



# Deep Work Plan

## Introduction

Deep work involves completing demanding tasks efficiently thanks to being able to focus without interruption. As a skill, deep work enables us to produce better results in less time. As a practice, deep work makes us better at what we do and leads us to a sense of true satisfaction and achievement.

Deep work is a productivity superpower, yet most people struggle to go deep. Many spend their working days bouncing between our inboxes, pointless meetings, and group chat notifications. Succumbing to these attention traps will have a strong negative effect on your productivity. To be exceptional at your work, you need enough time of uninterrupted focus: deep work.

In this exercise, we will identify what keeps you from engaging in deep work and devise a plan to tackle more deep work during a typical week.

### Part 1: General deep work reflection

On average, approximately what percentage of your time (0 - 100%) do you spend on deep work per week?

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
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How satisfied (1 - not satisfied at all - 10 highly satisfied) are you with the current amount of time you spend on deep work?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Not satisfied at all

Highly satisfied

To what extent do you feel there is room for more deep work in your current job (1 - no room at all - 10 a lot of room)?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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No room at all

Lot of room



## Part 2: Your deep work plan

Appendix contains a blank deep work plan. The following steps will guide you to formulate your deep work plan. Please write down your responses in the relevant boxes in Appendix.

### Step 1: Choose a task or project that needs deep work

Consider a work task or project that would benefit the most from deep work. In other words, which task or project is demanding and would benefit the most from sustained, uninterrupted attention? Describe the work task or project you plan to engage in by means of deep work strategy in box 1.

### Step 2: List distractions

What are your three greatest distractions in your work environment when working on a task or project? List them in box 2.

### Step 3: Eliminate distractions

Given the distractions you listed in step 2, what actions can you take to eliminate these to facilitate deep work? For example, I switch off my phone, exit emails, disable notifications, and ask others not to disturb me for X amount of time. For each distraction, describe how you will eliminate it in box 3.

### Step 4: Reduce/eliminate shallow tasks

*Shallow tasks* can get in the way of deep work. A shallow task is a non-cognitively demanding task that is often completed while we are distracted. Examples of shallow tasks include checking your email, filling in a spreadsheet, or ticking off your to-do list. These efforts are easy to replicate and tend not to create much new value in your world. While they feel nice to get out of the way, they mean little at the end of the day. You might think of shallow tasks as shuffling papers instead of laying bricks to build a house.

Consider the shallow tasks that fill up your daily work schedule and prevent you from “going deep” with the task or project. List three tasks you will spend less time on or eliminate to create more room for deep work in box 4.

### Step 5: Determining when to engage in deep work

Deciding beforehand when and how long you will work will keep you accountable and ensure you complete your deep work tasks. Determine when (day and time of the day) and for how long you will do deep work, and write this down in box 5.



### Step 6: Determining where to engage in deep work

Choose where you will do your deep work, for example, your study at home, local library, or perhaps even at your (or a friend's/relative's) holiday house. When choosing a location for your deep work, consider a place that is quiet and free from distracting things, like noisy neighbors, loud traffic, or children wanting to play. Write down your deep work location in box 6.

### Part 3: Reflection

Two weeks after completing this exercise, reflect on the following:

- Were you able to implement any or all of the strategies to eliminate distractions in your work environment?
- Has eliminating distractions allowed you to engage in more deep work?
- What has had the greatest effect on your capacity for deep work? That is, which distraction disrupted your workflow the most?
- Have you made more or less progress with your important work tasks in the last two weeks than previously?



### Appendix: My Deep Work Plan

Complete your deep work plan by describing the work you are planning to engage in using deep work, specifying the amount of time you will devote to your deep work, the location where your deep work will take place, the actions you will take to eliminate distractions from your work environment, and the efforts you will make to minimize (or eliminate) shallow work.

<b>1. Task or Project:</b>	
<b>2. Distractions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■</li><li>■</li><li>■</li></ul>	<b>3. How I will eliminate each distraction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■</li><li>■</li><li>■</li></ul>
<b>4. Shallow tasks that I will eliminate/spend less time on:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■</li><li>■</li><li>■</li></ul>	
<b>5. When?</b>	<b>6. Where?</b>