

perfect productivity

HOW TO BEAT PROCRASTINATION,
MASTER YOUR TO-DO LIST AND
AVOID BURNOUT



PLANNINGWITHEM.COM



contents

- 3 Introduction
- 5 The Psychology of Procrastination
- 7 How To Stop Procrastinating
- 11 How To Increase Your Productivity
- 17 How To Avoid Burnout
- 19 The Best Productivity Apps
- 21 Productivity Printables

Introduction

Firstly, thank you for purchasing this productivity ebook, I appreciate you so much!

I'm Em and I'm the owner of **planningwithem.com**, a blog all about bullet journaling, productivity and mental health. I am OBSESSED with making the most of my time and teaching others how to become the most productive versions of themselves.

That's where you come in. You have spent your hard earned money on this ebook hoping to read it and have your productivity skyrocket. But that won't happen. You need to actually implement these tips and processes in order for your productivity to increase exponentially.

I am going to give you all the tips, tricks and tools that I have gathered over my 21 years of life (admittedly I was probably as productive as a potato up to the age of 5) and I will teach you how to implement them into your own life. I have also done hours of research into this topic so you don't have to!

Introduction

Now you might be thinking, Em, why should I listen to you? Well, I pride myself on my productivity skills. Everyone who knows me knows that I live by my routines, schedules and time management systems. When I asked my boyfriend what I was good at, the first thing he said was 'being productive and organised'. During my academic years, I have managed to achieve 13 GCSE's, 3 A's at A Level and a high 2:1 in my degree. I honestly believe that my productivity, motivation and time management skills have allowed me to achieve these grades. Not only that, I had a part time job, volunteered for charities, fundraised, attended choir practice, danced 5 hours a week and more recently, I've added blogging into the mix, all whilst studying.

As you can probably tell, I like to lead a busy life. But I only like being busy if I can manage it all and not get overwhelmed. This is where productivity, organisation and time management come in. Without developing these skills, I would never be able to live such a hectic life.

Now that I have (hopefully) convinced you that I can help you become the most productive version of yourself, I need to mention that it's okay to not be productive all the time. Looking after your mental and physical health is just as important, maybe even more important than being productive. You do not need to be productive all the time and you need to take breaks.

"You can't pour from an empty cup, take care of yourself first"

I hope you enjoy reading this ebook and that you learn a lot from it.
Don't forget to leave a review if you would like to!

Em x

The Psychology of Procrastination

Why You're Always Procrastinating

Procrastination is a very common theme in the productivity and self help world. Everyone wants to stop procrastinating and get more done but they don't actually get to the root cause of the problem.

People who procrastinate (basically everyone), will see themselves as lazy, unmotivated or incapable of being productive. That is NOT TRUE.

Procrastination isn't caused by being lazy or unmotivated, it is caused by a feeling of 'stuckness'. It is actually a **self protection** method as opposed to a **self sabotage** method.

There have been numerous studies investigating the cause of procrastination and the findings have shown that it's actually the most conscientious people that tend to procrastinate the most.

Ironically, people who have a high fear of failure and a high need for success, are more likely to procrastinate.

Psychologists have found that there are **three main reasons** that people will procrastinate:

- Indecision/lack of clarity
- Irrational beliefs about performance and self worth
- Low self esteem

The Psychology of Procrastination

Why You're Always Procrastinating **Indecision or Lack of Clarity**

(Janis and Manns, 1997)

It's no secret that having too many decisions to make is overwhelming. But did you know that it can cause procrastination? When you have lots of things to do, you may feel overwhelmed and unsure of where to start. For example, you may put off an assignment because you can't decide what topic to write about. This results in procrastination because you can't decide what to start with or you feel you won't get anything done.

Irrational beliefs about performance and self worth

(Ellis and Knauns 1977)

Another reason you may be procrastinating is because you believe your self worth is determined by your performance. For example you may feel you need to do something 'well' in order to prove you are a 'worthwhile' person. These irrational thoughts can cause procrastination as you want to delay doing the task to avoid feeling like an inadequate person.

Low Self Esteem

(Burka and Yuen, 1983)

Having low self esteem has also been found as a common reason why people procrastinate. This is because procrastination acts as a protection from 'failure'. If you don't do the task, there is no chance of you failing. Low self esteem can also cause you to think you are incapable of doing the task and therefore you avoid it completely.

How To Stop Procrastinating

It is important to know the reasons behind your procrastination in order to reduce or stop it. Have you identified which of the reasons for procrastinating resonates with you the most? You may relate to one or all of them (and that's normal don't worry).

How To Cope With Indecision

Step 1: Brain Dump

If you are feeling overwhelmed with all the things you need to do or one thing you need to do has many components, you need to do a brain dump.

A brain dump is when you write down, either physically or digitally, everything you need to do. This can include everything you need to do, should do and want to do - we will break these down later. Write down everything that's on your mind, big or small.

Step 2: Prioritise into subcategories

Now take everything you have written down and divide them into 3 categories:

- Need to do - e.g. Reply to an important email
- Should do - e.g. Write a blog post
- Want to do - e.g. arrange a coffee date with a friend

How To Stop Procrastinating

How To Cope With Indecision (Cont.)

Step 3: Prioritise into urgency

Now you have your 3 separate categories, we can focus on the tasks you need to do. I would suggest numbering your tasks with 1 being the most important task to X being your least important task. You can order them in a few different ways such as due date or size of the task.

Step 4: Most Important Task

You should now have your most important task identified and this is the starting point to getting everything done. If your most important task has multiple components to it, break it down and go through the same steps to identify the most important component to start with.



How To Stop Procrastinating

How To Cope With Irrational Beliefs About Self Worth and Performance

Procrastination can occur when we base our self worth on our performance.

Ability = Performance = Worth (INCORRECT)

In order to stop procrastinating, we need to challenge this false equation.

Think about times when your performance has not been equal to your ability. For example, that time you got an A on the test but didn't study. This will breakdown your perceived relationship between your ability and performance.

Remember, our worth is not determined by our ability or performance. Our self worth is determined by our qualities and personalities, such as our kindness and our respect for others.

Task: Write down all of the good things about yourself and your personality and put it somewhere you will see it when you sit down to work. You could also ask your friends and family what they love about you too!

How To Stop Procrastinating

How To Cope With Low Self Esteem

Procrastination can occur when we have low self esteem in general or towards a particular task.

We may put off a task because we believe we are not capable of completing it or that we are going to disappoint others.

Here are some steps you can take in order to combat this low self esteem and avoid procrastinating:

- **Have self compassion** - Forgive yourself for procrastinating and remind yourself that the cause is not because of your laziness, it's because of your emotions.
- **Reassure yourself** - Try to think about a time when you completed a similar task and it went well. Remind yourself that you can do it again.
- **Imagine completing the task** - Imagine how you will feel about yourself after completing the task. How would others feel about it? For example, if you're writing a blog post that will help others, imagine how they will feel after reading it!

How To Increase Your Productivity

So, you've worked out why you're procrastinating and how to combat that, which is fab!

Now you're probably wondering how you can make the most of your time, get more done and master productivity!

My Top Tips For Productivity

Make A Mental Plan Before Starting

Charles Haigg found that people who are most productive tend to think about their days with 15% more specificity. So, when you are planning your day, try to be specific. For example thinking about every detail you can from waking up to going to sleep. It doesn't have to be an exact schedule but specific enough to know what you need to do.

Batch Working

Batch working is brilliant, especially for those of use who procrastinate due to large to do lists! Using the batch working method, you can theme each day for a specific task. For example, on a Monday you only work on writing and Tuesday you only work on graphics. This means you know exactly what you have to do that day, you have a clear plan and will be more likely to get everything you need to do done.

How To Increase Your Productivity

Time Blocking.

Time blocking is similar to batch working but slightly different. With time blocking, you carve out times in the day where you will work on a specific task. This means that you will only focus on the task scheduled during that time. You can switch up the tasks you do during the day but each task will have a separate 'time block'. I recommend using a digital calendar such as Google calendar, which means you can see the whole day at a glance and can move blocks around if things change.

Done Lists

You've definitely heard of a to-do list but have you heard of a done list? Done lists are basically the opposite of a to-do list and are pretty self explanatory. You just write down what you have already done and any small wins you have accomplished throughout the day. This helps to boost self esteem as you will no longer be focussed on what you haven't done but instead focussed on what you have done.



How To Increase Your Productivity

To Do Lists

I still recommend using to-do lists because they are essential for productivity (in my opinion). However there are ways you can make your to do list more effective and less overwhelming:

- **Use the brain dump exercise** on page 7 to work out what has the highest priority.
- **Make a smaller to-do list** with things you want to accomplish that day (not week, month, year etc).
- **Be specific** - if you want to study for an exam, what exactly will you study?
- **Don't overload it** - try to stick to 3-5 tasks if you can.

2 Minute Rule

The two minute rule is a concept I came across in David Allens 'Getting Things Done' book. The basic premise of the two minute rule is that, if a task would take less than two minutes to complete, you do it immediately. These are the small tasks that we put off daily but don't take much time. For example, replying to an email or putting the laundry in the machine.

You can also use this technique to tackle bigger tasks such as cleaning your room or writing an essay. Put on a timer for 10 minutes and do as much as you can in that time. You are most likely going to carry on after that 10 minutes but even if you don't, you will have done 10 minutes more than before.

How To Increase Your Productivity

Start a Bullet Journal

It wouldn't be a Planning With Em ebook if I didn't include bullet journaling! Bullet journaling is the PERFECT productivity tool in my opinion. Bullet journaling is great for keeping everything in one place and for planning your life.

You don't have to be super creative to bullet journal but it is a great place to get creative if that's something you enjoy!

You can start bullet journaling with a notebook and pen, you don't need fancy stationary to get started.

There are so many videos and articles online that will help you set up your bullet journal even as a beginner! My blog has many posts on bullet journaling so make sure you check them out too!

If you have any questions about bullet journaling please get in touch, I would love to help you :)



How To Increase Your Productivity

Turn Off Distractions

This is probably the most common productivity tip you have heard before but seriously TURN OFF THAT PHONE!

Anybody who says they can be productive with their phone sat next to them buzzing with notifications is lying. Our brains crave distraction and the dopamine rush that comes with it.

Psychologists have found that it takes an average of 15 minutes for someone to focus back on a task after being distracted. That's 15 minutes wasted!

Here are some tips for reducing distractions:

- Turn off notifications on your phone and laptop or better yet, turn it onto airplane mode.
- Exit your inbox and only check emails at specific times a day
- Use an app to block any distracting websites e.g. Cold Turkey or Forest
- Put your phone in a different room or get a family member to hide it for a set amount of time



How To Increase Your Productivity

Listen to Your Body.

Our bodies are amazing things and we should really listen to them more often!

Take note of when you feel more productive during the day. Do you prefer working in the morning or night?

Make sure you utilise this information to your advantage. Schedule your day around your body's preferred hours if you can.

Remember to look out for signs of burnout. These can include:

- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Feeling rundown more often
- Loss of motivation
- Oversleeping or insomnia
- Overeating or loss of appetite



Burnout needs to be taken seriously and should be dealt with as soon as possible. Remember to take breaks, eat healthily, stay hydrated and seek professional help if needed.

How To Avoid Burnout

Burnout is horrible to experience and can make you feel mentally and physically drained. Prevention is better than cure. In order to prevent burnout you should listen to your body and mind. Here are some ways you can avoid burnout:

*these methods can also be use to help bounce back from burnout but you should also see a medical professional if you are struggling.

Schedule Self Care

Just like scheduling your tasks, you should schedule your self care time too. Make it as important as any other task you need to do because it IS as important! Even if its just 15 minutes a day, it will help you avoid burnout and reduce stress.

Meditation

Meditation is an amazing mindfulness tool which helps reduce anxiety and help you be more present. Meditation will help you slow down and take some time with yourself. Burnout can occur when you are overwhelmed and busy so why not trying meditating? There are apps you can use for meditating. My favourite meditation app is 'Headspace' and I highly recommend it for beginners. You can also find loads of meditation videos on youtube so you can try a few out for free!



How To Avoid Burnout

Unplug

We are always being bombarded by our technology; social media notifications, emails from someone who wants something from us and texts from dominoes pizza (we've all been there). Sometimes the best thing to do is to have a digital detox and unplug from the world.

Hobbies

Make time for the things you enjoy! It doesn't matter if its painting or horse riding, it is essential that you do something for you that you enjoy. Dont have a hobby? Try new things and you will 100% find something you enjoy!

Focus on sleep

Sleep is SO important and one of the causes of burnout is lack of sleep. If you are finding yourself working late into the evening or even pulling all nighters, this is probably the cause of your burnout. If you are struggling to get everything done, try to use the techniques in this book to get more done during the day so you can sleep at night. You could also try to deligate some tasks to other people if you have this option.

Be Kind To Yourself

Burning out doesn't mean you've failed and it is nothing to be ashamed of. Be kind to yourself, look after yourself and ask for help if you need it.

The Best Productivity Apps

Although our phones can be very distracting at times, they can also help us be more productive (ok, hear me out). Our phones are designed to make our lives easier and there are many apps available that have been developed to help increase productivity. Many of these productivity apps are also available on desktop which means you don't have to go on your phone to use them.

These are my go-to apps that I believe are the 'crème de la crème' of productivity apps!

Notion

Notion is one of my favourite productivity apps and I use it everyday. Notion is basically an 'all -in-one' workplace for everything you need in life! There are various templates built in to Notion such as budgets, travel planning and a weekly agenda. I use notion for everything from my daily to-do list to planning future blog posts. If you are like me and like everything in one place, then Notion is the app for you! It can be tricky to navigate at first but once you get used to the format, it will work wonders for you! There are many helpful youtube tutorials on how to use notion so if you get stuck, watch one of those.

Google Calendar

Google Calendar is my go-to calendar app. I use Google calendar because I love how it syncs to all my devices and how I can use my google home to tell me what's happening each day. As I mentioned earlier, Google Calendar is a great tool for time blocking as you can easily edit, move and change your schedule.

The Best Productivity Apps

Screen Time App

You can use the built in screen time app on your phone or download an app like 'Moment' to track screen time. Tracking your screen time is an eye opening experience and most people find they spend a lot more time on their phone than they thought. Phone distractions are the enemy of productivity so it is definitely worth looking at and trying to reduce. Why not set yourself a screen time challenge?

Habitify

Habitify is a digital habit tracking app which allows you to track habits, set up cues and reminders and see your progress. If you like data, Habitify is a great app for you as it creates graphs and charts of your habit streaks and progress. This app is a great alternative to tracking habits in a journal.

Audible

Audible is great for being productive on the go. Need to read that book for uni? Listen to it on the walk there! Want to learn something new but you work 9-5? Listen to a book on the commute! Audible is great for multitasking as you can listen to a book whilst you do other tasks such as cleaning! **You can get a FREE audiobook from Audible by using my link today***.The trial is free and you can cancel at anytime.

**this is an affiliate link which means when you sign up through it I will earn a small commission at no extra cost to you.*

productivity printables

- Daily Time Blocking Schedule
- Sleep Tracker
- Habit Tracker
- Digital Declutter Checklist
- Brain Dump
- Done List

Daily Time Blocking Schedule

	00	15	30	45
6am				
7am				
8am				
9am				
10am				
11am				
12pm				
1pm				
2pm				
3pm				
4pm				
5pm				
6pm				
7pm				
8pm				
9pm				
10pm				

DATE:

TO DO:

DONE:

Sleep Tracker

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- 31

SLEEP
TIME:

WAKE
TIME:

GOAL
HOURS:

Habit Tracker

*The secret of your
future is hidden in
your daily routine*

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

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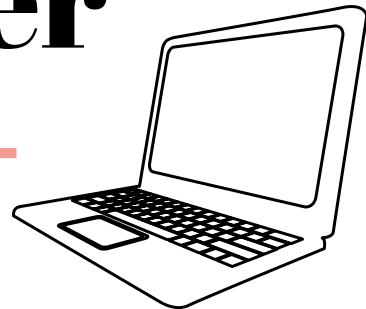
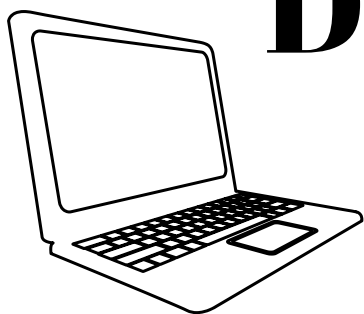
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Digital Declutter

CHECKLIST



PHONE

☐ DELETE UNUSED APPS

☐ ORGANISE APPS INTO FOLDERS

☐ DELETE PHOTOS AND SCREENSHOTS

☐ UPLOAD AND BACK UP PHOTOS

☐ USE PHONE OPTIMISER

☐ DELETE OLD MESSAGES AND CALLS

☐ TURN OFF UNNECESSARY
NOTIFICATIONS

COMPUTER

☐ DELETE DESKTOP FILES/SHORTCUTS

☐ DELETE DOWNLOADS

☐ BACK UP FILES

☐ DELETE OLD DOCUMENTS

☐ ORGANISE REMAINING FILES

☐ CLEAR BROWSING HISTORY

☐ GET RID OF UNNECESSARY
BOOKMARKS

EMAILS

☐ READ YOUR MOST RECENT EMAILS

☐ RESPOND TO IMPORTANT EMAILS

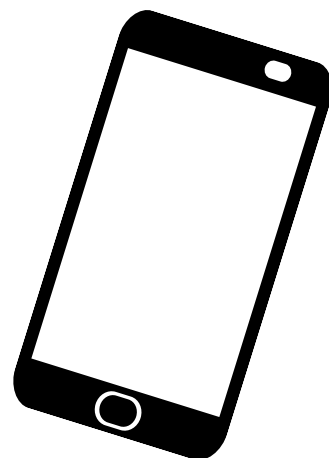
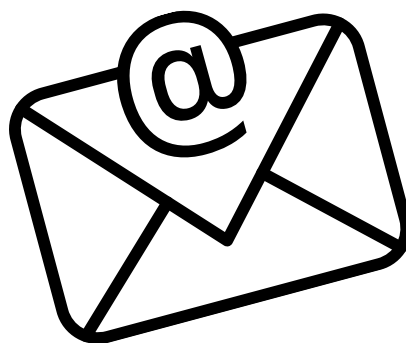
☐ UNSUBSCRIBE FROM MAILING LIST

☐ DELETE UNWANTED EMAILS

☐ CHECK AND DELETE SPAM EMAILS

☐ ORGANISE EMAILS INTO FOLDERS

☐ DELETE TRASH



Brain Dump

BRAIN DUMP

NEED TO DO:

SHOULD DO:

WANT TO DO:

Brain Dump

PRIORITISE TASKS:

MOST IMPORTANT TASK:

Done List

THINGS I HAVE GOT DONE TODAY:

*Remember: success is a
series of small wins...*