



How to Be More Productive, Now

The road to productivity is paved with distractions. Work smarter by learning how to navigate around them.

By Tiffany Dufu

Tip #1: Start Big

I attended a training program where the instructor filled a glass jar with big rocks and asked if it was full. After we answered yes, he poured in pebbles, followed by sand, then water. He pointed out that had he begun with the water or sand, there wouldn't have been room for the rocks. Moral of the exercise: Ensure productivity by tackling the big task first.

Tip #2: Kill the Negative Self-Talk

I once sat down to write something that I'd been procrastinating on. For 30 minutes I stared at the screen, telling myself I was irresponsible. In that time I could have produced a page! According to personal coach and author Tara Mohr, we often self-sabotage our productivity out of fear, allowing our inner critic to distract us from accomplishing anything that feels scary. In these moments we should ask ourselves, "What am I afraid of right now?" Here's how I handle negative thoughts: I scribble an affirmation on a Post-it note that counters them, like "I've got this."

Tip #3: Fake the Pressure

Many of us are more productive under pressure. When a deadline is looming, somehow we pull off what we couldn't when we had all the time in the world. To solve is to simulate your own pressure so it works for you. For example, if your boss gives you a deadline, enter it in your calendar for two days in advance

Reminders

- * Please remember to return all Publix carts to Publix and carts are NOT permitted inside of the buildings.
- * We have been getting some noise complaints, please be courteous to you neighbors and keep your noise levels to a minimum.
- * Just a reminder to change your AC filters once a month!!!! Changing your filters will prevent excessive dust and will keep your AC running efficiently.
- * Save time and pay your rent online!!!!

(the trick is not to do this so frequently that you assume your calendar deadlines are padded). If you have a task you could have completed within an hour if you hadn't gotten up every 10 minutes, set a timer. Or enlist a friend or family member to hold you accountable by calling or texting you at a scheduled time to ask, "Is it done?" Eventually you should implement practices that develop your own internal discipline instead of relying on external consequences as a motivating factor.

Tip #4: Shoot for an MVP

Perfection is the enemy of completion. Often the expectation that our work should reflect extraordinarily high quality the first time we create it impacts productivity. Years ago, when I was at a tech start-up, I was introduced to a revolutionary concept: the **minimum viable product**.

MVP is a common product development practice that involves building a product with the least amount of features needed to get feedback for future development. It's sort of like your blueprint. If you have a proposal to write, start by drafting your top five points and a few bullets. If you have a complicated new job order to fill, sketch out your plan on paper first. Show your MVP to your boss to make sure the two of you are aligned on expectations and to solicit feedback—also a brilliant way to manage up. Whatever you're trying to achieve, begin by asking yourself, "What is the MVP version of X?" Then push it out.

Tip #5: Minimize Distraction—You May Have Heard That One

You may have heard that one of the worst ways to negatively impact your productivity is to check your email or social media first thing in the morning. According to time management expert Julie Morgenstern, this triggers the reactive part of your brain. We feel like we're accomplishing something but it's hard to regain focus once we start replying, liking and retweeting. Same goes for taking that "quick" phone call or, if you work from home, putting in that load of laundry.

Create non-distraction zones—scheduled periods of time when you set your cell phone in another room, close the door or, if you work in an office with open seating, use a headset. There are also great apps like Forest and Focus List that help you concentrate on tasks and be more productive. And don't forget to signal to the outside world that you're on a major roll. Creating an email auto reply or putting a sign on your door that communicates "I'm being productive" will usually inspire the people around you to get more done too.

Nothing to do??? Join the fun!!



(NEW!) 5.4 FIRST FRIDAY DE MAYO will be 5:30-9:30 p.m. on Friday, May 4, along New Broad Street in the Village Center. This free festival combines the regular First Friday of the Month with a Cinco de Mayo celebration. A portion of New Broad Street will be closed to through traffic and attendees will be able to stroll the festival with drinks in hand, taking advantage of the live music, artist/vendor booth, food trucks, including **Oh Que Peña, Munch Organics, Kelly's Ice Cream and Tacos Mazatlan, and libations**. Featured are many Central Florida based-small businesses and non-profit organizations with products and offerings ranging from health and fitness, to beauty and fashion, as well as community service opportunities. Sponsored by the **Baldwin Park Joint Committee, Bloom-Kee Realty, Planet Fitness, and Consult BOOM**. For more information, visit <https://www.baldwinparkevents.com/5-5-17-first-friday-de-mayo>

(NEW!) 5.11 TRIVIA IN THE PARK will be 7-10 p.m., Friday, May 11, at Upper Union Park on the corner of Snow Road and Ethan Lane. Hosted by **Baldwin Park Residential Owners Association**, this event is for adult Baldwin Park residents to come and enjoy their neighbors, food trucks, a cash bar and a few rounds of Trivia to win prizes! This event is pet-friendly. Each attendee will be given two \$5 Party in the Park vouchers: one for the cash bar and one for the food trucks. The rest is up to you. Registration is \$10/person (limited) and starts on April 20. Tickets are \$15 after April 27 or until the limit is reached; advance registration closes at midnight on May 10. Visit <https://www.baldwinparkevents.com/trivia-in-the-park> for more information.

(NEW!) 5.19 ORLANDO FOX TROT 5K RUN/WALK FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH will be Saturday, May 19 at Harbor Park. Registration start time is 7 a.m. Run/Walk start time is 8 a.m. Every step you take is one step closer to a cure for Parkinson's. Runners and walkers of all experience levels, abilities and speeds are all welcome! Visit <https://foxtrot.michaeljfox.org/orlando/Static/Event-Info>

Lemon-Buttermilk Pound Cake Lemon Glaze

Cake:

- 2 1/2 cups white sugar
- 1 1/2 cups butter, softened
- 4 eggs
- 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon lemon extract

Glaze:

- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour a fluted tube pan (such as Bundt(R)).
2. Beat white sugar and 1 1/2 cups butter together in a bowl with an electric mixer until light and fluffy, about 10 minutes. Add eggs one at a time, thoroughly beating each egg into the butter mixture before adding the next.
3. Sift flour, salt, and baking soda together in a bowl. Add 1/3 of the flour mixture to the butter mixture; mix well. Pour in 1/2 the buttermilk and beat until combined. Repeat adding the remaining flour mixture and buttermilk, beating well after each addition, and ending with the flour mixture. Stir lemon extract into batter. Pour batter into prepared tube pan.
4. Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C).
5. Bake in the oven until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean, 60 to 75 minutes. Cool in the pan for 10 minutes before removing to a cake platter or plate.
6. Beat confectioner's sugar, lemon juice, 2 tablespoons butter, and lemon zest together in a bowl until glaze is smooth. Pour about half the glaze over the cake; let cool. Pour remaining glaze over the cake.