

# Deep Work Notes

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## 1 Introduction

Recently I've finished reading *Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World* by Cal Newport. The book introduces the significance of working deeply and the tactics to realize it. Since the internet and social media are ubiquitous in modern life, there are too many distractors preventing us to focus on single idea for an entire block of time. The theory behind the phenomena is that people are prone to do easy things when facing multiple tasks. The 'easy things', regarded as 'shallow work' in this books, are not mind-demanding, repetitious, alternativable and not-so-valuable. For instance, checking the inbox every ten minutes, surfing on Facebook, jumping to another pages with tantalizing titles when googling something. However, these diverge the limited-by-nature attention from the things which are really valuable. The core of deep work is eliminating the distractors and focus the attention on one task.

## 2 What is Deep Work

We expect the following abilities performed by deep work:

- Ability to quickly manage hard things.
- Produce at elite level, both at quality and speed.

There are 4 kinds of philosophies that implement deep work:

- **Monastic Philosophy.** It requires the individual to apply deep work for all the time (e.g. day after day for a couple of years), leading a monastic life.
- **Bimodal Philosophy.** This means that the individual leave large blocks of time for deep work periodically (e.g. 4 days a week).
- **Rhythmic Philosophy.** This requires the individual to scheme daily routine carefully and adapt to the routine that contains hours for deep work everyday (e.g. 5 a.m. to 7 a.m.).
- **Journalistic Philosophy.** This calls for the capacity that shifting to deep work quickly as long as there exists an entire block of time (e.g. at least 90 mins).

## 3 How to Execute Deep Work

- Ritualize the life with deep work.
- Carry out the works with grand gestures.
- Exploit the whiteboard effect brought by effective cooperation.
- Execute like a business:
  - Focus on the widely important things.

- Action lead measures.
- Keep a compelling scoreboard.
- Create a cadence of accountability.
- By lazy, namely value downtime:
  - Downtime aid insights: value the ideas which come in subconscious or unconscious.
  - Downtime helps recharge the energy needed to work deeply.
  - Do unimportant work at evening.

## 4 How to Tackle Boredom

All we should do is embracing boredom.

- Since most of us don't apply monastic philosophy, try to take breaks from focus instead of take breaks from distractors.
- Be close to the nature, thus mediate productivity.
- Be wary of distractions and looping during work.
- Structure deep thinking.

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### Algorithm 1: Deep Thinking

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- 1 Load relevant variables into memory.
  - 2 Specific next-step question.
  - 3 Consolidate your gains.
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## 5 Quit Social Media

### 5.1 How to Select the Internet Tool

- *Any-Benefit to Strategy*: Only use the tool that you benefit from it.
- *Craftsman Approach to Strategy*: Factorize all the tools by attributes, where each attribute impacts the user both positively and negatively. Only adapt the tool that  $\forall \text{attributes}, \text{pos} > \text{neg}$

### 5.2 Decide to Quit Social Media

- We need some high-level goals to pursuit on. Hence, identify mean high-level goals and list 2-3 activities to satisfy the goal.
- Its a rather unacceptable fact that no one on social media really cares about you, e.g. when you signed out. Only your family members and closest friends care about you, yet they are easy to access offline.
- Don't use the Internet to entertain yourself.

## 6 How to Drain the Shallows

- Schedule every minute carefully.
- Quantify depth of every activity to update the tactic sustainly.
- Make budget on shallow work that you have to handle with.
- Finish your work before 17:30.
- Become hard to Reach:
  - Make people who email you do more work, e.g. adding a sender filter to figure out those who really want to contact you.
  - Do more work when you send or reply to emails to reduce the number of the rounds to communicate.
  - *Don't Respond* Tactic. Some figures exploit this strategy to force people send to them with more clarified and determined words.

## 7 Conclusion

Just as the author enhanced all along the book, depth generates a life rich with productivity and meaning.