Jane's Plain Speaking, on which I talked about anything and everything. However, at the time, the job I was working in, for the police, didn't allow me to truly express my real opinions and so that soon came to an end, along with me taking much of the content down, just in case any of it hindered future job prospects. But that blog was a great success, with one post going viral overnight – a tale of a giant badger which was terrorising children at my daughter's school.

And so here I find myself with blog number four and this time around determined to stick at it, to become a “professional blogger” and to make money from my blog. I spend many hours on it, so it would be great if it could one day start to earn me a wage, however small. Although one of my biggest issues this time around, when my aim is to blog three times a week, is how on earth am I going to find the time? My first new job earlier this year was full-time and more, so with that job, blogging even just once a week was a huge ask. Luckily my second new job has seen me return to a four-day week, something I've done for the past 20 years, so finding the time to blog has now become slightly easier.

In order to approach this blog in a much more professional way - and to ensure this

one would be sustainable and have longevity – I did a Professional Blogging online course with Udemy, which took me a couple of days, and I would definitely recommend it. It took me through everything from hosting and initial set up, to advertising, affiliate links, URLs and metadata. But there wasn't anything in the course about finding the time to blog or managing your time. I guess it was just assumed that this is a skill bloggers already have, or quickly have to learn! Soon after the course, I purchased a Blogger's Journal from Paperchase. I use it for my ideas and plans and that helps in a small way to keep me on track and to keep coming back to my strategy and goals.

I love my blog and I love blogging, in fact, it's something of a compulsion, so however busy I am, somehow I always manage to find the time to write. I put the housework and the gardening on the back-burner while I pursue my passion.

As you might have guessed, my blog is all about finding your dream job. As well as telling my story, it also tells the stories of people who have already found their dream jobs and reveals how they did it. The “success stories” include a former boxing coach who invented the male Wonderbra, an undergarment which does for men what the Wonderbra does for women, well, kind of. It gives men a more impressive physique, giving them biceps and pecks. There's also a post about a hairdresser who has just found her dream job in Dubai, and a mum who always wanted to run her own business and now she is, along with her husband and two friends.

Since starting blogging and entering the blogosphere I've found many interesting blogs. There's a blog for just about everything, with my favourites including The Book Shop Around the Corner, where the blogger finds little independent bookshops

up and down the country and reviews them, and another called Soph Talks Science where a PhD student makes science simple – such a great idea.

I also like Suzy Speaks where the blogger talks about everything from blogging and shopping, to a night out with the girls and her hangover the next day.

As a newcomer, Blogging Breakthrough offers me great advice and inspiration. It's really helpful to have advice from others who have been there and done that – along with tips on how to avoid the pitfalls. I'm interested to read the other articles in this issue on the subject of time.

My overall feeling on the blogging community so far is that they are a very friendly and welcoming bunch of people, so thanks to all who have encouraged me and shared my content. And here's to the next five months of working and blogging - and in the words of Buzz Lightyear: "to infinity and beyond"!



# FIVE TIPS ON FINDING TIME TO BLOG AS A NEW PARENT

BY KEVIN LAYCOCK

When you're a new parent, you find you don't have much time to do anything other than looking after your new baby. Feeding, cuddling, holding them while they sleep (this takes a while!), changing them, buying things, doing the washing, all the while looking after everything else like your home, perhaps going to work...maybe caring for other children. It's an incredibly important and busy time.

Of course, when you've just had a baby, the absolute number one priority is your baby and your family. For the vast majority of people, they won't even think of writing or starting a blog. But there are some strange

people like me who think it's a great time to start! Crazy! I just felt there was something beautiful about starting a diary at the time my son was born, a diary just for him.

I am asked sometimes how I find the time to blog having just had a baby and working full-time. It's a good question, as I get up at 6am and don't stop to sit down for any prolonged period until about 7:30pm. At that time, of course, I want to relax and spend time with my wife. Yet I tend to write around three blog posts per week...but how do I find the time to do that?

## Bringing Home The Baby



## A Dad Blog For All

[www.BringingHomeTheBaby.co.uk](http://www.BringingHomeTheBaby.co.uk)

So, looking back, since I started my blog I've learned a lot, including the best ways for me to find time to write posts.

## #1 | PREPARATION IS KEY

I started preparing my blog and setting everything up a couple of months before I actually launched the site, i.e. before our baby was born. This got me in the habit, made sure I knew the blogging tools well and helped me develop my writing style. It takes time to do all these things, and how much time depends on you, dear reader, on how much time you want or are able to spend preparing ahead of the birth. The more time you invest the better. For example, I've still got two or three blog posts I'm sitting on from before I launched my blog, just waiting for the right moment to release them. I'm also thinking months ahead of what posts I'd like to ideally release and when. Prepare prepare prepare.

## #2 | USE ALL TOOLS AT YOUR DISPOSAL

I use Wordpress to help me manage my blog and associated content. Wordpress has an app available for you to produce blogs which means you can write when you have five minutes anywhere you have a signal. In fact, I'm sitting here watching Springwatch whilst writing this blog on the app on my phone. It's a very good app. This is just one example of using the tools at your disposal. I also use my phone to take photos, and the way I have it set up with my Mac, the photos automatically transfer across so I don't have to plug my phone in and transfer photos myself when I want to work on the app. Every little bit of time saved helps.

## #3 | TAKE EVERY FEW MINUTES YOU CAN TO WRITE

Standing in a queue waiting to pay for your shopping? Blog. On a car journey (and not

driving!)? Blog. Waiting for your potato to cook in the microwave? Blog. The key thing for me is that you don't have to find an hour all in one go that you can set aside to blog, just do it when you find a few spare minutes. Any time can be useful, even a couple of minutes. You can 'polish' your post on a laptop, but most of the effort is in writing it, which can be done anywhere at any time. In fact, I'm in this exact position now with three posts written on my phone that just need 'polishing' on the laptop.

## #4 | PLAN YOUR POST BEFORE YOU WRITE

This one is very important to me. Finding the time to sit and write can be difficult. It's even more difficult finding the time to think of a post, plan it out, think of your key messages and structure, and then actually write it. You can do most of this thinking well ahead of time. I'm often thinking about post three, four or five in the future, rather than the one I'm writing now. Perhaps this is just titles of posts, maybe there is thought around the content, maybe even the different sections, or for the super organised, even the photos to include (this one is rarely me, but something I should do!). Get into the habit of being consciously aware of what's happening around you and be almost always 'on'...inspiration for a post can hit you at any time.

## #5 | TAKE LOTS OF PHOTOS


Struggling to think how this one can fit in with finding time to post? Well, let's assume for a moment that your posts include some photos. I've read blogs with and without photos, and the ones that grab me more have photos. Sometimes very personal, or sometimes just to emphasise a point, but they stand out and engage an audience. As such, I like photos (or at a minimum simple pictures) in my posts. Therefore you can start to take some great photos with the



massive, huge and complex equipment called a mobile phone! I don't use anything else now as they are so advanced and such good quality with excellent editing capabilities. Just use your phone when you are out and about. Perhaps a stop sign, a tree, a football net. Whatever random stuff you see that takes your fancy, pic it. You never know when they will come in handy. These can even go in a 'blog' folder for easy access. This will mean you have quick and easy access to loads of your own photos rather than searching for them. This is another great way to save some time.

Now get going! There you have it. My top tips on how to find the time to blog even when you have a newborn baby. This can apply to many situations in fairness, having older children, a busy job, lots of other things going on. All of these tips can help anyone at any time. Try them out!





# THIS IS HOW TO ACTUALLY GET S#!% DONE (WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE PROCRASTINATING)

BY HOLLY SUTTON

Do you really want procrastination to get in the way of your goals and dreams? Find out how you can start single tasking instead of multitasking and be more productive.



I'll let you in on a little secret when it comes to my career as a blogger...I used to be a really good procrastinator. You know when you don't feel inspired to do a task or you want to put it off, so you do loads of research to make you feel like you're being productive? Yes. That was me. And it used to stop me from getting anything done.

You might think procrastination is just chilling in front of Netflix or moving something to the bottom of your to-do list, but it's actually much more serious than that. Especially as a survey from a couple of years ago found that Brits actually spend 24 days a year procrastinating and the biggest culprit? Social media.

But the surprising thing is, procrastinating in the way I did it by making myself feel like I was being busy is the worst way to do it. Why? Because I thought I was doing it for my own benefit. I know I need to do loads of research before I start a podcast. I know I need to look at what everyone else is doing before I figure out my path. I know I need to do loads of prep before I actually sit down to write that thing. Can you relate? But the reality is, we actually don't want to do those things so the prep work makes us feel productive.

I used to come away from working on my blog to find that I hadn't actually taken any action. Sure I'd done loads of reading and research, but nothing to actually show for it, nothing that I'd implemented. That doesn't feel great, does it? You get to the end of the day and that little voice starts talking to you in your head and you feel so guilty for everything you didn't accomplish.

When you are trying to get to your next breakthrough whether it's in your blog, career or life, the most important thing is taking action. Consuming too much information is an easy trap to fall into and

you need to try your best to avoid it at all costs. One of the biggest lessons I learnt early on as a blogger is that it's much better to implement what you've learnt instead of adding more to your plan. You won't learn unless you start. Things will come up and you won't know how to handle them unless you get started and take the next step.

I always encourage you to create your own version of success, but one key factor that helps a person become successful is taking consistent action. It's not about being the most innovative or intelligent. It's about taking action. They are the people that do the work day after day, even when all they want to do is pack it in altogether **#beenthere**. So what happens when you don't want to do the work? What do you do when the dream doesn't seem so bright?

## WAKE UP EARLY

I'm sorry if you think this is a BS tip and believe me, it's tough to get started. But waking up at 5:45am every morning and starting my day with a workout then getting to work has made me more productive than I ever thought possible. In the evening, I want to spend time with my family, so the earlier I get up, the more time I have to do my work (and in my current season of business, I have A LOT to do).

If you're a night owl, maybe you can flip it the other way around, the principle is still the same. Where are the gaps in your day that you can fit a bit of extra work in? Find a time and stick to it. The people that complain they have no time and don't take action? They're the ones that don't get to where they want to be. Make the time for it. Don't choose to complain or procrastinate. Choose to get it done.

## DON'T AIM FOR PERFECTION

With the world we live in at the moment, especially as bloggers, we have this constant pressure for everything we do to be perfect. We create our work so critically that we never seem to get a project finished. This can be so difficult if it's what you naturally do, but give yourself chances to make mistakes. Do a first draft, take a break, then go back and tweak it.

Not only will this make sure you finish what you're working on, it also allows you to use your creative juices when they're flowing. Then when you're not feeling inspired, you can take a break and come back to it when you're in a better frame of mind.

## GET EVERYTHING READY

You know those times when you sit down to work on something, but realise you don't have what you need to get going? You need your hard drive, or your other notebook, or a cup of tea. This will constantly happen unless you get organised. Plan out your time so you know what's coming up and what you'll need to help you work. No more and no less.

## GO INTO HUMAN AIRPLANE MODE

Now, I don't just mean put airplane mode on your phone. I mean think of flipping a switch in your head too. If you have other people living or working with you, it can be difficult to get a solid amount of uninterrupted work time. But when you're working on something to help you reach your next breakthrough, you **MUST** set this time aside.

Whatever you're working on hopefully isn't something you'll work on when you have the time. It's something you need to make time for. Ask for quiet space, go into airplane

mode, and get started. This might also mean leaving your phone in another room (studies have shown that even if we have our phone within our eyesight it distracts us). You can also place time restrictions on your computer so you can't access certain websites within a specific timeframe. There are loads of apps available, so do some research and find the ones that are best for you.

## GET ON BOARD WITH TIME BLOCKING

This is one tip that has made such a difference to how much I get done each day. I used to just write a to-do list and be done with it. Now I take that to-do list and put my tasks into certain time slots on my Google Calendar. I write a weekly master list every Sunday, which includes everything I need to do. Then I plan out my calendar for the week. This allows me to start each day knowing exactly what I need to do - and I've got the beauty to move things around if I need to.

This technique will also help you establish priorities. I bet you'll find that there are so many things you want to get done, but you don't know where to start. So many of those won't get done in a single day. That's why it's important to plan every single minute of your time, so you're not only getting the "need to do" things done, but the "want to do" things done too.

## WRITE DOWN YOUR "WHY" AND READ IT EVERY MORNING

This will keep your brain focused on your purpose. Sometimes I can be so busy that I sit down to work and sometimes forget WHY I'm actually doing it. Has that ever happened to you? So I've written down my "why" on a sticky note and it's on my whiteboard where I can see it every single morning.



Honestly, this is the single most important thing you must do if you want to get one step closer to a breakthrough. Without your “why”, your actions won’t take you anywhere. This is what drives and motivates you to do the work. Without knowing it, you won’t be able to make any decisions. Everything you do and create is determined by the picture you have of what your next breakthrough looks like.

When it comes to your online presence, you must know your “why” and allow it to drive you. Otherwise, you just won’t do the work. What do you picture when you think of your “why”? What purpose do you have? How do you feel? What does your life look like?

These tips are really going to help you for taking steps forward towards your next breakthrough. But guess what will help you even more? Action. The worst thing you can do right now is nothing. Decide one thing you can do right now to take a step forward with your online presence. Then take action and get it done.







# WORDPRESS MAINTENANCE TASKS YOU CAN CARRY OUT IN 5, 10, OR 30 MINUTES

BY HOLLY PRYCE

Website maintenance is important if you want a healthy and secure website.

If you are a WordPress user then there are lots of maintenance tasks that you need to carry out, but I understand that your time is valuable, and these tasks are probably right down at the bottom of your to-do list.

However, a lot of maintenance jobs don't actually require a great deal of time to complete. Not hours or days like you might

expect.

I've created a list of tasks you can carry out on your WordPress website, and I've broken them down into time brackets. So even if you only have 5 minutes to spare, you can tick something off your website maintenance to-do list today.



5 MINUTES

## UPDATE YOUR PLUGINS

Updating your plugins is one of the simplest and quickest maintenance tasks you can carry out on your WordPress website, but arguably one of the most important. This is because outdated plugins can be a security risk and increase your chances of being hacked.

Updates to plugins may also fix any bugs and issues that users have been experiencing, and they may even come with new features. And new features are exciting!

To update your plugins, simply log in to WordPress and click the Updates link in the left-hand menu. Here you will see a list of all of your plugins that need updating.

## REMOVE ANY PLUGINS YOU AREN'T USING

While you are updating your plugins, check to see if there are any plugins that you aren't using or that you don't want anymore

and remove them.

Not only is it important to remove plugins for security reasons, but also because they can slow down the loading times of your website, particularly if they are large plugins, or they are constantly running in the background.

To delete plugins, log in to WordPress, click on Plugins in the left-hand menu, and click Deactivate, then Delete once it has been deactivated.

## UPDATE YOUR VERSION OF WORDPRESS

As well as updating plugins, it's also important to update your WordPress installation to the latest version. Again, this is for the same reason you need to update your plugins; for security.

Here's a scary fact for you: according to WPBeginner, 83% of WordPress websites that are hacked are not upgraded! And to think it only takes a few clicks to update WordPress and reduce the chances of this

happening.

To update your version of WordPress, simply log in to WordPress, and click the Updates link in the left-hand menu. On this page, you will see the option to update WordPress.

10 MINUTES

## MODERATE COMMENTS

In WordPress you can choose whether or not you want to moderate comments, meaning that comments left by visitors to your website will not be published until you approve them.

If you do have this option turned on, take some time to work your way through your pending comments and decide whether you want to approve them or put them in the bin. And if you find any spammy looking comments, mark them as spam. This brings us nicely on to the next task...

## DELETE ANY SPAM COMMENTS

If you have an anti-spam plugin, like Akismet, then hopefully it's doing its job and filtering out all of the spammy comments. All of these comments will end up in the spam folder, and it's up to you to delete them.

But before you delete everything in your spam folder, have a quick look through to make sure no genuine comments have ended up in there by mistake.

If you aren't using an anti-spam plugin then I highly recommend you install and set up Akismet. It's free to use (just choose the personal plan and when taken to the checkout page move the slider down to £0.00), and pretty effective. Over on my personal blog, Akismet has blocked over 11,000 spam comments with an accuracy

rate of 99.32%!

## TIDY UP YOUR SIDEBAR

Sidebars can be magnets for clutter. You start with a nice simple sidebar and before you know it, it's full of widgets, social media feeds and links to other websites.

Ideally, you don't want your sidebar to be too long, and you don't want it to distract from the main content of your website.

Take some time to analyse your sidebar, if you have one, and consider what you actually need in there. Do you really need a feed for each social media account you have? Do you need a badge linking to that blogging network? Do you need all those adverts, or are they just getting in the way?

30 MINUTES OR MORE

## CHECK AND FIX BROKEN LINKS

Checking for and fixing broken links is a time-consuming process, especially if you've not done it for a while or you've never ever done it.

Broken links are simply links that don't work because the page they are linking to has changed or been removed. Broken links can have a negative impact on both SEO and user experience, so it's important to keep on top of them.

There are plugins available that will automatically check for broken links, such as Broken Link Checker, but I actually find it more accurate to use a website called [Online Broken Link Checker](#). All you have to do is pop in your website URL and it will then produce a list of all the broken links on your website and where they can be found.

It's best practice to check for broken links

regularly. Depending on the size of your website you might want to check every week or every month. The more frequently you check and repair broken links, the less time it will take.

## BACKUP YOUR WEBSITE

I can't stress how important it is to backup your website! You wouldn't want to lose all of the content of your website, would you?

Sometimes things go wrong and there's no good thinking that it won't happen to you. You need to be prepared just in case.

The easiest way to backup your website is by using a plugin, and I recommend one called UpdraftPlus. UpdraftPlus allows you to schedule your backups so they are automated, and you can choose where your backup files are sent to, such as Google Drive or Dropbox.

## ADD ALT TEXT TO IMAGES

Alt text (alternative text) is used to describe an image, and it is important for a

number of reasons. Alt text is used by screen readers which are often used by the visually impaired. So you need to make sure that your alt text is descriptive and accurate, and not just random text or your website URL. Also, if any of your images fail to load for some reason (some people browse the web with images turned off) then the alt text will be displayed instead. Alt text is also important for SEO, as search engines use it when crawling your website to correctly index your images.

When I first started a blog I never bothered to add alt text to my images, and you might be in a similar situation. Work back through your old blog posts ensuring that all of your images have alt text. Just click on the image, then click on the edit button (it looks like a pencil) and finally fill in the Alternative Text box.

It may take you more than 30 minutes to add alt text to all of your images that are missing it, but if you do a little every day, then you'll soon get it sorted!

# WHERE TO INVEST YOUR TIME IN BLOGGING

BY KATIE MOODY

Blogging is a juggling act. We spend so much time balancing all the things that having a blog entails, including content creation, photography, social media scheduling, PR, organisation, planning... the list goes on. It can often feel like we're trying to do it all, and it's hard to find a balance. The easiest way to combat overwhelm is to prioritise. If you don't have time to do it all, don't. You don't have to put 100% into every aspect, especially as most of us are trying to juggle a full-time job on top of our side hustle. We're all extremely busy people, but stress is not fun! Our time is precious and it's important to make sure you spend the time you do have, wisely.

I've earmarked three areas that you should

invest your time into when it comes to blogging, so you don't burn yourself out but you still get the results you want. Without investing time into these, you won't see the wonderful benefits that blogging can bring with it.

## COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION

One of the highlights of the blogging industry is the community. Making and then nurturing the relationships you build is number one on the list for time investment. Blogging can be very one-sided, and it's true that a lot of bloggers are introverted, because it's easier to write a wordy blog post than it is to socialise and put yourself out there 'in real life'. Blogging events are fantastic, but if that's not quite up your





street, blogging connections don't have to be made in person for you to build yourself a support network. It's so important to connect with other bloggers and to make your blog and social media channels a two-way street.

Comments have declined over the past few years, but that just means they are even more special! Commenting on a post that you really love and then simply letting the writer know how much you enjoyed it is a fantastic way to start a conversation. Follow them on social media, reply to their tweet asking for advice, double tap that Instagram post. Interacting like this and making real connections means so much more than an emoji comment where you can't tell if they're a bot or not. Invest your time in social media connection and support your fellow bloggers - it will not only make the recipient feel good, but you too. And who knows, you might meet your new blogging best friend!

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Another important aspect of blogging is photography. So many bloggers feel like this is the main area they are lacking knowledge in. A lot of people want to invest money into camera equipment, but it's important to remember that it's not just the camera that makes a good photographer. Spend time researching and learning how to use that DSLR you bought and have since kept on the auto setting. Youtube is a fantastic resource

and there are plenty of free mini-courses on there to get you started. If you prefer reading, there are countless books, and blog posts that explain photography terms in easy to understand language.

ISO, aperture and shutter speed may sound alien to you, but they're easy to get your head around and it'll become second nature to you if you invest time in learning. As with all things, practice makes perfect, so the more time you put into it, the more you'll get out. Photography is a huge aspect of blogging now, so I really recommend putting some time aside and getting to grips with the camera.

## HASHTAG RESEARCH

There's very little point publishing your post and not shouting about it. The great thing about blogging is that it's evergreen content, but who is going to find it if you don't promote it? Repeat sharing is important on social media platforms, but if you have a small number of followers, it's difficult to get the pageviews. We all know hashtags are important to share our posts but have you ever thought about investing your time in researching them?

It's easy to add #bloggers on the end of a post but as that hashtag gets, on average, just under 1k mentions a day, it's hard for your content to get noticed. It's easier to do your hashtag research on Instagram, as the search bar will show you just how often

that hashtag has been used. Plenty of bloggers (including Instagram queen, Sara Tasker), send monthly emails that include their favourite hashtags to use, as well as up and coming hashtags that have smaller audiences. You want to include hashtags of various sizes - not all with >1m uses already! Use specific hashtags rather than broad ones, such as #ihavethisthingwithfloors rather than #tiledfloor. Use a mixture of hashtags that have 10k mentions or less, >20k, >100k and so on.

Make sure your content matches the hashtag too - it sounds obvious but you don't want to use your generic list of hashtags that includes #onmydesk when the photo is of you dancing around the garden and clearly not in your office. It's also important to mix up your hashtags every few posts, so they don't get stagnant and so you can reach a broader audience.

These are just a few of the areas of blogging that are great areas to invest your time into. We can't juggle it all, and it's not good to burn yourself out trying to do so. But ten minutes or half an hour a day that can be invested a little more wisely in the ideas above, will reap benefits for your blog.

# 5 QUICK WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR BLOG VISIBILITY LONG-TERM

BY HOLLY LANDIS

We all know that search engine optimisation (SEO) is one of the best ways for your blog or website to be discovered by your target audience. But who really has the time to keep up with Google's algorithm updates and put these changes into practice on a monthly, weekly or even daily basis?

The good news is there are plenty of small tweaks that you can make to every blog post as you write and upload them, that only take a few minutes of work but can really help to boost your chances of appearing higher up in search results and make the overall experience on your site better for your readers.

## BREAK UP YOUR POST WITH HEADINGS

This may seem like an obvious point but I still frequently come across posts, even from the most experienced bloggers out there, that are giant walls of text. Nothing puts off a reader more than endless scrolling through a stream of consciousness!

Headers are a great way to organise your content. They help you to stay on topic by



concentrating your energy in short chunks of text and make it much easier for your readers to scan if they're looking for something in particular.

Not only are headers great for user experience, they also give you an opportunity to throw in some keywords that you'd like your blog post to be known for. Think about how you use Google. I know that when I'm looking at a new product, one of the first things I search for is "(product name) review" and take a look at the first page of results. If you want readers to find your post for something this specific, make sure you're adding some of those key phrases throughout your post.

#### TAG YOUR POSTS AND ADD THEM TO A CATEGORY

If you've been blogging for a while, you likely have categories already built out. But if you don't, start now! Depending on how your content management system (aka CMS - think Wordpress, Squarespace, Blogspot etc.) is set up, you may have category and tag pages that automatically populate with your post once that tag has been assigned.


Taking a few seconds to add these tags and categories to a new post can really help you long term as search engines read those overview pages and start to get an idea of what topics you write about and what search queries your posts could potentially answer.

Try to be as specific as you can with your categories and tags. For instance, you may talk about veganism, which would be a good category, then within that, you could have tags for recipes, clothing, simple living etc. The more defined you can make your content, the easier it is for search engines to understand what you're posting about and the more likely you are to start appearing for some of those terms in search results.

#### SHOWCASE YOUR OTHER POSTS

You've already got a bunch of great content on your blog, so show it off! Spending a few minutes going through your new post and linking to other posts you already have is a great way to encourage readers to move around your site and, as a result, improve important metrics such as time spent on your site and lower your bounce rate. Don't worry too much about the jargon, just know that these are really helpful in letting Google know that your site is high quality and should be considered for more search results.

Linking to other posts that already exist is also a good way to highlight some of your older content that might now be buried by a large number of new posts. If your content is evergreen (timeless and not tied to a one-off event, promotion or news story), a link from a more recent blog post can help bring something older back to life and top of your reader's mind. You never know what



someone might be interested in and want to share, even if it was posted a year ago or longer.

## RENAME YOUR IMAGES BEFORE UPLOADING

Is it just me or don't you hate seeing hundreds of unnamed photos sitting in a folder on your computer? DCS3485749 just doesn't do it for me! To save yourself hours of going through hundreds of images when you're writing and formatting a new post, take 5-10 minutes and rename all of the pictures you plan to use when you upload them from your camera card.

Try to stick to descriptive names such as "blue-flower-on-desk". Not only will this help you to find the right image when it's time to add them to your post, those file names will also stick upon upload to your CMS and will publish with those names. If they're descriptive, that can also help search engines when they're reading the backend code of your post and they can pull those images with the descriptions into image searches such as Google Images. Image optimisation is often overlooked so taking this extra step could give you a great advantage over bloggers who produce similar content to you!

## DON'T FORGET YOUR TITLE AND META DESCRIPTIONS

You've seen them, the big blue title and the 2-3 sentences below when you search for

something on Google. Those are the title and meta descriptions and are some of the quickest, but most easily forgotten parts of a web page or blog post that you can update.

As with your headings, you'll want to make sure that both the title and meta descriptions contain a keyword or two for what you'd like your post to appear for in search results. Don't spend too long on this though; your title should be around 55-60 characters and your description should be around 120-130 characters.

While it's debatable how much direct impact these have on SEO (titles often do, descriptions less so), both are still incredibly important in attracting readers to click on your post over someone else's and that traffic is always a great sign of a high quality and worthy site in the eyes of a search engine.

Don't be scared of technical terms like SEO, meta description or UX. Ultimately, you want your content to be found by the people who are most interested in it and these quick tricks will help you on your way to achieving that. Spending a few extra minutes before hitting "publish" on every blog post can really help you to see long-term success with your blog, which is what it's all about!





# 6 TIME-SAVING PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

BY NATALIE PAIGE

Photography has always been known as a medium based on time. Capturing moments, seemingly stopping time altogether. These aspects have drawn in droves of people to the art of the photograph since its invention. Snapshots capture moments we wish would last forever. The art and use of photography has changed over time, especially with the arrival and rise in popularity of the digital photograph. Smartphones have made photography even more accessible than it already was, and we

all know that as bloggers, photography is a centrepiece of what we do.

Blogs across all subjects and passions rely on photographs as a branch to further show their personalities and unique way of looking at life. Because photos play such a huge role, saving time on photography is a huge help. Here are some of the best tips I've learned that help me save time on my photography!

## SHOOT IN BATCHES

Plan your outfits, beauty products you want to talk about, recipes, etc. in advance and shoot them back-to-back! This makes the entire process faster from getting all of your photographs for the week out of the way, so you can edit them in batches and get them posted. Shooting in batches streamlines the rest of your blogging processes. It also makes life easier so you aren't racing against the sun in the shorter winter days. There is nothing like natural light. Also, by shooting in batches you can streamline your editing in Lightroom, Photoshop or whatever editing software you like to use. I use Lightroom, and having all of the pictures I need right in front of me makes editing take half the time it usually does when I used to shoot for one post at a time.

## PLAN SHOTS AHEAD

This covers everything from the theme you want for your shoot to scouting locations and checking the forecast. For most of us, the weather isn't as predictable as we'd like. Double check your schedule and the forecast for the week before choosing the days you want to shoot on. There's nothing worse than showing up to the location and not being able to get any shots because of a freak thunderstorm! Locations are also a huge part of a great shoot. Learn about where you live, find beautiful places that are unique to where you live and integrate them into your concept.

## SHUTTERBUG

If you don't have a hired photographer to take care of getting great shots for you, don't be afraid of overshooting! Take tons of shots from different angles, poses, whatever you want. It is so much better to have an abundance of pictures to choose



from than to take a fewer number of shots and not be happy with any of them after the shoot is over. Most cameras have built-in timers which is how I get most of my portrait shots done. I have a friend shoot with me as often as I can, but sometimes the self-timer is the only way we can get enough portraits done. There's always a workaround, so just keep practising and you'll become more comfortable taking your own shots.

## ORGANISATION

If you use something like a content calendar to plan your posts ahead, look at the posts you have coming up and try to stay at least a week ahead. This way, if something comes up or you take a holiday, you aren't falling behind on your content! I like to shoot in the order that I want my posts to go live in, because it keeps me in the right mindset for each individual post (rather than bouncing back and forth between different posts).

## SHOW YOUR BEST

As frustrating as it can be, bad shots are unavoidable. Not every photo is going to be amazing. It isn't a big deal to have shots you

have no intention of posting. It's better to have 3-5 amazing photos for a blog post than 8-10 mediocre ones. In today's world, creativity is expected to be some unending source that we can pull from whenever we want, but that simply isn't the case. Don't let the pressure to constantly create undermine the vision you have for yourself and your brand or blog. Stick to what you know, love and do best, even if it means posting slightly less often on places like Instagram.

## TAKE YOUR TIME

This obviously sounds counterintuitive, but it can do wonders for your photography. It shouldn't be a rush to get through a photo shoot or find a location. Take a good, old-fashioned walk with your camera to find amazing places you may have passed many times before and never seen. During your shoot (this works if you are in front of or behind the lens), move slowly and make small movements at a time. This will help you learn better angles and what poses work better for certain clothes, makeup, lighting or even food!

Sometimes the best way to find what saves you time is to make small tweaks to the way you already work. Try to pay attention to the things that take up the most time for you and look for ways to you'd like to speed them up!



# DON'T RAIN ON YOUR OWN PARADE

BY MAXINE KERLEY

You've got your business idea, you know who your audience is and what you want to offer them – you are now at the stage where you are thinking about your website. A website is your shop window, whether you're a blogger, a store or a service provider. It is your corner of the HUGE internet to showcase who you are and what you do.

Starting a website can be a really daunting thing – where do you actually start? What makes a good website? Luckily there are loads of platforms available now to help you bring your business dreams into an online reality. But it's easy to get caught up and overlook some really vital things. Let's take a look at the 5 mistakes you don't want to make with your own website.

## NO PLANNING

You've chosen what platform you want your website on, and you're ready to choose a template or even (gulp) build it from scratch. STOP RIGHT THERE because what I am going to say now will save you hours upon hours of time.

Before jumping straight into the fun stuff, grab your notebook and get planning. Think about your website, even sketch out what you'd like it to look like, how many pages you want and more importantly, what is going on those pages.

If you don't spend the time planning out your website, you are going to spend longer thinking of these things as you go. Break down each page, what it's about, what you want the user to do when they visit that

page and what you want to say. This leads me nicely onto...

## SEO

SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) can often get missed when creating a website, mainly because a lot of small businesses or bloggers don't know about it or why it's important. SEO works collaboratively with your content, so when you're doing that planning and writing above, you can be thinking about this at the same time.

Look at the content on your pages - what are you saying? Is it clear to your audience? Does it include the words you want to be found for? Then think about the titles for your pages and how you would describe them. You want people to click when they see you in Google and having good SEO is the difference between you getting found and someone else.

## RESPONSIVE

As we know, most people will look at your

website on the move, so this means their phone or tablet and that's exactly what "responsive" means. It's your website working with whatever size screen it's viewed on, i.e. a huge 27 inch iMac to a 4inch iPhone. Now a lot of the website platforms say "we create responsive sites" but don't just rely on this, do the tests yourself. Once you have your website exactly how you want it, grab your own devices and visit it. Go through every page and try every function to make sure it looks right. Even ask to borrow your friend's if they have different phones or tablets to do a check. You don't want a poor user experience, because once you lose people they rarely come back.

## STATS

So many bloggers and business owners don't spend time looking at their own stats. You want to know how many people are interacting with your website, right? How about whether your social media activity is actually driving traffic? Your website platform might come with built-in stats but you need to have Google Analytics connected to your site. It will give you more information than your platform and the statistics it provides can actually influence your marketing decisions, plus it's FREE.

## IMAGES

Websites are very visual places and often images can be overlooked, especially the quality of the image. Websites need large images in a web resolution to look good. You'll soon see if this isn't right when visiting a website and the image is pixelated. This happens when someone uses a small image in a large space and vice versa - if you choose a large image for a small space you can actually be slowing down your website.





The best thing to do is look at the image sizes your platform recommends and then use a program to resize it, like Photoshop or an equivalent. This means that not only are you uploading the right image for the right size, but you won't be affected with slow site speed.

Even as social media dominates the way we communicate and even do business, don't forget about your website. It is still very much your calling card and a place to host all the information about you, what you do and offer. It should be regularly maintained, regularly updated with engaging content and don't forget to check in on it properly every once in a while. Logging a task in your diary every 6 months to sit down and spend time on your website is a good thing. Re-read your content and ask yourself, "does it still make sense?" Look at how your SEO is performing - do you need better functions? Your website is there to grow and get stronger, so don't leave it out in the cold.



# 4 TIPS TO BE THE BEYONCÉ OF BLOGGING

BY RUTH ANDERSON

“You have the same hours in a day as Beyoncé.” That may be true, but I certainly don’t have all the same help. As a blogger, I am attempting to do several different jobs in one go. I am a writer, an editor, a photographer and a marketing manager, to name a few. If that sounds demanding, that’s because it is, but it’s not impossible. The key is organisation and time management.

Here are four tips to help you become the Beyoncé of blogging.

## #1 | PICK THE DAYS AND TIMES YOU WANT TO PUBLISH YOUR WORK

Whether that’s every day or every few days, it gives you structure and deadlines to stick to. If you discover that your first choices don’t work for you, switch it up and try something else. It’s important to be aware that this does depend on the nature of your blog. If you are aiming to write about current events, then you need to be prepared to create content whenever necessary.

Structure isn’t only beneficial for self-motivation. It’s important for your audience, too. It’s hard to build an audience when they have no idea when to expect new posts! If your readers love your work, then it’s



important that they know when to come back for more.

Personally, I share new content every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 11am, and I make a point of including this information where possible to ensure I stick to it. I knew that if I didn't put this into place, I'd write as and when I wanted. I imagine I would have only written when I felt inspired, so my blog posts would have been irregular. Having this structure encourages me to sit down and think of ideas then put those ideas out into the world.

## #2 I USE EVERY TOOL YOU CAN FIND

Start with the ability to schedule your posts. This is a wonderful gift that you should take full advantage of. If an idea comes to you, you can get the writing done and line it up to be published on one of your scheduled days! Unfortunately for me, my inspiration turns up at some very inconsiderate times. It can rear its head in the middle of the night, and I know I must get it on paper, or it will have gone back into hiding by the morning.

Then there are social media scheduling tools. Hootsuite, Tailwind, Later – you name it. These will become your new best friends. It's not going to create the content for you, but you can dedicate a few hours to lining up your posts, and then let them do the rest! I do this twice a week. I like to take care of these when my social media isn't as active, so I know I'm not missing out on

networking opportunities. My usual time slots are Mondays and Fridays, from around 8am until 11am.

Aside from saving time and stress in the long run, there are two other advantages that I've discovered. The first is that scheduling your posts throughout the day enables you to reach lots of different people on a global scale. While I'm fast asleep, I can have tweets or Instagram posts going out and being seen by people on the other side of the world where their day is just beginning! You must remember that your work can be accessed by anybody, anywhere, so you need to give yourself the best chance of reaching them.

The second advantage is the biggest as far as I'm concerned. Scheduling all your promotional posts means that, when you do log on to social media, you use it for its intended purpose: to socialise and interact. You can log on, reply to tweets and share other people's content without stressing about your own. Being an active member in the blogging community is crucial, so allowing yourself more time to do this can only be a good thing.

## #3 I LISTS

Start with a general list of everything you want to achieve in your day. Write it all down, in any order. This doesn't have to start and end with tasks related to your blog. Often, my lists include some household



tasks, like cleaning the kitchen. As the saying goes, “a woman’s work is never done”, so not only do I have to create and promote my content, but I must also keep my house in order.

When you have your list, try to put it into a schedule, according to what needs to be done at which times. You should include time for breaks and relaxing, too. It’s very easy for me to start something at 10am and then not notice the time until 4pm, so I make sure I have a little reminder to have some lunch at around 1pm.

Having this clear plan for the day helps me to no end, rather than having all my tasks whirling around in my head. Admittedly, I’ll choose blogging over cleaning every day of the week, so cleaning the kitchen is usually left until towards the end of the day, but at least it gets done! (Yes, I’m one of those who will frantically scrub in the last half an hour before my boyfriend gets home and trick him into thinking I’m Wonder Woman. Oh, if only he knew.)

#### #4 | PLAN AHEAD

Sometimes, there are other things going on in life and blogging needs to be put on pause. Admittedly, some of these things creep up and you can’t plan for them, and it’s important not to give yourself a hard time when that happens. However, the things you know are coming up that may interfere with your schedule, take them into

account.

I tend to do this at the beginning of each month. I factor in anything that means I won’t be sat at my computer during that time. Days out, appointments – anything that is likely to interfere with my usual schedule. Using the tools I mentioned previously, I can put everything into place and know that I won’t need to worry about it again.

For example, at the end of May, I went to see my parents for the week. While my intention was to stay relatively active on social media, I knew I wouldn’t have as much time to create content. That meant I had to look into getting posts set up and ready to go at least a week beforehand, so I could focus on time with my mum and dad while knowing that my blog was staying fresh and up-to-date.

Blogging is a steep learning curve but following these guidelines should put you in a better position to take on the challenge. Don’t expect to master these habits straight away as it takes some adjustment to get into the swing of things. The main thing is to remember that you are only one person, trying to do the work of five, so it’s okay to find it challenging! Everybody does, but hopefully these tips will help you feel less like an overwhelmed blogger and a whole lot more like Beyoncé.



# HOW TO SAVE TIME BLOGGING

BY HILLARY ROBERTS

Blogging is vital to reaching people. When people first hear about you or your service, where is the first place they go to find more information? Your website of course! While we know it is essential, it is also hard to keep up a constant stream of blog posts. It takes time to write the post then to put it on all of your social media platforms to publicise it. People often wonder how I can keep up my blog alongside writing for other people. It took me a while to figure out a workflow that would enable me to accomplish this, and once I did it saved me so much time and has been a game changer. I am now able to write far more than I was before.

But how? I can hear you asking. The secret is in automation for a considerable chunk of it. When I first heard of automation, I thought that it was just another fad going around in the blogging world. Then I started experimenting and now I can tell you it is a godsend. My article will go into detail on how you too can achieve this level of automation so you can cut time blogging and move on to income-generating activities in your business. Blogging is essential to cultivating your brand, but unfortunately it does not directly (most of the time) generate income. That is why a workflow such as this is so important. I used to spend days writing blog posts and the time I spent that I could be saving was time lost in earnings. It was making me a bit nervous, so that is why I went searching for a better way to utilise my time blogging so that I could focus more on client work.

## TOOLS NEEDED

Evernote or Google Docs  
CoSchedule  
Wordpress  
Trello or Asana  
Zapier  
Canva  
Grammarly

## THE WORKFLOW

I prefer Evernote because I know it can be accessed everywhere (on my phone, for example, and also offline). I keep all my ideas in Evernote and my editorial calendar in Trello. I have a Zapier zap set up that connects my Evernote to my Trello card. Each week I move what I am working on to the relevant calendar in Trello and make sure that the proper Evernote card (or Google Doc) is attached.

I then work on the blog post in Evernote, which is great because I can easily access



the document everywhere; if I am travelling and want to pass the time working on the post, I can access it on my phone or even hook up a wireless keyboard to my tablet and work on it that way. After I write the blog post, I then use CoSchedule to import the post into WordPress. It can be hard to get the hang of how to do this at first, but once you do it a few times it is second nature. After being set up in WordPress, I edit the post using Grammarly. What I like most about this is that I can add my blog post images in Evernote and it will import precisely as I have it to WordPress. I make sure everything looks good and then schedule the post to go live!

Another process that I have found useful is to make and edit images in batches. I used to make the images post by post, but that was added time that could have been better spent elsewhere, so now I look at all of the posts that I have to do for the week and make them all at once in Canva. This alone saves hours.

If you do it one image at a time with each post, you have to go in and select the template, add the image, add the text and then download it individually. And if you are doing this post by post, it can take time to open Canva and go to the correct template

to add the image and text. But if you stay in the Canva app you can do all of your Facebook posts at once, then all of your Instagram posts at once, and so on. What's more, if you have the paid version, it will automatically resize the image for you, saving you even more time. Once I realised this, I started doing everything in batches; I now write all my posts at once in Evernote, which is attached to the appropriate Trello card, then put all the images in the posts in one go. This saves a tremendous amount of time. Before I discovered batching, I was taking two days to create blog posts. Now I am down to one day! Even though my preference is Evernote because I can use it offline on my phone, Google Docs is just as effective an alternative if this is not as much of a concern.

Before I discovered this workflow, it used to take me HOURS to put each post together. Formatting, adding images, all of that used to take me a whole DAY to do one post. Now I can get through four or five in a day. This is helpful because you can have just a couple of days of content creation a week, you can then focus on income-generating activities during the other days instead of spending all of your time on activities that are important to building a brand, but that do not directly generate income.

# HOW TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF THE TIME YOU HAVE WHEN IT COMES TO EXERCISE

BY EMMA COOKE

"I'm too busy to tell people how busy I am."

How many times a day do you hear the word 'busy'? It seems these days everybody has a really bad case of being busy and not having enough time. In a fast moving world where nothing ever really seems to stand still, how is it possible to find the time for exercise?

Some people would say that if exercise is important to you, you'll find time. It just isn't that black and white though is it? In life we all have different priorities - jobs, families and relationships that all require our attention and our time. It is often the case that when something has got to give when you're busy, exercise will not make the cut.

So rather than tell you that you should just magically find the time and be all #noexcuses, here are some ways that I try and squeeze exercise into my routine around my two jobs, friends, family and long-suffering boyfriend.

## HAVE A PLAN

This above everything else is the best bit of advice in my entire article. I cannot tell you how much easier life is when you feel planned and organised. Sit down with a diary and know what the week has in store for you. Look at what days are feasible to get some exercise in and write it down. This

makes your exercise plan more likely to happen than just telling yourself that next week you'll go to the gym a couple of times and maybe do some yoga or go for a run. When you approach exercise like it is something you only might do, you won't do it.

Every Sunday I sit down with my diary and I look at what my full-time job has in store for me, what PT sessions I have booked in, and what days I am likely to see my boyfriend versus the ones where we just say good morning and goodnight to each other. I plan my tougher sessions for the start of the week, when I know my motivation is at its best and my energy levels will be higher. Weekends are more flexible for me, so those are no-brainer training days.

You know yourself better than anybody else, you'll also know when you're more or less likely to exercise. Instead of trying to force yourself into a routine that doesn't work for you, accept how much time you have to dedicate to exercise and make the best use of it.

## HIIT WORKOUTS

HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) has become seriously popular in the last couple of years thanks to people like Joe Wicks. People really bought into the idea of

exercising at a higher intensity for shorter periods of time and still getting results. This has made exercise for the busy generation much more manageable. These shorter and more intense sessions can be pretty brutal and there are tonnes of brilliant workouts you can follow on YouTube.

Be careful that you are working hard enough for the session to be classed as HIIT, as quite often people mistake tough circuit sessions as the same thing. Depending on the interval split you decide on, for example, 30 seconds on 30 seconds off, during the 'on' period the idea is you give it everything you've got. This type of training is hard going but does offer brilliant results if you're limited on time.

### INTUITIVE MOVEMENT

I am all for this these days. One of the most effective ways to incorporate exercise into your life is to commit time in your week for movement. On that day, depending on how you feel if you're anxious or stressed or tired, you can pick a type of movement you feel will benefit you the most. This way you're not forcing yourself to the gym giving it 20% effort and a load of bad attitude because you're just not feeling it.

This stops exercise being something you're forcing yourself to do into something that is giving your body what you feel it needs on the day.

### STEP COUNT

As it seems now almost everybody has a smartphone or watch of some kind that can monitor our steps, we have all become a little bit obsessed with our step count. As a FitBit junkie myself, I love step challenges. I am forever taking on friends and friends of friends and my clients in weekend and weekday step challenges. They're ridiculously addictive.

I don't care what anybody says, everybody loves the smug feeling of being crowned the winner of a weekday hustle or weekend warrior challenge. My clients love to take me on, and occasionally beat me!

### HOME GYM

The one thing I think most of us really struggle with is finding the time to get to the gym. You've overslept or you get stuck in traffic leaving work because your meeting finished late and before you know it, there just isn't really a decent amount of time once you get there and get changed to get a good enough workout in to justify going.

Being able to exercise at home can be a great time saver when it comes to getting your sessions in. Body weight exercises are not to be sniffed at and there are some great ways to manipulate movements to make them much harder. This also takes away your travel time. You can pick up cheaply priced resistance bands, mats and weights in loads of places now. You really don't need that many bells



and whistles as you think for a decent workout.

## LUNCH WORKOUTS

One of the best things about working in a town or city is almost all have a budget gym option. These places normally waive a joining fee on and off throughout the year and offer cheap as chips memberships for fairly well kitted out gyms with zero contracts. For some people, this could be a really good option to sneak in a quick 30 minute training session during the day. It gets you away from your desk, stops you spending money on other stuff, and doesn't allow you to make excuses about why you can't get there.

## DAILY CHALLENGES

We've all seen the press-up, squat and plank challenges that always seem to randomly crop up throughout the year. Why not take on one of these yourself and set yourself a daily challenge?

Take one movement a day and set yourself a target. For example on Monday you could commit to doing 50 squats. It doesn't matter when you do them, or how many you do at any one time, the idea is just that you get them done that day. On Tuesday you could say you want to do 30 press-ups, and the same rules apply that ultimately you just have to get them done that day. Throughout the week you can take on a range of different movements that target different areas of the body and each week you can look to increase it to make sure you're challenging yourself.

So there you have it, my take on finding different ways of incorporating exercise into your busy life. I'm definitely not saying it's easy but I will tell you it is worth it. Habits are difficult to make and easy to break, so why not make exercise one you really stick to?





# HOW TO MAKE THE TIME TO TURN YOUR PASSION INTO A BUSINESS

BY SARINA LANGER

If you're stuck in a job you don't like, you're not alone. More and more people consider self-employment, but many people don't make it past the first hurdle: time. Building a business takes a huge amount of hours and effort, and if you already have a full-time job, raise two children, and are married, then fitting anything more into your busy routine can be tricky. If you work part-time, have no

children, and aren't married, then it's still a challenge. Ultimately, you're about to take on more work, and you are your only motivator. There's no supervisor setting your deadlines for you, no manager telling you what to do next. It's just you and your determination.

Many people give up because they simply



can't find the time. But allow me to share a secret with you: you'll never find the time. You need to make it.

So, I have good news and good news: making the time for your passion to grow into a business is up to no one but you, and it's not as hard as it sounds.

## HOW TO MAKE TIME

Start by drawing a table of your week - weekdays at the top and hours down the side, and pencil in everything you can't drop. These are things like your day job, the school run, grocery shopping every Friday, etc. Don't put in anything that doesn't need to happen at a certain time or on a specific day.

Next, sit back and examine the gaps. Do you have an hour every Monday morning? Do you leave work earlier every Friday afternoon, giving you an extra two hours? If there are no gaps at all, consider how you might be able to create some. What if you got up just half an hour earlier every day?

Now make a list - on a separate sheet of paper - of everything you need to fit in. Be vague for now - you can break down your goals later. For example, if you want to grow your blog into a profitable business, pencil blogging into the gaps you just made in your schedule. J. K. Rowling once said that, if you want to write a book, you need to set time aside for it and protect that time religiously. The thing you just pencilled into your schedule deserves the same treatment. Those previous gaps are for your passion, and your passion only. Not hair appointments. Not walks with your dog. They aren't up for debate. Guard them without mercy.

## SET SMALLER GOALS

Now you know what you want to achieve and when you're going to do it, you can break it down into smaller goals. If you have three one-hour slots throughout your week and you want to create a profitable blog, your goals could be 'affiliate research' or 'write post drafts for next month'. Make it small, make it achievable, and stick to it.

## KEEP TRACK OF YOUR GOALS

Have you ever had an idea and thought, 'I don't need to write this down, I'll remember it', and then forgot all about it five minutes later? This will happen with your new venture, too. The busier you get, the harder it will be to stay on top of everything. Deadlines, meetings, appointments, research... If you don't make a note of everything you need to get done (and when), you'll forget. I record everything in my bullet journal and in several notebooks, depending on what it is I need to remember. You don't need a different notebook for every new project, but keeping a list somewhere helps and the sense of achievement when you can tick off goals is worth it.

You can also announce your weekly goals on social media. This helps me stay focused and holds me accountable, but it can also add more pressure to your already busy schedule. If you're not sure if this would work well for you, you could try it with a few smaller goals you know you'll achieve. You could also ask a friend to check in on your progress by the end of the week or month. That way, someone holds you accountable without your entire Instagram following knowing what you're trying to do.

## DIFFICULTIES

My biggest struggle is keeping to the goals I set for myself. I often set too many, and when I don't, I get distracted by other, less important tasks. More exciting tasks.

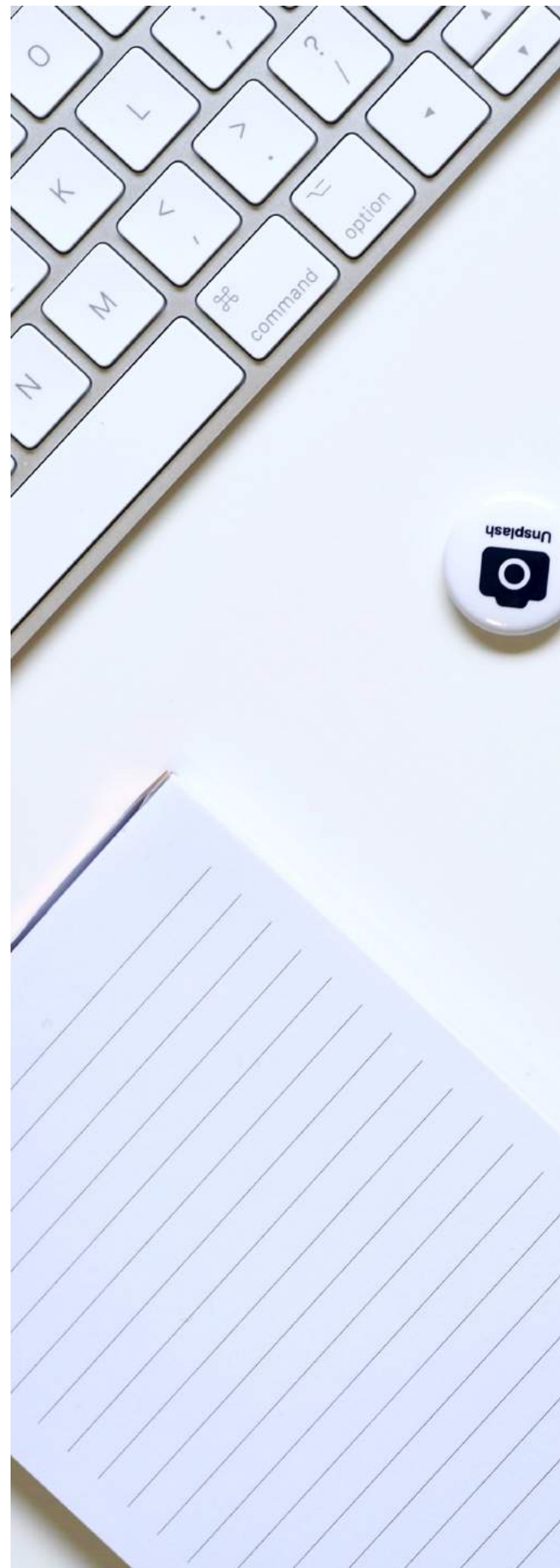
When you're just starting to work toward your final goal, knowing what you can achieve in those free slots you just filled is hard. Set only a few goals to start with, and see how you do. If you can fit more, fit more. But having a bit of wiggle room is good, too, because the unexpected will find a way into your life eventually. Here's how I decide when this happens to me: if it's urgent, I deal with it right away. This can be difficult when you have deadlines, which makes leaving a bit of space all the more important. If it's not urgent, I make a note and come back to it next week.

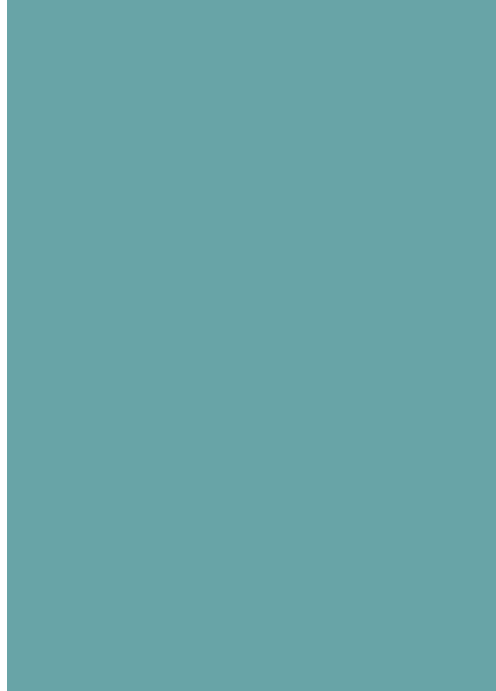
Note: new ideas are exciting, not urgent. Leaving those for another week is hard, but if you're still excited when you come back to them you know you're onto something!

## PERSEVERE

If this sounds like a lot of time, work, and effort, don't worry. It is. But if you really want to turn your side hustle or idea into a profitable business, it's worth that time, work, and effort. Don't forget to take care of yourself, listen to your body and mind when either, or both, need a break, and keep at it.

You'll get there.





# TIME-SAVING TIPS

BY HOLLIE ELLIS

Have you spent hours upon hours trying to make something look right in Canva and at the end it still looks homemade? And by the time you give up on doing anything more, you realise you've lost half the day working on one graphic?

Don't worry, you're not alone. A lot of business owners and bloggers find themselves in exactly the same position and on a regular basis. I am here to tell you that it doesn't have to be this way.

As a business owner, time is precious and you want to be using it efficiently. Here are some time-saving tips to help you when it comes to creating any future graphics for your business.

## PLANNING

Firstly, plan out what sorts of graphics you need to create; for example, blog graphics, Pinterest graphics, Instagram graphics,

Twitter graphics, Facebook graphics, Youtube graphics and so on. Once you have a definitive list of the types of graphics you need, it's time to find out what size they need to be. The great thing about using a web app such as Canva, is they have the different sized posts already pre-loaded in to choose from. Some may not be available and this is where Google then becomes your friend.

## BRAND STYLE

Having your brand stylesheet to hand is a great way to save time, as it will show which colours and fonts you should be using to keep everything 'on brand' for your business. Typically a brand stylesheet will tell you the names of the fonts used and also the hex code of a colour, for example, #e71d73.

Using the likes of Canva, you can add a custom colour and keep it in the palette of

colours available to you to use each time, by adding in the hex code of that colour.

If you don't have a brand stylesheet, all you need to do is google 'find colour in image' and there will be plenty of websites to choose from where you can upload an image of your logo, pick out the colour and it'll automatically tell you what the hex code is for that colour. Make sure you input that into Canva straightaway.

## BRAND GUIDELINES

Brand guidelines are much more advanced than a brand stylesheet, as they detail do's and don'ts for the use of the logo, they show how other branded materials should look and they also go into fonts and colours to use in more detail. If you don't have brand guidelines for your brand, it's definitely something worth looking into.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography is a whole other kettle of fish and to save time, why not check out some



free stock websites? Most of them have their own styles and here are just a few to check out: [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com), [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com), [pexels.com](https://pexels.com). Make sure the photos you do use are 'on brand' with how you want everything to look and feel.

I would recommend spending some time looking through these free stock websites, typing in anything relevant in the search bar to see what's available and start downloading them into organised folders as to what they relate to. This way when you're in need of a photo, rather than go online, search for an image and then download it, you can just go to your photography folders and you can see what you have available.

## TEMPLATES

This is a great way to save time - create some templates in Canva which you can use over and over again. Firstly, write out a list of graphics you usually need to create on a weekly basis and start to create templates for them in Canva. This will save you so much time because when you know you need to create a new blog graphic, for example, you will have the template sitting there ready to use as soon as you log in. And there is nothing wrong with using your own templates over and over again. This will result in a more consistent look across the board for everything. A great example is Janet Murray's blog graphics. They're uniform and consistent.

## BATCHING

Batching up graphics is a great way to save time. So why not schedule in 1 hour every week to batch some graphics together. Now you have your templates in place, this will make everything a lot easier. Write out a list

of graphics you need to create and have the wording you need to use in a word document, so you can easily copy and paste the wording into Canva and away you go. And because you've already spent some time downloading stock images, they'll be easy to find and upload from your specific folders too.

## ORGANISATION

Once you've batched up the creation of some graphics, it's time to organise them into folders. You could create a folder referencing the type of graphic it is, for example, blog graphics. Inside that folder, create another one with the month and year and save the relevant graphics you've just created in there. This will save masses of time because when it comes to writing and publishing a new blog post, the graphic will be there ready for you to use in an easy to find folder.

## SMARTPHONE APPS

You don't have to rely on web apps like Canva all the time, as there are also some great smartphone apps available to help you create graphics on the go when you're out and about, including these two below:

- + Wordswag - This app is easy to use, low cost and is also hooked up with Pixabay as well. It's pre-loaded with inspirational and motivational quotes and great for producing social media graphics on the go for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- + Canva - There is also a Canva mobile app available to use, which is just the same as the web app, but for smartphones. Again, this is a great way to create social media graphics on the go.

## INSPIRATION

If you find yourself in a bit of a pickle and you're not feeling particularly creative, looking on Pinterest for inspiration can help. Why not set up a Graphics Inspiration board with inspiration to help you design future graphics? This way, when you feel like you've hit a brick wall, looking at the pins on your board will be able to give you a boost in the right direction.





# HOW TO MANAGE TIME EFFECTIVELY AS A WRITER

BY RHIANNE WILLIAMS

Time management is one aspect of the organisation that writers tend to overlook. Different writers have different management styles, but the fact is that there are only 24 hours in a day. The issue of time management comes to the forefront, more so for writers who are doing it as a part-time task. So how do you juggle your other commitments with writing? How do you manage other professional and social responsibilities?

## WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

I always find that writing down the things you need to do first is always helpful. For example, if you have a full-time day job, that's something you need to do, so is washing your hair, etc. Write down the things that are a must-do for everyday life and then evaluate the time it takes for them to get done.

## WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

Things you want to do consist of Netflix, being social, hobbies, side hustles (although this could also be a need if you want this to eventually be your full-time job). Then once you have them, evaluate the time needed to do them and see where they will fit in your day.

Top tip: remember the average adult needs 7 hours sleep, but everyone is different. I

know a few people who get by on 5 hours sleep, while others need 9. So figuring out your sleeping time and what you need as a person is vital to working out your schedule.

## CREATE A TO-DO LIST

You cannot prioritise tasks if you don't know what they are. What are the tasks of the day (both writing and non-writing)? A to-do list is important as your writing is not done in isolation. You have to manage other tasks to make your day balanced.

You can even try and make a to-do list for the week, or the month, and then slot tasks into your schedule where you can.

## IDENTIFY PEAK ENERGY PERIOD

Some writers say they write best at night; some say they are at their creative peak immediately after waking up, while others will be comfortable writing at any time of the day. Identifying your peak energy times will help you plan other tasks around it.

Sometimes you might even need to try things out before you commit to which method works for you. Try staying up late one week and getting up early the next and figure out which is best.

## PRIORITISE

What tasks are to be completed as a priority? Without prioritising, you would be jumping from one task to another without completing these tasks satisfactorily. Don't just make them tick off items, make them count. If something can wait until the next day, leave it until the next day. However, you need to be careful that you don't push things over to the next day over and over again.

## SET A NUMBER OF WORDS

Setting a minimum number of words to be written in a session pushes you to go on during those low-energy moments when you don't feel like writing. Or how many blog posts to write in a week. Set a goal that works for you.

## NO DISTRACTIONS

Writing is largely a mental task which can get disrupted by easy distractions, both visual and audio. Creating a conducive writing environment can do a lot to boost your productivity. A quiet spot in the house like the bedroom or converted attic will do just fine.

Some writers say they find it easier to write when unhooked from the internet. This will keep off distractive advertising, and social media distractions.

## USE A FRIEND

A writing buddy can keep you in check. You don't have to be physically together - you can also do it online or via mobile. They will check on you at set times and ask about your progress.

This might provide that extra push you need on dull days.

## SCHEDULE BREAKS

Sitting down for long hours puts a strain on your back and neck, slowing you down. Schedule breaks to allow for both mental and physical recharging. It will also help you review your progress periodically.

## TIME BLOCKING

This is something that I've recently been introduced to and honestly, I think this could be the one thing that gets everyone into a schedule. Of course, in your schedule, you'll need time to set aside and do your time blocking. It's been recommended to me to do it weekly. So on a Sunday or Saturday morning/afternoon/evening (whichever works for you), plan out your next week and, if need be, set yourself alerts that remind you to move onto the next task.

If the previous task isn't finished, set aside some more time later on in the week to finish it up. So far, for me at least, this seems to be the way forward when it comes to scheduling my to-do list with notifications that come up on my phone. Otherwise, I see it written down and I'm like, "Nah, I'll do that later."

## DELEGATE TASKS

Smart delegation is a useful skill for a writer. It takes away the non-essential stuff and leaves you to concentrate on priorities. A virtual assistant could be very helpful in researching, proofreading, and formatting.



# HOW TO MANAGE A SIDE HUSTLE WITH A 9-5

BY TORI DUNLOP

Side hustle: it's the word(s) of the year. Or rather, of a generation: Millennials are known for their hustle, with over a third opting for a second (or third) source of income. Many more millennials have passion projects: maybe not profitable, but instead, offer individuals the opportunity to explore an interest and develop skills. We could spend a whole article or six talking about why millennials love the side hustle (crushing student debt and the need to feel entrepreneurial are just two reasons), but

before you jump into the deep-end, there are some things you need to prepare for.

In 2016, I made tens of thousands of dollars side hustling. As a professional digital marketer, I use my skills at my corporate 9-5 and as a freelance strategist for clients in my spare time. I also write and promote Victori Media — my personal finance and career blog for millennial women — which is a huge monster in and of itself.

There is a certain glamour to side hustles in this day and age, a certain badge of honour with being tired. You must do a million things and never be satisfied and push until you can't push any harder. Work to get ahead, make more money, gain more skills. It's an easy trap to fall into.

It's moments like these when I realise that having a full plate — corporate job plus side hustle plus other side hustle plus a semi-social life — can and will leave you burned out. But only if you let it. You're allowed to work hard. You're allowed to be busy. You're allowed to make more money, work on more projects, indulge in a passion — but never without caring for yourself first.

Managing your time is ROUGH. There's no way around it. When you get home from work, all you want to do is collapse on the couch with a pint of Halo Top and a bottle of wine. But there are courses to create, emails to respond to and work to be done.

I was recently asked at a global panel about how I manage to balance a side hustle with ANOTHER side hustle, with a 9-5. And I realised that although side hustles can often be exhausting, they are incredibly rewarding. They make you better at your job, grow your skills and network, and earn you more income flexibility. They offer that entrepreneur side of you to flourish.

Good time management, goal setting, and prioritising are so important. But more than that, balancing a job with a hustle is about just that: balance. More than once (hundreds of times), I've crashed on my couch on a long day instead of working out, writing that blog post, or pitching a new client. And while this kind of care — shutting your brain off — is incredibly important, it

must be balanced with productive work. What I discovered is that you have more time than you think you do. Every second of free time must be utilised, even if that means it's spent taking care of yourself. Those 20 minutes on the bus every morning? That's your time to check emails or respond to Instagram comments. Those 20 seconds spent waiting for your water to warm up? Do squats. Your walk to work or an appointment? Call your mum. Working both a full-time job and a side hustle is one of the most challenging things you will do. But I cannot recommend it enough. It will open doors, give you new experiences, and make you an extra stash of cash. If you're a creative — designer, marketer, artist, photographer, writer, etc. — and interested in leveraging your skills, now's the time.



# HOW TO MANAGE TIME AS A MULTI-HYPHEN JOB AND KEEP YOUR MENTAL HEALTH IN CHECK

BY ALESSIA CESANA

Stress and burnout are the biggest risks to our health in the modern workplace, and it can affect everyone, but when you have a so-called “multi-hyphen job title” (as in Emma Gannon’s book), you are even more at risk. Whether it’s a full-time job and a side hustle, or multiple businesses, you are constantly juggling the competing demands on your time, and passions can become a chore. You also need to make sure you don’t neglect your loved ones, and “me time” begins to look like a luxury rather than a necessity. If that does happen, the biggest victim of such hustling can be your mental health. Here are the strategies I use to make

sure I manage my time effectively, without overworking and taking my time to relax and rest, and prevent minor illnesses that could blow out of proportion.

## MANAGING TIME IN BLOCKS

This will be controversial, and if it works for you then by all means, keep using it, but I’ve ditched the to-do list a long time ago. Having a list of things to do caused me too much anxiety when I was adding to it at a faster pace than I was ticking off (and the Harvard Business Review has gone into the research behind why they aren’t our most



effective time-management tool). Now I only write down deadlines in my diary alongside meetings, and review how much I have done at the end of the day. What I do to avoid my days being a chaotic free-for-all is blocking out sections of it for specific areas of my work (emails, admin, marketing, writing, design etc) and for my private life (so there is no excuse not to rest), and then work on tasks within that area based on evaluating urgency and importance (one way to do it is with the “Eisenhower Matrix”). When the time allocated is over, it doesn’t matter where I’m at with the things that need doing, I will switch to the next section (save some rare case of genuine need). If I’m not daydreaming instead of working, anything that really needed doing (because of a deadline or its role in the progression of a project) will have been done anyway.

## DO THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS FIRST

Chances are you are familiar with the jar and the stones as a metaphor for life, and how if you put the big stones (one of which is health) in first, you use the jar more effectively and you manage to fit more in of the less important things. It is an efficient way to manage your time, too. I tend to keep the most important things for the beginning of the week, so that if I’m tired, or coming down with an illness, or just want a day off to enjoy the sun before a weekend of rain, I know I can afford to do it. It may

not be so simple if you are working for someone else, but it can apply to the things you do outside of your 9 to 5 too. An extra hour of work on Monday evening can make a difference to your Saturday morning, when you have to choose between your blog and brunch with friends.

## FOCUSING ON ONE THING AT A TIME

I played around with the Pomodoro Technique using an app called Be Focused, and worked out the time I can focus and be productive. Their suggested intervals are 25 minutes, but I’ve found myself taking breaks I don’t need and not managing to do a task properly because of them, so I have extended them to one hour (the research-suggested time is up to 90 minutes for long tasks). For that one hour, I forget multitasking and focus on one thing at a time. My phone is off (if it’s important they will leave a voicemail I can chase up in the break), my emails are off (I only check them at specific times of the day anyway), and most importantly my social media notifications are off. The breaks are also timed, so I don’t end up wasting a whole hour scrolling through Instagram.

## TAKING LUNCH BREAKS

That’s my one non-negotiable in my working life. I mostly work from home, which means

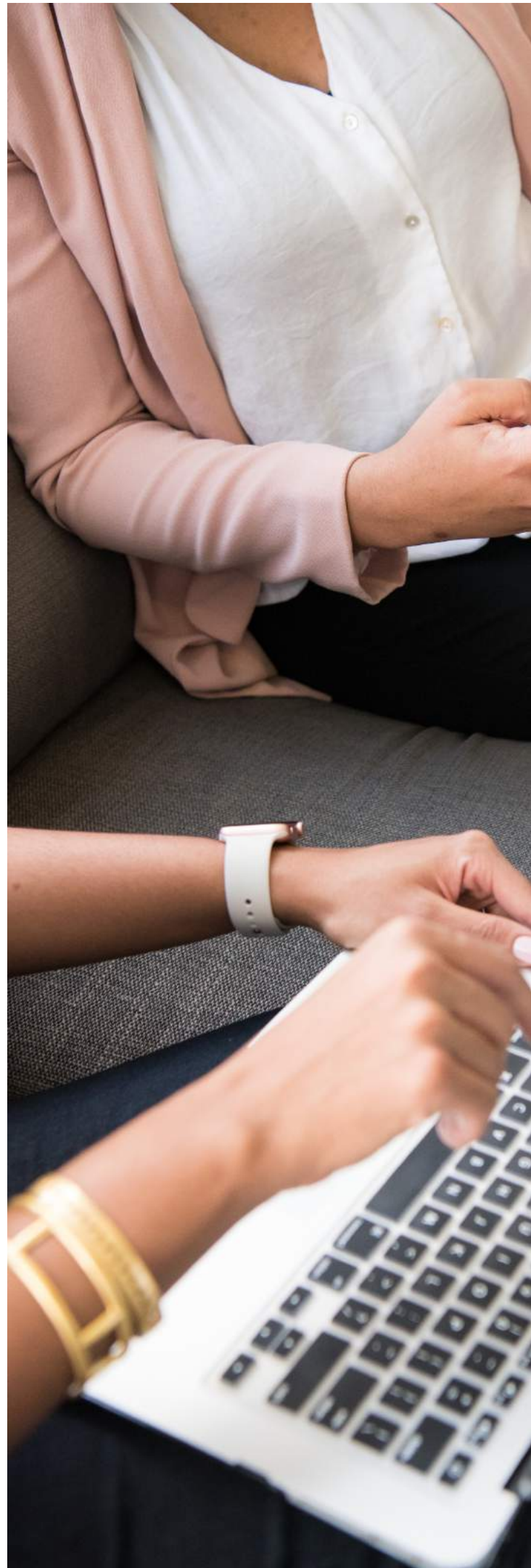


I need to break to cook my lunch anyway, but the temptation of just going back to my laptop and eat it while working is still present. However, the research referenced by Susan H. Randolph of the University of North Carolina in her paper “The Importance of Employee Breaks” is unanimous in the benefits for creativity and productivity. It is also important to reduce stress and fatigue, and make you make the most of the nutrients in what you are eating, which ultimately makes you healthier overall. Focusing on eating and chewing slowly has a number of benefits on our digestion too. It can also be a chance to have some “me time” throughout the day if you have a demanding personal life, or vice-versa to have some time with friends so you can take an evening out for yourself without neglecting anyone.

#### KEEPING WATER AWAY FROM THE DESK

I know many people keep a bottle at hand at all times so they don't forget to drink enough water, but, to get around this issue, I keep an app on my phone which sends me reminders to drink water. By keeping the water away from the desk, I force myself to take short walks every time I need some. Walking can improve brain function according to research done by Harvard University, and an active lifestyle is also a benefit for our mental health. While the ideal solution is a long walk in nature, it may not always be possible when a chunk of our free time is taken up by our blog or a side hustle, so even a quick walk every so often to get a glass of water adds up. It's also great for productivity as it clears your mind to allow for fresh thinking.

These are just guidelines that work for me, but my working life isn't perfect and sometimes needs adjusting to life's circumstances, but they are generally useful ways of making sure I am kind to my body and my mind while keeping on top of the workload by working smarter instead of harder.



# MY FIVE P'S OF MANAGING TIME

BY FARIHA KHAYYAM

My father once told me, “Every single person is given the same 24 hours, how do you make the most out of it?” It wasn’t until much later that I understood the inner meaning behind it. Now I’m juggling a full-time job, freelancing some of my niche hobbies, and running a blog with (almost) weekly posts. Here’s how I do it: Procrastinate, Panic, Pray, Pay, Pamper. Well, jokes aside, here’s how I actually do it.

## PLANNING

I’ve always been a fan of bullet journals, though I rarely do it myself. My journal is the simplest one, where I just need the most space I can get to write and plan. Why don’t I use a Planner App on my phone or tablet? Because my phone is almost all the time on low battery whenever I need it. However, I do use my Google Calendar (my personal favourite calendar app) whenever I need to set reminders or alerts, because if I say to myself ‘I will remember to do ----’, I’m bound to forget it even before the hour is up. So yes, technology does make life easier.

For example, July of last year was one of the most hectic months to date. I was loaded with deadlines right until my travel to Dubai, and I was attending evening online webinars in between all of this. So, while my journal looked chaotic, my calendar app seemed logical enough to make sense. To make things a little less intimidating, I use colours to categorise my tasks. This way, I remember what is my “To Do” for that day

and how much of it have I accomplished.

## PRIORITISING

My next method is of course prioritising my tasks. I had little-to-no blog activity in the weeks I was travelling. It helped if I had some prescheduled posts, but there was nothing new that I wrote during that time. So, prioritising is essential to manage time. If something has a deadline, those tasks are already at the forefront of my “To Do” list, but ranking the ones which do not follow a deadline is the real deal. I mostly evaluate them on three main metrics: (1) How long would it take me to complete it? (2) Who benefits and how much is the benefit versus the amount of time / effort / resources I am putting in? And lastly (3) What else is in line after this? After those non-deadline tasks are evaluated, they automatically get a “To be done by...” date assigned to them. This way it’s easier to keep track of them.





## PRESCHEDULING

The next thing I do most is prescheduling. If I am free at the moment, I will utilise the time right then. During that week of 24th July, after my travel and deadlines, I most probably slept like a log. If I wasn't sleeping, then I was more than likely drafting my next month's worth of blog posts (and catching up on my reading, because I review books on my blog too). I believe in utilising technology to its full capability, and if any of my timely tasks, either work or blog related, has auto-scheduling or anything similar to that, I pretty much use it all the time. It pays off during the off-hours, when I finally realise I have all the time to myself.

## PRODUCTIVITY ON HIATUS

There is always the other side of the story. What do I do when I'm in an unproductive slump or how I like to call it: "Productivity on Hiatus"? It's only natural that we feel utterly lost and unmotivated from time to time, but the lesson learnt from that is not to let it get to you. It's the way your brain tells you that you've done enough, now let's take a break, and in all honesty, you might really need that break.

Why do you force yourself to do something when you are not "feeling it"? (Yes, I know, deadlines), but if those are personal goals I usually don't let it bother me, because I know the quality of work I'll produce during my "Productivity on Hiatus" phase will not be up to par, and I'll have to end up repeating it anyway.

During this phase I try to change my rhythm and daily routine. I start trying new things or get back to something I used to do a long time ago. I try to loosen the restrictions I've set on myself. Want to eat that whole pizza for lunch? - Do it! Want to spend a little extra on a Limited-Edition MAC Lipstick you

wanted to buy? - Do it! This helps to relax the brain and yourself, and before you know it, you will back on your toes in a few days or weeks.

## PAMPER YOURSELF

So, what's next? Now that I have planned all of my "to-dos", set colour-coded reminders, then prioritised, prescheduled and completed it all, I need to reward myself. I usually bake myself a cake or buy a new book at the end of the month. At other times, I disconnect myself completely during weekends, and spend the day in self-care, whether that's going shopping or binge watching Harry Potter. For me, gratification encourages commitment to maintaining and following a tight schedule.

To wrap up, this is not a Do-or-Kill thing. It really depends on what your personality is like, how you like to handle your various engagements, and lastly, what level of importance you give to certain things over others. The "Five Ps" methodology (Planning > Prioritising > Prescheduling > Productivity Break > Pampering Yourself) works for me. It's not heavily dependent on any specific person or piece of technology, neither is it extremely technical or complicated - it's just a matter of falling into the habit of doing it to see actual results.

Last but not least, it is equally important to give yourself self-care and some off-time before you burnout from overwork. High productivity also inspires creativity, and, as content creators and bloggers, your creativity is your biggest asset. As Albert Einstein said: "Creativity is intelligence having fun." So remember to not stop having fun and being you.



# BREAKING DOWN LINGO: BOUNCE RATE

At the end of the day, bounce rate is all about how long people are staying on your site for.

Your bounce rate reflects someone who visits one page on your website and then leaves.

## A HIGH BOUNCE RATE ISN'T GREAT NEWS...

It could be a sign that people aren't interested in your content or they're coming to your website by mistake. You want to aim for a low bounce rate.



# INSTAGRAM SPOTLIGHT

With so many Instagram accounts out there, it can be so difficult to get noticed. What can you do to stand out? Take some inspiration from Han: she combines motivational graphics with her personality to create a perfectly balanced and interesting feed.

## WELLNESS & WANDER

### HER BACKGROUND

I started to document my fitness/health journey and turned it into a space where I wanted to help and inspire other women to live happy and healthy lives through mental and physical wellness.

### WHAT SHE LOVES ABOUT INSTAGRAM

It's a space to be creative and say what you want to say with the help of imagery.

### WHAT MOTIVATES HER

Helping others but also inspiring myself through the work of others.


### FAVOURITE TOOLS

Right now I am still trying to find something that works for me.

### INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT


[instagram.com/wellnessnwander](https://www.instagram.com/wellnessnwander)





*if you can't stop thinking about it,  
don't stop working for it.*

@wellnesswander  
wellnessandwander.com



*regardless of how others feel about me,  
i am going to choose to be happy & love myself.*

@wellnesswander  
wellnessandwander.com



“

*too many days are wasted comparing ourselves  
to others and wishing to be something we aren't.*

*everybody has their own strengths and  
weaknesses, and it is only when you accept  
everything you are - and aren't - that you will  
truly succeed.*

@wellnesswander  
wellnessandwander.com

”



“

*there comes a time when you have to choose  
between turning the page & closing the book.*

@wellnesswander  
wellnessandwander.com



“

*be soft, kind &  
loving. but also  
don't take crap  
from others.*

@wellnesswander  
wellnessandwander.com



*the habits you created to survive will no  
longer serve you when it's time to thrive.  
get out of survival mode.  
new habits, new life*

@wellnesswander  
wellnessandwander.com



# BLOGGING BREAKTHROUGH

CAN'T WAIT FOR THE NEXT ISSUE?

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BLOG IT BOSS IT.