

GET ANYTHING DONE

UNLOCK ACHIEVEMENT WITH THE POWER
OF TIMED INTERVALS

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USE TIMED INTERVALS

YOU'VE BEEN THERE BEFORE—YOU HAVE A MILLION THINGS TO do. When you think about everything tucked underneath your covers, you imagine how good it would be not to get up. The weight of the tasks that stand between you and an evening victory seems like unslayable giants.

The good news is that you can learn how to remove procrastination from your day. **If you are success-driven and have huge goals, you might be prone to doses of procrastination. Why? Because procrastination is a coping mechanism for stress.** You're putting things off because you know how much work you have to do to reach your goals.

Sometimes looking too hard at the BIG picture is a bad idea. Having monster goals is essential, but thinking about them all at once is intimidating. The goal turns into a problem that we haven't solved, and we may have no clue how to. Our optimism for a better future turns into a whale or unscalable mountain.

That's why it's helpful to break down our projects into digestible bits, using timed intervals to get everything done.

Instead of thinking about how much work we have to do, we work in short intervals, focusing on the time spent instead of the ultimate result we want.

How do I know it works? I've used this method and finished more projects in three months than in the last THREE YEARS. I'm not a lazy person, either.

Say we need to build a new website for a business we're launching. We make a mistake when our focus is on the laundry list of tasks we need to complete the project: graphic design, pictures, copy, products, marketing, payment gateway, testimonials, sales. The list is too long.

If we think of everything left to be done, instead of working on it, we're more likely to see a movie with a friend or start binge drinking. It seems illogical—and it is—but it happens because we psych ourselves out with what seems impossible to complete in the near future. *I'm not getting what I want anytime soon, so why start now?* We might say to ourselves.

The key to being productive is working in intervals—15, 30, 60, 90 minutes—focusing on one specific activity at a time. Don't focus on the entire project. The scale is too broad. Break it into bite-sized pieces.

Here's how the conversation goes in our mind: *I can't build the whole website today. There's too much to do. Can I even do it myself? Not sure, but I can commit to working on it for 60 minutes. Yeah. That's sounds good. That's not so bad. Let me grab my phone. Start the timer. Let's see what happens. Here we go.*

Why Using Intervals Works

When we use timed intervals to attack a project, we get immediate wins:

1. **We feel instant relief**—after the timer goes off for the interval, we're free to move on to a new activity.
2. **We'll be empowered**—Instead of avoiding the things we know we *should* be doing, we committed to the time and followed through. We were true to ourselves.

The exciting thing is that, by using timed intervals, we get inspired and motivated to do more. There's something to be said of deadlines and constraints on the creative spirit. When we impose this sturdy box, it helps us explode through the top instead of float around in the abstract, where our emotions like to trap us.

Every time we avoid a project, it's because we're thinking about all the components of our goal—we're taking in the whole thing. All we have to do is focus on one thing, working on an aspect of it for 30 or 60 minutes, then we're good. That's usually all it takes. We'll be surprised when we keep working after the timer goes off: lightning strikes, in the groove, ideas, and execution flowing like a river.

There's some positive psychology at work with giving ourselves a quantifiable amount of time for a task, then walking away for a while. It's a relief, breath of fresh air, when the time is over, even if we have a thousand more things to do. Doing what we say we will is a small victory—small victories are what create BIG wins. By using timed intervals, we're stacking together a progression of tiny wins

—repeatedly—so that achieving our goal becomes inevitable.

I laugh at myself all the time when I forget to do something. I ask myself why I haven't finished a project, like my monthly original music playlist or my online music school, then I realize, *O yeah, I haven't worked on that beast using timed intervals. How could I forget?*

We can't do everything *today* to make our project a success—It's too huge. But we can work on it for 30 or 60 intervals. No problem. If we adopt this time-based approach to our workflow, we will beat procrastination. We'll also feel better about what we're getting done and will still have time to see a movie with our friends.

Get Started With Intervals

Here's the plan—use the timer on your phone (set it for 15, 30, or 60 minutes) and pick your biggest whale of a project that you've been putting off.

All you have to do is hit the timer, focus all of your attention on one micro-activity for a short period, then you're free for the rest of the day. I know you can do this.

I use this method every day, and it has multiplied my productivity. Like I mentioned earlier, I've accomplished more in the last three months than in the previous THREE YEARS. Using intervals is the only way that I'm able to manage being a musician, artist, entrepreneur, father of three, and decent human being.

When I catch myself avoiding work, it's because I get lost in the thoughts and emotions around achieving the goal. *Why am I not using an interval to get this done*, I remind myself. So I get out of my head and set a timer for 60 minutes. More often than not, I'm surprised how much I get

done in that short period, even having time left to spare. Since I followed through with working on what I was putting off, I'm energized and feel like I could tackle another project with the remaining time. That's pretty good since I was procrastinating for days without anything to show for it.

I'll say it another way; make time work for you by owning it. Be it's master and leverage the powerful effect that constraints have on your productivity.

Channel the focusing power of timed intervals. You'll thank me later.