

A ROADMAP TO START YOUR OWN PRODUCTIVITY PROJECT



With so much productivity advice out there, it's sometimes hard to figure out where to start.

That's why I've designed this PDF.

This isn't some corny whatever-step plan to becoming more productive. This is a companion piece to *The Productivity Project* that, if you want, will serve as a roadmap to putting the tactics in the book to work for you. You can, of course, adapt and change this schedule as you see fit. I highly recommend doing so, as you discover productivity tactics that work better and worse for you. The thinking I followed when I created this was simple: what schedule would I follow if I were to try and adopt every tactic in *The Productivity Project* all over again? This roadmap is the direct result of that thinking.

A word to the wise, though: it's worth easing into becoming more productive. It's all too easy to be hard on yourself as you push at your limits, but as I found during my project, that can work against you. Ease into these tactics—that way they'll actually stick, and pay dividends for some time to come. If you feel like working these changes into your life at a slower pace (with the schedule below I've spread them out over six months, broken down into 26 weeks), then please do so. If anything, this schedule is a bit more on the accelerated side. I also recommend that you carve out some time every Sunday to step back and plan how you're going to put these tactics into practice. Don't wait until the last minute!

I think you'll find that the time you take to step back will pay for itself many times over.

Have fun!

CHRIS

LAY SOME PRODUCTIVITY GROUNDWORK

WEEK 1: What are your most productive tasks? (Don't skip this one!) You can skip almost any other item on the timeline, but don't skip this one. Not all tasks in your work are created equal; there are some tasks through which you accomplish way more for every minute of time you spend on them. These are the tasks you should spend the majority of your time on. Make a list of all of the tasks you're responsible for over a month, and identify the 3 that give you the biggest return on your time (page 34).

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WEEK 1: Use the rule of 3. At the start of each day this week, and the start of the week, step back and think about the three main things you'll want to have accomplished when the day/week is done. This simple tactic is one of the best ways out there to work more deliberately and with intention (page 41).

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WEEK 2: Think deep: why do you want to become more productive? And what new habits and changes do you want to make over the course of the next six months? The more time you spend on this, the more motivation you'll have to stick with investing in your productivity in the long-term (page 25)!

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WEEK 3: Track your time. Tracking your time is tedious, but will give you valuable intel on how well you manage your time and attention, and even how often you procrastinate (page 50). (Use the Time and Energy template on ProductivityProjectBook.com for this one.)

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WEEKS 3-5: Calculate your biological prime time. This is easily the most tedious item on the list—stick with it! To get as accurate a reading as possible, I recommend doing a bit of prep work that's admittedly a pain, but will pay for itself many times over. If you can, before tracking your energy, cut out caffeine, alcohol, and other stimulants, eat less sugar, eat small, frequent meals throughout the day, and wake up without an alarm (page 50). Then calculate your peak productivity time of the day using the Time and Energy template on ProductivityProjectBook.com.

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WEEK 6: Rest and look ahead. Tracking your time and calculating your BPT can be tedious. Give yourself a week to reward yourself for making it to this point! And while you're at it, look to the weeks ahead, and the tactics you'll be doing in them. Look at what upcoming obstacles may get in the way of these tactics (vacations, business trips, etc.), and make adjustments accordingly, ahead of time.

SPEND YOUR TIME WISELY

WEEK 7: Take advantage of your most productive hours. Block off your Biological Prime Time in your calendar, and, as much as possible, defend it against the unimportant work that comes your way. This time is yours to work on your most important tasks. Whenever possible, make an effort to also adapt your work to how much energy you have over the day (page 107).

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WEEK 8: Dissect a task you're procrastinating on. Your brain will resist this week's challenge, but that's kind of the point. Think about which procrastination triggers a task you keep pushing back sets off—like that the task is boring, frustrating, difficult, ambiguous, unstructured, or lacks personal meaning or intrinsic rewards—and make a plan to flip these triggers (page 68).

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WEEK 9: Disconnect from the internet for 30 minutes. The internet is one of the greatest things ever, but it's also one of the worst things for your productivity. This week, during your BPT if you can, disconnect from the internet for 30 minutes. Turn everything off, and work for 30 minutes without interruptions or distractions (page 83). Observe how much you get done during this time.

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WEEK 10: Schedule less time for an important task. This will create urgency around the task, which lets you accomplish it in less time (page 100). (You may want to consider setting a weekly work limit once you feel this tactic at work.)

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WEEK 11: Collect and lump together your maintenance tasks. Maintenance tasks are essential if you want to live a healthy and productive life, but they also provide you with an abysmal return on your time. This week, lump together these tasks, and plan to start either a maintenance day ritual, or a maintenance list (page 115).

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WEEK 12: Rest week! Take it easy this week. And pat yourself on the back by reflecting on the productivity gains you've made so far. If you're dying to do more, carve out the space to let your mind wander for 15 minutes this week. Make sure you bring a notepad with you—you'll need it to capture the thoughts that will bubble to the surface (page 175).

SPEND YOUR TIME WISELY

WEEK 13: Find your time and attention hogs. Luckily, you've already identified these—look through the list of tasks you captured back in Week 2, and choose three tasks that take up a disproportionate amount of your time and attention. Then, shrink how much time and attention you'll spend on them (page 132).

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WEEK 14: Calculate the exact value of your time. Your time is valuable—maybe more than you think. Calculate the precise value of an hour of your time. This value will likely orbit around how much money you make, how valuable you find your time, how much you value money, and how overwhelmed you feel (page 144). Depending on how much you value your time, make a plan to delegate or outsource your less important tasks accordingly.

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MANAGE YOUR ATTENTION

WEEK 15: Perform a brain dump. (You'll never feel the same.) Carve out 20-30 minutes of time to disconnect, and, with a pen and a notepad, capture all of the tasks, projects, and other “open loops” floating around your head (page 158). My bet is you'll capture a ton of them, and be stunned by how much you're keeping up there.

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WEEK 16: Get to know your hotspots. Every week you invest your time, attention, and energy into seven main hotspots—your mind, body, emotions, career, finances, relationships, and (hopefully) having fun. Take 10 minutes to expand each of your life's hot spots (page 167). This week, my bet is you'll see your life from a whole new vantage point.

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WEEK 17: Rest, and reward yourself! I personally recommend taking in one of the wonderful stress relief strategies on page 174—these have been proven to actually reduce levels of stress hormones in your body. You'll feel incredible afterward. And while you're at it, if you feel so inclined, invest in one or two of the happiness tactics on page 255. It's all too easy to be difficult on yourself as you push yourself to get done, and these strategies will let you treat yourself along the way.

WEEK 18: Tame 3 attention hijackers. Attention hijackers—such as alerts from your phone, computer, tablet, and smartwatch—can cost you as much as 25 minutes in lost productivity. This week, dive into the Settings on each device you own, and tame as many attention hijackers in your work as you can—any that aren't worth losing 25 minutes of productivity over (page 189).

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WEEK 19: Single-task! Single-tasking is my personal favorite way to become more productive, despite how difficult it can be in the moment. This week, for just one day, single-task for 15-30 minutes (page 200). And afterward, reflect on how much you accomplish in that time. You'll be *amazed*.

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WEEK 20: Try meditation on for size. This week, I challenge you to meditate for just five minutes each day. Meditation is tough, but the tougher it feels, the more you're getting out of it. Plus, you can do pretty much anything for five minutes. Afterward, observe how your ability to focus changes. (Page 212. Meditation instructions on page 206.)

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GET MORE ENERGY

WEEK 21: Rest. Woo! Another rest week. This week, reflect on the self-talk you've experienced (if any!) as you have pushed on your limits, and invested in your productivity (page 260). Take it easy, while thinking about which productivity tactics have worked the best and worst for you so far.

WEEK 22: Eat for energy! Make one small, incremental improvement to the way you eat to eat for more energy, so that you either eat fewer processed foods, or stop eating once you're full. The more you love food, the smaller the change you should make here. Small changes aren't significant by themselves, but they compound over time to produce results that will blow you away (page 223).

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WEEK 23: Drink for energy! This week, drink a ton of liquor, caffeine, and sugary energy drinks. (Kidding.) This week, make one small, incremental improvement to what you drink so that you have more energy over the course of the day—like by drinking caffeine strategically (instead of habitually), drinking less alcohol, or drinking more water (page 234).

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WEEK 24: Boost your heart rate for at least 15 minutes, at least once this week. Make sure you observe how you feel afterward—this alone should give you the motivation to stick with the ritual. If you already have an exercise habit, I challenge you to make one incremental improvement to it (page 243)!

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WEEK 25: Protect your sleep. If you don't already get enough sleep, carve out a nighttime ritual that will ensure you get enough sleep throughout the week. Remember the pseudoscientific rule from this chapter: For every hour of sleep you miss out on, you lose at least two hours of productivity the next day. (Page 252.)

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WEEK 26: Make an accomplishments list. Reflect on the results investing in your productivity has led to over the last several months. Think also about which tactics worked and which ones didn't; what tactics you want to drop and which ones you want to do more of. You've done an awful lot over the last 25 weeks, and odds are, if you followed this schedule, you're more productive than you've ever been. Congratulations!!