

# TOP 100 TIPS TO ACHIEVE MORE





## Thinking Smarter

1. **Recognise that being busy is not the same as being effective.** Ask yourself: “Is what I’m doing contributing to what is really important to me?”
2. **Choose to be effective rather than efficient.** Being efficient at everything will get you bogged down, while being effective at what’s important will get you what you want.
3. **Commit to paper in detail what you want to achieve.** Having a clear description and picture brings your goal closer to reality.
4. **Focus your attention on what you want to achieve, rather than the problem.** What you focus on gets bigger.
5. **Decide what you really want to do, then just do it!** Ask yourself, “What do I really want to do more of in my life?” Make the commitment to yourself.
6. **Decide what you no longer want to do, then stop it!** Some of your habits no longer serve you and may be counterproductive.
7. **Accept your natural gifts and talents and leverage them.** It’s okay to be acknowledged and rewarded for something that comes easily to you.
8. **Take care of yourself first, so that you can keep giving.** Do it as a favour to yourself, your loved ones and your co-workers.
9. **Take time to be alone,** especially if you need private time to recharge your energy. You will find it easier and more enjoyable to spend time with family and co-workers.
10. **Take time to be with other people** if you are very social and gain energy from being with people. This is especially important when you are working on solitary projects.
11. **Know what you are good at** – do only that and delegate the rest. You will produce better results with more sustained energy and enthusiasm.
12. **Just do it now!** Keep repeating this short phrase to yourself over and over again. Repeat this simple phrase for 30 days and it will become a habit. Once our sub-conscious has this as a habit your procrastinations will be no more.

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Traditional thinking is all about "what is". Future thinking will also need to be about what can be.

”

- Edward de Bono



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## Boost Your Energy

13. **Start your day with a walk or a jog** in your neighbourhood or local park. This will stimulate your body and clear your mind.
14. **Exercise in the morning to wake up your system and pump your body for the day.** Notice how more focused and effective you are.
15. **Ask yourself, “What boosts my energy or relaxes me and has no side-effects?”** Develop this into three new daily self-care habits.
16. **Listen to inspiring or uplifting music to start your day.** Music stimulates your senses and puts you into a positive mood.
17. **Take stretch breaks every hour to move your body,** even if only briefly. This keeps you limber.
18. **Take several deep breaths to oxygenate your system** when you're tired. This bio-chemical action gets you alert.
19. **Take time to rest and recharge your batteries** by doing relaxing things that you enjoy – it can be doing nothing at all!
20. **Get sufficient sleep,** between seven to nine hours a night. Sleep improves your ability to concentrate, process information and reason. Being in bed before 11:00 pm each evening will result in a better sleep for your body.
21. **Keep a glass of water on your desk and sip it throughout the day.** This reminds you to drink the six to eight glasses of water a day that you need.
22. **Take a power nap in the afternoon of no more than 20 minutes** (otherwise you will be more tired). Set an alarm if you need it. A light nap rather than falling asleep will leave you refreshed.
23. **Take time daily to laugh and enjoy yourself.** Read a cartoon or a joke. Laughter is a powerful form of stimulation.
24. **Spend your time with positive, uplifting people,** rather than constant complainers who drag you down.

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And what is a man  
without energy?  
Nothing - nothing  
at all.

”

- Mark Twain



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## Communication

25. **Repeat back aloud the name of a new person you are being introduced to while looking straight at them.** You will be able to check your pronunciation and remember their name more easily.
26. **When a situation goes wrong, ask, “How did you decide to do that?” rather than, “Why did you do that?”.** “Why” questions put people on the defensive, producing justifications rather than useful answers.
27. **State what you want in the positive rather than what you don’t want,** such as “remember” rather than “don’t forget”. People tend to ignore the “don’t” and do the opposite of what you want.
28. **Listen fully when a person is speaking to you rather than preparing what you are going to say next.** You will hear more.
29. **Acknowledge what people say to you in conversation, so that they feel heard.** Say “okay, alright” or “I understand”.
30. **Empathise with people you speak to.** They will care more about what you have to say when they know you care about them.
31. **Ask the person you disagree with to explain their point of view.** This way you will have a better understanding of their perspective, and find the common ground.
32. **Ask for what you want from people in your life rather than assuming they should know.** Avoid the disappointment when they can’t mind-read!
33. **Ask your listener to repeat back their understanding of your instructions for the sake of accuracy.** It is less time consuming than redoing an incorrect task.
34. **Request feedback to check understanding.** Get the person to repeat their understanding of what you have communicated. This is the point where you will find out how clear your communication was.
35. **Introduce yourself with your name when you are phoning someone you don’t speak with regularly,** rather than expecting the person to recognise who you are.
36. **Ask, “Is this a good time to speak?” when calling.** If it isn’t, then ask for a better time. You want to have the full attention of the person.
37. **If you don’t understand, ask your boss for clarification.** Temporary discomfort is better than ‘wasting’ days doing the wrong thing.

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Many attempts to communicate are nullified by saying too much.

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- Robert Greenleaf



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## Distractions & Interruptions

38. **Schedule uninterrupted focus time** that allows you to work when you are most alert and at your best. You will accomplish more in a shorter period without distractions and interruptions.
39. **Eliminate the distraction of incoming telephone calls.** Ask your receptionist to hold your calls for an hour or two, or turn off your telephone and let your voice-mail take the calls.
40. **Close your door during your scheduled focus time** to deter people from 'dropping by' to chat. Let people know when you will be available again.
41. **Allocate specific blocks of time as 60 or 90 minutes for intensive activities.** Focus and accomplish as much as you can, then shift to something else.
42. **Return a block of phone calls when you are prepared with a focused response.** You have better control of the conversation and are able to reduce the time it takes.
43. **Know when to say "no".** Remember that you have a choice. Be discerning about which causes and activities you want to participate in and which ones you would rather avoid.
44. **Ask yourself, "What am I putting up with?"** By eliminating things you merely tolerate you can reduce your frustrations and regain lost energy.
45. **Deal with each long-standing incomplete project to get it off your mind.** Decide to either do it, dump it, change it or delegate it.
46. **Eliminate what you no longer need** – things just taking up space or clutter. By applying the principle of creating a vacuum, you make space for what you do want.
47. **Use a small notebook to register reminders, capture fleeting ideas, and make notes from conversations.** It is far more reliable than your memory or a scrap of paper.
48. **Cut down your "to-do list".** Ask yourself if this task really needs to be done or ever will get done. If not, dump it. Do you need to do it? If not, delegate it. The phrase to remember is "Do it, dump it or delegate it".

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Work is hard.  
Distractions are plentiful.  
And time is short. ”

- Adam Hochschild



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## Distractions & Interruptions (contd.)

49. **Break large tasks up into manageable pieces** that can be completed in foreseeable timeframes. It makes it easier to get started when the end is reachable.
50. **Cancel subscriptions to periodicals that you never get a chance to read.** You will save time by not looking at them come in and pile up.
51. **Re-organise and weed-out your files so that frequently used files are quickly and easily accessible.** You will find what you want quicker.

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By prevailing over all obstacles and distractions, one may unfailingly arrive at his chosen goal or destination. ”

- Christopher Columbus



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## Reduce Stress

52. **Take a mini vacation.** Close your eyes. Imagine being at your favourite relaxing spot. Be there. Feel the sensations. Hear the sounds.
53. **Do something creative on a regular basis** such as painting, drama or writing. It will get the right-hand side of your brain active and will allow your left-hand side to relax.
54. **Recognise what you can control and what you can't.** Accept that what you can't control is not worth worrying about. Only deal with what you can control.
55. **Zap worrying about things you have no control over** by exaggerating the situation to the impossibly ridiculous. Have a good laugh!
56. **Clearly understand what you wish to achieve each year, quarter, month, week and especially each day.** This gives you control over what is happening in your life.
57. **Overcome being overwhelmed by listing all the tasks you face.** Determine your three priorities, those that can wait, and those that have to be dropped for a while.
58. **Deflate your negative self-talk by changing the critical voice to sound high and squeaky.** The previously halting message becomes laughable and easily refuted, enabling you to get on with it.
59. **Take a deep breath and let it out slowly.** Do this three times. This signals your body to start relaxing.
60. **Reduce the amount of news you read and watch.** You don't need the stress and most of the time you don't need to know the information. Use the time to read a book or write.
61. **Reduce the chatter in your head by writing out whatever comes to mind.** Less head chatter means fewer distractions and less stress.
62. **Take time to sit in silence, focusing on your breath.** This form of meditation clears the chatter in your head and increases your sense of ease.

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Stress is not what happens to us. It's our response TO what happens. And RESPONSE is something we can choose. ”

- Maureen Killoran



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## Reduce Stress (contd.)

63. **Notice what you tell yourself.** If it is negative and self-critical interrupt it by saying, “No” or “Shut up” to yourself. If you include expletives, you will find it more effective. Then replace it with something positive about yourself – it will improve your energy and attitude.
64. **Use a headset to free your hands while on the phone.** This gives you more flexibility and reduces stress and the strain on your neck and shoulders.

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Much of the stress that people feel doesn't come from having too much to do. It comes from not finishing what they've started. ”

- David Allen



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## Problem Solving

65. **Get up and go for a walk around the office or outside to clear your head.** Moving your body will get your mind moving.
66. **Stop working on the problem and do something completely different.** Your subconscious will continue working on it and give you the answer later.
67. **Prime your subconscious to come up with an answer** by periodically imagining how things would be if the problem were solved.
68. **Change your environment:** move to a different setting such as another desk, a conference room or even a coffee shop.
69. **Explain to someone what you're doing, what you hope to achieve and where you are stuck.** This brings new ideas through clarification, questions or more input.
70. **How do you eat an elephant? – one mouthful at a time.** Break any large task down into 'bite size chunks' and complete each 'chunk' before moving on to the next one.
71. **Go for a long drive in the country alone with the radio off.** Take along a notepad or Dictaphone, as ideas tend to drift in and out quickly.
72. **Trust your intuition** – that "gut feeling" can lead you to question or try another approach to a project. For example, if while contemplating a problem, you get a thought to call an old friend or business associate; do it – they might just trigger the solution for you.
73. **Use colour pens or markers to doodle or draw whatever comes to mind.** This opens the flow of new thoughts, ideas and solutions.
74. **Look over all the information and ideas you have gathered and then go for a walk.** The break will give your mind time to incubate the ideas and produce solutions.
75. **Use mind-mapping to develop creative ideas and solutions.** On a large piece of paper, draw a circle with the central idea in the middle and then draw lines from it to other circles containing your new ideas. Keep adding ideas as they are triggered.
76. **Flip through magazines to stimulate the flow of ideas.** Write down everything that comes to mind. It gets you thinking in new directions.
77. **Keep a journal to capture ideas and reflect on your day.** It allows you to review your thoughts and go deeper for more valuable ideas.

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Most people spend more time and energy going around problems than in trying to solve them. ”

- Henry Ford



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## Motivation

78. **Keep a photo in your office of an inspiring scene or person.** Positive reminders bring back the good feelings associated with them.
79. **Get motivated by pretending you already are motivated.** Sit or stand up straight, look up, take a deep breath and smile. Your body signals your mind to be motivated.
80. **Change tasks when you feel temporarily unmotivated by what you are doing.** Go back to the first task when your mood is better.
81. **Celebrate your wins, the milestones along the way.** This way you acknowledge your progress and enjoy the journey. It helps sustain you for the work ahead.
82. **Keep a record of your accomplishments in a journal and record them on a daily basis.** Read it when you are feeling there is too much to do and that you are getting nothing done. It's a good cure for amnesia!
83. **Enlist the support of others.** Surround yourself with people who will encourage you and inspire you to grow and learn. Let your family and friends know how to best encourage you.
84. **Create a support system.** Meet regularly with one or two advisors to report progress and get objective feedback and encouragement. A personal coach can be one of these people and will help you to excel.
85. **Develop a strong network.** Whether you need a new job, an introduction, a good mechanic or feedback on an idea, people in your network can help you get it faster and easier.
86. **Determine what motivates each person.** It's not the same for everyone. A good question to ask on a one-to-one basis is "What is important for you in your work?"
87. **Acknowledge and give your team members positive feedback.** People are more likely to stay in jobs where they feel liked and appreciated, than go where they might be paid more.
88. **Listen to people so they feel heard.** No one likes one-sided conversations, especially when their ideas are criticised. When team members feel heard, they feel respected and motivated to contribute more.
89. **Share the work so others can share the ownership of the project and its success.** You will benefit from your team members acquiring new knowledge and skills. They can offer a fresh perspective. Being the team leader does not mean you have to do it all.

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You cannot afford to wait for perfect conditions. Goal setting is often a matter of balancing timing against available resources. Opportunities are easily lost while waiting for perfect conditions. ”

- Gary Ryan Blair



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## Balance Your Life

90. **Remember your priorities are yourself, your family and your career – in that order.** Any other order not only puts your life out of balance. It also jeopardises all the elements. Keeping the order in mind helps you make better decisions for effective living.
91. **Develop a vision, a dream of what you wish to achieve with your life.** If you don't know where you're heading, you're not going to get there!
92. **Work back from your vision and set the goals you need to achieve along the route.** Remember to set **CSMARTY** goals to measure your performance; Challenging, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely and Yours.
93. **Commit to paper in detail what you want to achieve.** Having a clear description and picture brings your goal closer to reality. Remember that if you have goals written down, you will achieve far more than 95% of the population.
94. **Clear your desk at the end of the day, putting your work away.** This routine completes your workday and helps you leave your thoughts of work at the office.
95. **Listen to your favourite music on the way home, to clear your mind of work.** This creates a break in your thought patterns and allows you to recharge your batteries.
96. **Go for a walk when you get home from work.** Use it as a transition time to break up your day. This allows you to clear your head, recharge your batteries and prepare you to spend quality time with your family.
97. **Employ a cleaner so that your home is clean and tidy.** Do not waste time off by doing chores. Similarly, delegate laundry, ironing and shopping. It will allow you to enjoy your entire weekend.
98. **Schedule personal errands and tasks into one evening.** An artificial deadline will challenge you to find better ways of getting them done. Otherwise tasks expand to fill the available time.
99. **Hug your family and those close to you at every opportunity.** A hug can speak volumes, helps you get grounded and connected with them.
100. **Take every opportunity to thank and acknowledge friends and family** for what they are good at or have done well, especially the little things. Let them know you appreciate them rather than taking them for granted.

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Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving.

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- Albert Einstein



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