

## BOOK BONUS 2

### Daily Work Cycle: Tips for Each Phase



#### **BEFORE: SETTING YOURSELF UP & GETTING INTO THE FLOW**

*The Before Phase involves setting yourself up for the day ahead. This requires addressing practical matters like organizing your work space, while also paying attention to your mind-set, exploring any resistance to work that comes up, identifying incentives and rewards, and reconnecting to what inspires you.*

- Set an end to your working day in advance and stick to it. Having a limit on the amount of time you allocate to work is a great way to motivate yourself.
- Spend time [reconnecting to your 'Why'](#) – what first inspired you to pursue a PhD?
- Create a collage with inspiring words and images for your desktop that you can quickly glance at for a motivation boost.
- Find a suitable working space / do some clutter clearing to make the space more inviting.
- Establish a daily ritual for yourself, which includes the same wake up time.
- Listen to uplifting music / make a playlist for work.
- List your top distractions and deal with them in advance – whether it's social media updates, your email notifications, clutter, watching or reading the news, Netflix, or your family/flatmates.
- Find an [accountability partner](#) that you can check in with on a daily or weekly basis.
- Do some pre-writing before you start your work to exercise your writing muscle.
- Identify your incentives and rewards – make a list of them.

- Prioritise your daily tasks a day in advance so you can set yourself up for the following day.

### **DURING: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR WORKING HOURS**

*The During Phase is about enhancing your concentration and focus in order to make the most of your working hours. This will involve setting realistic and achievable targets, overcoming perfectionist tendencies, and adopting strategies to make you more present with your work.*

- Instead of focusing on the long road ahead, focus on the next step in front of you by breaking tasks down into small, manageable pieces – one section at a time, one sentence at a time.
- Take some pressure off by shifting your language around work and your expectations (e.g. sketching, drafting, outline, preliminary).
- When establishing your hours remember that [less can actually be more](#).
- Try a modified version of the [Pomodoro Technique](#), especially when feeling stuck.
- Organise a virtual or in-person writing session with one or more peers for mutual motivation.
- Listen to inspiring background music / use a noise app to create an atmosphere.
- Notice any procrastination tendencies as they arise / do some inner critic work (see first book bonus).
- Allow for ebbs and flows in productivity – every day will look slightly different and that's ok.

### **AFTER: DETACHING FROM YOUR WORK**

*Detaching from your work is an equally important part of your working day. Not only is it crucial for your wellbeing, it also gives your mind a break and allows you to return to your work feeling reinvigorated and refreshed. Stepping into this space can be a challenge for many and may require consciously giving yourself permission to detach, easing into your downtime through transition activities, and addressing resistance to taking time off.*

- Draw your work to a close at the time you had planned rather than waiting until you are too exhausted to continue or feeling burnt out.
- Try transition activities to ease your way into downtime (exercising, going for a walk, grocery shopping – online or in person).
- Find ways to keep track of progress aside from word count (e.g. a [‘PhD Process Journal’](#) or Pomodoro rounds) since it is not always the most reliable measure of progress.
- Check in with your accountability partner.

- Keep track of your wins.
- Cultivate gratitude for what is going well. Volunteer work is a great way to cultivate gratitude – find an organization that you can get involved with in your community on a weekly or monthly basis.
- Reward yourself with an item on your Rewards/Incentives List.
- Make time for a new hobby or pastime that you've been postponing (learning a language, playing an instrument, drawing, painting, listening to music, reading a novel).
- Maintain the same bedtime / adopt a wind down ritual in the evening to boost your sleep quality.
- Carry a notebook with you for any thoughts or ideas that come to you during your downtime. Make a note of them and return to them the following day.