

# Getting Stuff Done

James Gamble - [james@jamesgamble.net](mailto:james@jamesgamble.net)

# My Story

I just wanted to be Internet famous...

# Definitions

- ▶ Project - A long term effort of work, usually with multiple parts, often with a deadline.
- ▶ Chunk - Noun) One part of a project that is similar in effort and/or scope. Verb) To split a project into like pieces.
- ▶ Task - A piece of a chunk that has been broken down into manageable efforts of work.
- ▶ Combo Task - A synergistic task that combines two related tasks into a single effort of work.
- ▶ Time Gapped Task - Tasks that cannot be completed in one effort of work because of a required delay in time between the start and end phases of the task.
- ▶ Success Threshold - The quantitative measure used to determine when a project, chunk, or task is complete.

# Projects & Chunks

## ▶ Projects

- ▶ How much time do you have to complete the project?
- ▶ When is your deadline?
- ▶ Are there multiple deadlines for different stages?
- ▶ How can I split the project into chunks?

## ▶ Chunks

- ▶ Which chunks are a priority, or which chunks have dependencies?
- ▶ Can multiple chunks be worked on concurrently?
- ▶ How can I split the chunks into tasks?

# Tasks

- ▶ Does this task help me accomplish its associated goal?
- ▶ Do have the tools necessary to complete this task?
- ▶ How should I define the effort increment associated with the task?
  
- ▶ Task Increments
  - ▶ Time Increment - 15 or 30 minutes of focused attention followed by a five-to-ten-minute break.
  - ▶ Value Increment - "I'm going to listen to this many songs per day, or read this many pages per day, or write this many words per day, or..."
  - ▶ Day/Week - Do the thing, every day, or every week, or on a particular day of the week.
  
- ▶ Note: Projects and Chunks aren't always required. Some things will just be simple tasks.

# Deadlines (Usually project related)

- ▶ Calculate the total effort of work based on which increment was chosen.
  - ▶ Calculate the number of increments available to you before the deadline.
  - ▶ Divide the total effort of work by the number of increments to determine the incremental workload.
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- ▶ Examples
    - ▶ 25 hours of work, due in 9 days, using the Time Increment, means each day you need to do 2.77 hours of work.
    - ▶ A 2,500-word essay, due in 14 days, using the Value Increment, means each day you need to write 179 pages.
    - ▶ 40 hours of community service, due in 30 days, using the Day/Week increment, but you only have Saturday's and Sunday's available, means each Saturday and Sunday you need to work 5 hours.

# Before You Start

- ▶ Ask yourself:

- ▶ What time of day do you work best?
- ▶ Do specific activities work better during certain parts of the day? If so, schedule those for the same time every day.
  - ▶ Early Morning, Mid-Morning, Afternoon, Evening
- ▶ How will I reward myself?
- ▶ How do I define a break?

# Combo Tasks

- ▶ Helpful for increasing efficiency.
- ▶ Allows for some creativity in organizing your day.
- ▶ “Kill two birds with one stone.”
  
- ▶ Examples:
  - ▶ My communal mailbox is beside my communal trash compactor. Whenever I go to check the mail, I know to check to see if the garbage needs to be taken out as well. If it does, I go ahead and take it out.
  - ▶ When cooking pasta and waiting for the water to boil, I take the time to prep the dining room table for the meal.
  - ▶ While I’m waiting for my gas to pump, I clean my car of any trash.



# Time Gapped Tasks

- ▶ Can be confused for two different, independent tasks.
- ▶ Up for interpretation based on your working style.
- ▶ Examples
  - ▶ When filling up the dishwasher, I organize the dishes as efficiently as possible, adding a bit more time to the front side of the task, because once the wash is done, it'll speed up the process of putting the dishes away.
  - ▶ When my wife fills up the dishwasher, she doesn't organize the dishes, which saves time up front, but it takes much longer for the dishes to be put away once the washing process is complete.
  - ▶ If doing laundry, sort the clothes so that each wash is washing similar clothes. When it's time to fold the clothes, the task is much more repetitive because you're only having to think about folding one thing.

# Getting Started

- ▶ Pick a task manager. I suggest Habitica.
- ▶ Pick a thing you want to make a habit and put it on your task manager. Make sure to chunk it appropriately.
- ▶ Do the task every day for a week.
- ▶ Success? Add a second task. This builds a sense of confidence and achievement.
- ▶ Do the first and second task every day (or whatever your increment is) for a month. Add a third.
- ▶ Proceed at your own pace after that. Don't try to add too many too quickly.
- ▶ Expert Mode: Start chunking and tasking your projects.

# Tips

- ▶ Start Slow - Rome wasn't built in a day.
- ▶ Give yourself a break. - "I'm not a perfect person..." -Hoobastank, The Reason
- ▶ Bored? Drop it.
- ▶ This is hard work, but...
- ▶ ...you will see an acceleration/feedback loop begin.

# Pitfalls

- ▶ Trouble starting a task...
- ▶ Anxiety when running behind...
- ▶ Pushing through a boring task...
- ▶ Inability to focus on a task...
- ▶ Lack of fulfillment...

# Pitfall Resolution

- ▶ Trouble starting a task... ensure you've chunked it to appropriately sized tasks.
- ▶ Anxiety when running behind... take a deep breath, this happens. Examine your day, see if something can be pushed to help make room for the urgent task.
- ▶ Pushing through a boring task... breaks are essential. Get up, move around, focus your else on something in the distance, try again in 5 minutes.
- ▶ Inability to focus on a task... check to see if there's something else you can work on to help spark your focus. Revisit the previous task later in the day, or maybe reorganize when you work on a task in the future.
- ▶ Lack of fulfillment... ask yourself, "will this task help me accomplish my goals?". If the answer is no, consider dropping the task.

# Benefits

- ▶ More work will get done in a day.
- ▶ Your schedule will become predictable.  
Structure reduces anxiety.
- ▶ Easier to establish new habits.
- ▶ Better organizational skills.
- ▶ Enhanced mental dexterity.
- ▶ Improved focus.
- ▶ Sense of achievement.

# Questions?

I have at least some of the answers.