

Strategies to Keep You on Track

It's important to set goals and strategies for yourself while you're writing every day, and more importantly, that the goals be achievable. Some strategies that work with students and faculty are listed below:

Free Writing

Just write. Don't edit. This activity helps get you into the practice of writing. Get into the habit of free writing for 5 minutes at the beginning of each day:

- Keep your hands or fingers moving
- Go for your first thoughts
- Don't edit
- Don't stray from the topic
- Be specific
- Don't worry about punctuation and grammar
- You are free to write the worst junk imaginable

Goal Setting

Some people are able to sit for hours at a time, continuously writing. Others, not so much. One of the first goals to get you started is to just stay seated for an extended length of time, maybe X minutes, while doing nothing but writing. Once that time is up, check it off your list.

Positive Reinforcement

You may want to reward yourself in some way after accomplishing your goal. Maybe you've earned a walk in the neighbourhood or some musical instrument playing after a few hours of writing. Whatever you enjoy doing, be sure to only reward yourself with that activity once you've reached your writing goal. This actually works.

Create a Time and Place to Work

Be sure that your workspace is in a place you enjoy working, and when possible, stick to that space. As well, as much as possible, stick to a schedule where you're writing/working at that space each day at the same start time to the same finishing time. Structuring your day in this way helps you to feel more in control of the process.

80/60/40

One formalized way of doing all this is the 80/60/40. This method allows you to get everything you need done in one go but you do not leave your seat for each allotted time for writing. Some people like to start with different time frames, such as 60/40/20 and then work up to larger ones. This means that at the beginning of your day

you:

- Write for 80 minutes.
- TAKE A TEN MINUTE BREAK*
- Write for 60 minutes
- TAKE A TEN MINUTE BREAK*
- Write for 40 minutes
- You're done.

* At each break, be sure you don't do anything that will be too distracting from your mental space for writing. Go for a walk, make some tea, whatever. Just don't check email, Facebook, etc.

[The Queen's Assignment Calculator](#)

(a tool to help students break down big assignments into manageable parts)

[The Thesis Manager](#)

(designed to help you plan your thesis or dissertation process)

[The Pomodoro method](#)

(It's pretty self-explanatory. Check out the website.)

Still Having Trouble?

Maybe this is the [way to go](#).