

Remote 忍術

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Do you...

- Have trouble staying focused?
- Need strategies for productivity?
- Want to create more value in your day?

Focus on approach, not tools

- No tool will solve productivity issues
- You must commit to changing your mindset
- Not dissimilar from fitness

Why?

Importance

**IMPORTANT
NOT URGENT**

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Urgency

Importance

**IMPORTANT
NOT URGENT**

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**NOT IMPORTANT
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Trivia, busy work, time
waste

AVOID

**NOT IMPORTANT
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Urgency

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Trivia, busy work, time
waste

Interruptions, SEPs,
some meetings

AVOID

LIMIT

Urgency

Importance

**IMPORTANT
NOT URGENT**

**IMPORTANT
URGENT**

Emergencies,
short deadlines

MANAGE

**NOT IMPORTANT
NOT URGENT**

Trivia, busy work, time
waste

AVOID

**NOT IMPORTANT
URGENT**

Interruptions, SEPs,
some meetings

LIMIT

Urgency

Importance

**IMPORTANT
NOT URGENT**

Strategy, planning,
opp'ty, relationships

FOCUS

**IMPORTANT
URGENT**

Emergencies,
short deadlines

MANAGE

**NOT IMPORTANT
NOT URGENT**

Trivia, busy work, time
waste

AVOID

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Interruptions, SEPs,
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LIMIT

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Importance

**IMPORTANT
NOT URGENT**

Career plans, project
architecture, *hacking*

FOCUS

**IMPORTANT
URGENT**

Disk failure or outage
Sick child at school

MANAGE

**NOT IMPORTANT
NOT URGENT**

Facebook
Reorganizing files

AVOID

**NOT IMPORTANT
URGENT**

All-hands Q&A
Phone call from Mom

LIMIT

Urgency

How to increase focus

- Manage time
- Manage environment
- Manage your attention

Manage time

- When do you achieve your best daily focus?
- Set time aside for focus work
- Daily vs. weekly vs. long term
- Manage by sprint period (e.g. 1 hour)

Manage time: Tools

- Calendar (only one, if you can)
- Block/pre-schedule calendar time
- Pomodoro timer

Manage environment

- What distractions do you have in plain sight
- Clean your work area
- Sanitize your system desktop, too
- Not just visual, also auditory

Manage environment: Tools

- Desktop without icons
- Close/put away windows not in use
- Wastebasket (a physical one)
- Turn off notifications
- Use silence, music, or noise as appropriate

Manage attention

- Most difficult part: being mindful
- Inventory: Where are you spending time?
- Context switching costs time and focus
- Avoid non-related tasks during core focus time

Manage attention: Tools

- Long term: Task/todo list (prioritized)
- Short term: Write the goal for this time period
- Maximize app in use

The task list

Defer, delegate or do

- “I’m responsible for this but can’t finish it in a few minutes.” → DEFER
- “I’m not responsible for this (or at least the next step).” → DELEGATE
- “I’m responsible for the next step and it should take only a few minutes.” → DO

Defer?

- Not “put off indefinitely”
- Schedule a time to focus + complete
- Add to list to break into steps
- Sometimes falls into the golden quadrant
- Exceptions for critical + urgent items: OK!

The task list: Tools

- Trello, Taiga, Kanboard, etc.
- Taskwarrior, inthe.am
- Evernote, Remember the Milk, Google Keep

Building remote trust

- Weekly team videocall (Hangout, etc.), and regular communication channels (email, chat)
- Manager 1x1
- Communicate effectively and concisely
- Deliver what you commit to

The remote “water cooler”

- Build relationships – including locally/regionally, and outside team
- Inject remote participation, and speak up if you feel sidelined
- Really participate!

Resources

- *Getting Things Done*, David Allen (Penguin)
- *Time Management for System Administrators*, Thomas A. Limoncelli (O'Reilly)
- <http://workawesome.com>

Tips

- Don't poll email; schedule time to check it
- Organization's not an accomplishment
- Change your location occasionally
- Get an accountability partner
- Take responsibility for your time

What are your tips?