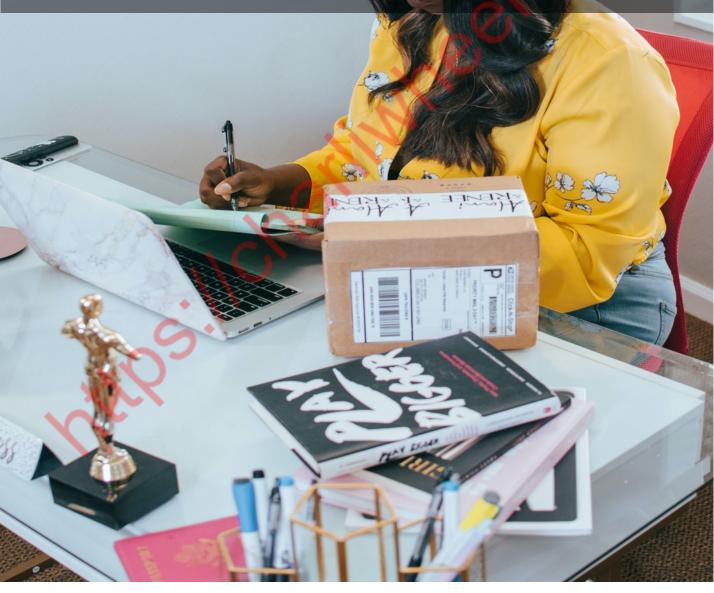
# **BURST:** Change Your Life 25 Minutes at a Time

By Charli Wheeler



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## Introduction

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For as long as humans have understood the concept of work, we have been trying to devise ways to be more productive.

After we learned how to hunt, we tried to figure out how to hunt better. When we finally learned that we could grow our own food, we quickly figured how to ways to grow it in bulk.

The entire industrial revolution basically happened because we wanted to produce quality goods more efficiently.

Some reports claim that as early as 1791, Benjamin Franklin recorded one of the first to-do lists. It would be hard to argue he didn't lead a wildly productive life, and he was still looking for ways to be more productive.

Humans have always been obsessed with productivity because it means accomplishing more in the same amount of time. Considering that we can't change how much time we have, boosting our productivity is the only way to get more done.

Often, boosting productivity focuses on one's ability to work more or longer hours. If we can go heads down and work non-stop, we will get more done.

That statement seems irrefutable, right?

#### Maybe, but maybe not...

While working as hard as you can is important, it doesn't always translate to more productivity.

#### The real key to productivity lies in two main areas:

- **Prioritization** This is your ability to organize your tasks so that you are spending most of your time and energy on your most rewarding tasks.
- Maximum Effort This is your ability to stay as focused and energized as possible during any given task.

Think about it this way. How much more effective would your daily routine be if you **worked on your most important tasks** while at the same time giving those tasks **unparalleled focus and effort?** 

I think we both know the answer – you would be crushing it.

Combining proper prioritization techniques with maximum effort delivered in **short-bursts of time** is our productivity solution.

In this guide: "Burst: Changing Your Life 25 Minutes at a Time," we will help you become the most productive version of yourself.

We will teach you how to prioritize your tasks and then introduce you to the power of working in small bursts of time and energy,

If you are ready to maximize your productivity, let's go!

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## Hustle Culture



Before we get started, we need to quickly touch on the "rise and grind" mentality that seems so popular in the current age.

The first thing is first - there will always be times when you need to hustle, work hard, and it will feel like a grind. Working in short-bursts doesn't preclude hard work. In fact, short burst productivity is all about working hard in the right way,

Hard work is a natural part of life, a common part of success, and integral for any sort of high achievement. It can not be stressed enough that hard work is important. It isn't, however, a personality trait. At this point, hustle culture is becoming more of a meme than a reality.

Alexis Ohanian (no stranger to success, founded and sold the massively popular Reddit website) famously coined the term <u>hustle porn</u>. Alexis uses this term to describe the classic "move fast and break things" mantra the tech industry has made so fashionable.

#### The Dark Side of "Rise and Grind"

If you are constantly going at full speed, grinding from sun up to sun down (and beyond), you probably do accomplish a lot, but you might also be causing or suffering from a few problems:

- Wasting effort on low return tasks
- Risking burnout
- Letting your self-care slide
- Erosion of social life
- Less time to think of creative solutions
- Stretching your focus thin
- Making more mistakes
- Not planning for obstacles
- Giving up if you don't see the results of your hard work

You might not suffer all these issues, or even care about some of them, but just the fact you might be wasting your energy on low reward tasks should trouble you.

#### Is There a Better Way?

The better way is what this guide is all about. We mentioned it in the introduction, but to reiterate:

#### The best way to maximize your productivity is to:

#### **Step One - Properly Prioritize**

Make sure you are spending your time and effort on things that matter. You can work as hard as physically possible, but if you are directing that energy towards low or no value tasks, what are you really accomplishing?

#### **Step Two - Work in Focused Short Bursts**

Dedicate your full focus and energy for a predetermined amount of time. Once you reach that time, take a break and regroup. We repeatedly mention 25-minute work periods in this guide but choose whatever time works best for you. You have likely heard of the Pomodoro Technique before. It is the most common form of "short-burst productivity."

Don't get us wrong though, hard work and "the grind" have their place - we will never argue that - but working in short bursts is the **key to long-term sustainable productivity**.

We will be going more in-depth about the "how" in future chapters, but for now, let's quickly examine the many benefits of working in short bursts.

- It's easier to ignore distractions 20 minutes at a time
- It's easier to give full effort during shorter bursts of time
- It's less taxing to give full effort during short bursts
- You can reward yourself after each burst
- You can use unique/fun ways to time yourself (like your favorite music)
- Your momentum fuels progress
- You must take breaks. They aren't optional, so you are forced to enjoy their benefits
- Improves your ability to plan in general
- You take control of your time on a micro level

- It can help with your posture and activity levels
- It's easier to maintain motivation
- It helps you fight procrastination
- It breaks your bad habit of multitasking
- It helps you understand the value of your time
- It improves your output quality and quantity

As you can likely tell now, the benefits of working in short-bursts combined with the negatives of constant hustle make a pretty convincing case for you to at least take a shot and try working in short bursts.

If you are open to the concept of short burst productivity, and ready to become more productive, check out the next section about the first step: proper prioritization.

## The Prioritization Primer

We could write a complete guide about prioritization on its own, but since our focus is on short-burst productivity, we will keep it simple. Our goal here is to give you a brief primer on the importance of prioritization and then share some of the most popular and effective techniques available.

You can only realize the power of a productivity technique if you are directing that increased productivity towards the right tasks. This concept is especially true with short-burst productivity. After all, does it even matter how productive you are if you are focusing on unimportant or low-value tasks?

The dictionary definition of prioritize is as clear a way to explain it as any:

#### Prioritize

/prai\_prətai'zeijn/

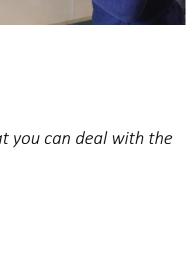
The act of putting tasks, problems, etc., in order of importance, so that you can deal with the most important first.

#### Prioritization is essentially a two-step process:

- 1. You figure out what's most important
- 2. You spend your time working on that

Sounds simple enough, right? It is!

It is also a powerful tool to have in your arsenal, even if just used on its own. You will likely boost your overall productivity with some basic prioritization alone. The real magic comes when you combine it with short-burst productivity, though (more on that later.)



One potential issue is that while prioritizing your tasks is simple in theory; it can be easier said than done if you don't know where to start.

Luckily, there have been many different systems created to help you with prioritization. One of the most widely known and used reputedly comes from General Eisenhower himself:

#### The Important-Urgent Matrix

You might be familiar with this concept if you read Stephen Covey's book "7 Habits of Highly Effective People". In his book, Covey repackaged a technique known to be used by General Eisenhower. This technique is also commonly referred to as The Eisenhower Box, Eisenhower Matrix, or Time Management Matrix.

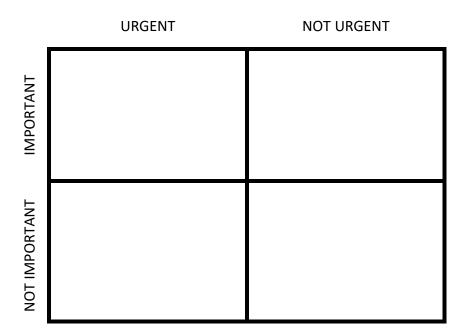
The Important-Urgent Matrix organizes your tasks by importance (how critical this task is to your goals) and urgency (when you need to complete this task).

This technique is an important exercise because, without guidance, we are terrible at figuring out what we should be doing next. We are so terrible that there is even a psychological name for it: <u>The Mere-Urgency Effect</u>.

Researchers found that we typically choose the most time-sensitive task, even if that task isn't nearly as rewarding as something less urgent. One of the most nefarious aspects of this effect is that people who already feel busy were most susceptible to it. Self-described busy people were significantly more likely to choose urgent tasks (and their far lower rewards) since they are already fixated on time.

The bright side of this research is that we can counter the Mere-Urgency Effect if people take the time to consider the long-term consequences of their choices. That is where the **Important-Urgent Matrix** comes in!

The tool is simple to use. You need to draw a square and then break it into four equal quadrants. You can do this in a notebook, a whiteboard, or using an app, but you want to end up with something like this (big enough to write in):



You likely see how simple this technique is at its core already.

Now it is up to you. You need to figure out how your daily tasks, to-dos, and long-term and short-term goals fit in this matrix.

#### There are a couple of important things to consider first, though.

The idea of *urgency* vs. *importance* isn't always easy to decipher. Since Covey popularized this technique in his book, it seems appropriate to consider how he breaks each term down:

**Urgent:** These tasks require immediate action. These can be tasks you know you need to deal with or can pop up and demand immediate attention (also commonly referred to as "putting out fires.") There should be consequences for not completing these tasks in a timely fashion.

**Important:** These tasks contribute to your long-term goals and values. They require planning and taking well-thought-out actions. What is important may vary from individual to individual.

Knowing that should make it easier for you to distribute your tasks properly. To help you even further, you will find a flushed-out version of the **Important-Urgent Matrix** below. This version includes how to treat the tasks in each quadrant and some example tasks that fit each.

|               | URGENT  | NOT URGENT  |
|---------------|---|---|
| IMPORTANT     | <b>DO IT!</b><br>These tasks often pop up out of<br>nowhere or are due to procrastination.<br>• Your client has an emergency<br>• You have a last-minute deadline<br>• There's an emergency at home                         | <ul> <li>SCHEDULE IT</li> <li>These tasks might not even have a deadline, but they are important to your overall vision or goals</li> <li>Planning long or short term goals</li> <li>Self-Care</li> <li>Learning or improving skills</li> </ul> |
| NOT IMPORTANT | DELEGATE<br>This is basically busy work. Tasks that<br>need to be done daily but don't<br>progress you towards your goals.<br>Household chores<br>Responding to emails<br>Some meetings or calls with<br>colleagues/clients | DELETE<br>These are the things that you do<br>daily that need to be cut out or<br>down on.<br>• Certain bad habits<br>• Social media obsessions<br>• Excessive TV watching  |

The **Important-Urgent Matrix** likely makes a lot more sense to you now. Here are a couple of further tips to help you use it properly:

Use an app to track your time for a few weeks. This way, you will likely find some "not important and not urgent" tasks that you can try to limit.

Urgent tasks are going to pop up regularly. Deal with them as well as you can. If you feel like you are constantly drowning in these tasks, you might need to make a significant change in your life somewhere.

Honor your personal preferences. When you decide what's important or not, focus on things important to you or your loved ones.

Schedule some time weekly to reflect and review your matrix. What's working? What isn't? Is there anything I need to add or remove?

#### **Other Prioritization Practices**



*The Important-Urgent Matrix* isn't the only way to prioritize your tasks. We included a deep dive into it because it's so simple and powerful that anyone can start using it right away and see a marked improvement in their results. If this method doesn't seem like something you are interested in, you might prefer one of the following techniques:

#### Getting Things Done (GTD)

Getting Things Done is an all-in-one productivity solution from New York Times Bestselling author and productivity guru David Allen. We would have to write a complete guide to cover this concept (and he did!) His system is all about capturing the information floating around in your head and organizing it, so you know where to focus at the appropriate times.

#### 168 Hours

If you feel like you ever have enough time, this system might be right for you. In 168 Hours, author Laura Vanderkam reminds us that we all have 168 hours each week. By examining how you spend those 168 hours, you can figure out unique ways to reorganize and prioritize your time. That means you can figure out ways to spend more of your time focusing on the really important tasks.

#### Eat That Frog

This book is an undisputed classic of the self-help genre. Author and all-around productivity wizard Brian Tracey wrote about one key prioritization concept: "Eating the Frog." In basic terms, all this means is that you should always tackle your most dreaded or important task first thing. This action builds a sense of empowerment that ideally motivates you for the rest

of the day. One of the best things about this method is it doesn't require much setup time (although I highly recommend you read the book), and it's a simple concept to remember.

No matter how you choose to prioritize your tasks, know that it is a critical step to boosting your productivity. All of the above practices are widely accepted and used, but The Important-Urgent matrix is probably the best choice for most of you.

Once you know what you should be working on, it's time to figure out the best way to maximize your focus and energy. We believe short-burst productivity is the answer. Let's not waste any more time. It's time to dive into short-burst productivity and learn how to unlock the most productive version of yourself.

## Short-Burst Productivity



If you want to give your maximum effort, you should be embracing short bursts of productivity.

The best way to put this in simple terms is to relate it to sports. Let's take hockey, for example. Even if you aren't a fan, this is an easy example to follow. A hockey game is 60 minutes long. The average shift (time on ice) a player takes is 40 seconds! Coaches know they must limit the length of these shifts so their players can give max effort. By rotating short shifts with breaks on the bench, coaches ensure they have max effort each time someone takes the ice.

The most talented hockey team on earth would likely get thrashed by a minor-league team if they kept the same five guys on the ice all game.

Hockey might be an extreme example, but why wouldn't the concept hold for any job or career?

You know the feeling of being exhausted and burnt out. Your eyes are heavy, and your thinking isn't straight. You might even suffer physical symptoms like a sore back or slower reaction times. Even if you are getting work done like this, what's the quality?

We shared some earlier benefits of short-burst productivity, but here are a few more science-backed facts:

- A study at the University of Illinois found that short breaks from a task can dramatically improve one's ability to focus on that task for prolonged periods.
- In the book The Distracted Mind, Dr. Gazzaley and Dr. Rosen's work highlights that "the shorter the time between reinforcements (rewards), the stronger the drive to complete that behavior. " Short burst productivity feeds into this by offering the reward of a break much more often.
- Research has shown that working long hours with no breaks can negatively impact your decision-making.

It is safe to say that for most people, working in time-limited blocks with regular breaks is the best way to stay focused, energized, and productive. It's backed by both science and anecdotal evidence.

If you have followed us this far, you either already agree with our take on productivity, or you still have an open mind. In the next section, we introduce you to the most popular short burst productivity of all time before teaching you a few of the other ways you can add Short-Burst Productivity to your daily routine.

#### The Pomodoro Technique



It will be a mild shock if you haven't heard of this practice before. If you have studied any time management or productivity information, it is certainly familiar. This is because it is one of the best and simplest ways to use short-burst productivity.

In fact, the Pomodoro Technique is the basis for several other productivity practices, a few of which we will touch on later.

There is a reason the Pomodoro Technique sounds more like a method to make an incredible Italian sauce than making you more productive. Back in the '80s, an Italian college student was

struggling to stay focused on his studies. I mean, who of us hasn't been there? He made a deal with himself that if he just studied for ten more minutes, he could take a break. He was encouraged by the success of this technique. So encouraged, in fact, that he found himself a kitchen timer (in the shape of a tomato - *Pomodoro* in Italian) and started to time his study periods. The technique takes the name from that original tomato timer. He went on to publish a book about it, and thus the Pomodoro Technique was introduced to the world.

It rapidly gained popularity because it was effective and easy to use/remember. The technique itself is simple enough to explain in five steps. On top of that, there are only a few rules to remember.

#### The 5 Step Pomodoro Technique

#### 1. Get a kitchen timer.

Although now it's just as easy to use your phone unless you are worried about the potential for distraction.

**2.** Set the timer for 25 minutes and focus on one single task. *This 25-minute block of time is known as a Pomodoro.*  3. When the timer goes off, markdown that you completed one Pomodoro.

You can use an app to track this or even just a notebook. You can also jot down what you focused on or completed during that period.

- **4. Enjoy your 5-minute break!** A break means a break. It doesn't mean time to do another task. Use this time to disengage and maybe move around a bit.
- **5.** After four Pomodoros take a longer break Once again, a break means a break. Take 25-30 minutes to disengage and restore.

#### Pomodoro Technique Rules

- Break bigger tasks into small actionable steps that you can realistically complete in four or fewer Pomodoros.
- If tasks are so small, you can do more than one during a Pomodoro, then group similar ones.
- Once the timer is set, it is not to be stopped. If something unavoidable does break your concentration, take your five-minute break and then start again.

#### Tips to Get the Most out of The Pomodoro Method

#### Plan your tasks in advance

Spend some time each evening or morning to plan your future work sessions. Check out your to-do list, prioritize what's important then estimate how many Pomodoros you will need to accomplish everything.

#### Feel free to play around with the timing

Twenty-five minutes is a good place to start, but it isn't optimal for everyone. Some people like a little more time, while others like significantly more work time, balanced by longer breaks. A little bit of experimentation will help you figure out your sweet spot.

#### Use a music mix to time your work sessions

A fun way to time your sessions is to create 25 minute(ish) playlists and use those for timing. Be careful to choose music that doesn't distract you. Typically, music without lyrics is the least distracting. You could also just use the music in place of an alarm. You (and the people around you) might appreciate that more than a screeching alarm.

#### Be flexible with the length of your breaks

Sometimes you might just be having one of those days. If a 5-minute break isn't cutting it, don't worry about stretching it out for an extra five or so.

#### **Track your Pomodoro sessions**

Keep track of your Pomodoro sessions with some sort of journal. This way, you have a visual representation of everything you have done. You can look back on this and try to spot patterns that might help dial in the process even further. It's also an excellent record of everything you have accomplished. If you ever doubt yourself, you can look back and see a list of your accomplishments.

#### **Embrace technology**

While phones and tech are often our biggest distractions, they also offer unique benefits to the Pomodoro Technique. Besides the obvious use as a timer or music player, many apps are designed to help you incorporate the Pomodoro Technique in multiple areas of life.

#### The 52/17 Rule

DeskTime is a time-tracking app that anyone can use to track how productively they use their time. It is wildly popular on a corporate level, where many large corporations use it to track their employee's or freelancer's time.

DeskTime has tracked the productivity of more than 325000 users across 15000 businesses in over 200 countries. Even if you find that thought a bit dystopian, you can at least acknowledge it is a ridiculous amount of data about how people work.



Using their daily 5.5 million logged records, DeskTime isolated the top 10% of the most productive employees. These employees had the best ratio of spending time on productive websites versus unproductive websites. They noticed that all of the top employees had one thing in common:

#### Their ability to take effective breaks.

The most productive employees didn't even work 8 hour days for the most part! Digging deep into the stats, DeskTime came up with their perfect ratio: 52 minutes of work combined with 17 minutes of **effective** break. Thus, the 52/17 rule was born.

This method isn't all that different than the Pomodoro Technique mentioned earlier. The 52/17 rule is essentially just tweaking the timing of the Pomodoro Technique. However, it is worth mentioning or trying because those who like it seem to LOVE it. On top of that, they didn't just snatch the 52 and 17 numbers out of thin air. Those numbers were the result of examining an enormous amount of relevant data.

The main difference (and some would argue the benefit) of this method over the Pomodoro is break time length. The Pomodoro Technique recommends 5-minute breaks to start, while this method encourages 17 minutes.

#### What Makes an Effective Break?

The extended break with the 52/17 rule opens more possibilities on what your break can be. Here are a couple of tips that will make your breaks more effective than ever.

**Exercise** – This will not only disengage you from your work, but it is also great for your health. The proverbial win-win

**Take a Walk** – This is a nice low-impact exercise that also provides a good time for quiet reflection. Head outside to add the benefits of fresh air, sunshine, and connecting with nature.

**Grab Something to Eat** – Fuel your mind and body. A healthy snack is a great way to ensure you hit your next work session with focus and energy.

**Socialize** – People who have work friends have higher levels of productivity, job satisfaction and are much more likely to be <u>engaged in their work</u>.

**Daydream** – I spent a lot of my formative years being yelled at for daydreaming. It's too bad my teachers, bosses, and parents didn't recognize how powerful a tool it can be. It provides <u>similar benefits to meditation</u> and can help you come up with new creative ideas.

**Brew a Coffee** – I have an AeroPress that lets me make a cup of expertly brewed coffee in just about the same time as it takes to boil the kettle. It not only provides a comforting ritual that helps me relax, but it also provides a kick-butt cup of coffee that reenergizes me for my next work session.

**Do What You Want** – You will hear many people talk about what makes a break, good or bad, but don't forget this is your time. If scrolling through your social media on a break keeps you from doing it when working, then go for it. After all, your break is essentially your reward, which brings me to the final tip.

**Treat it Like a Reward** – Make sure you do things you look forward to on your breaks. One of the biggest benefits of working in short-bursts is that it feeds into our natural reward system, so make sure you enjoy your breaks.

#### **Time-Blocking**

Time-blocking isn't specifically a short-burst productivity technique, but it is a powerful tool that can easily honor the concept.

Time-blocking is essentially what it sounds like it is. You divide each of your workdays into different blocks of time. The idea is to eventually time-block your entire calendar.

This technique is best suited to detailed oriented people who thrive on structure. Time Blocking is much more hands-on than the previous techniques. You will need to plan each week out beforehand and then do a nightly review to figure out any adjustments you need to make along the way. This system absolutely requires you to prioritize your tasks – luckily, you just learned exactly how to do that.

|       | <b>—</b> · · · · · · · ·   |                       |
|-------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
|       | Typical Schedule           | Time-Blocked Schedule |
| 7:00  |                            |                       |
| 8:00  |                            | Morning Routine       |
| 9:00  | Check and Respond to Email |                       |
| 10:00 | Call with Chuck            | Break                 |
| 11:00 | Team Meeting               | Deal with Email       |
| 12:00 | Lunch                      |                       |
| 1:00  | Check and Respond to Email | Lunch and Reflection  |
| 2:00  | Work on Project X          |                       |
| 3:00  | Appointment With Client    | Break                 |
| 4:00  | Call with Jen              | Work on Project X     |
| 5:00  | Work on Project X          |                       |
| 6:00  | Check and Respond to Email |                       |

#### Visual Example

The above image is just an example, but you can probably spot the difference between the two schedules right away. With time blocking, instead of your schedule being full of disparate tasks at random times, you block off entire periods to dedicate to one task.

#### The Benefits of Time Blocking

- Fully scheduling each day means you don't waste time wondering what to do next.
- Having your weekly schedule in front of you makes it easy to combine similar time blocks. If you have many related tasks, it makes sense to batch them into a single time block. This technique is known as task-batching and is a powerful tool on its own.
- It keeps you on task and avoids the pitfalls of multitasking. All your effort and energy are directed at one task.
- Grouping low reward tasks (like checking email) into a single time block allows you to tackle these tasks more efficiently.
- It helps you track how you spend your time.
- •
- Scheduling everything (including downtime) means that you will have time for everything you want to do.
- •
- It is easier to set boundaries with people. It can be hard to say no to people even when you should. Having your time already booked makes it much easier. Instead of saying "no," you can say, "sorry, I am busy with ... "
- •
- It helps with perfectionism. When a perfectionist doesn't have things scheduled, they might keep tweaking and improving incessantly. With time blocking, you at least have a firm time to move on to something new.
- Creating concrete plans <u>has been linked to</u> an increased chance of people reaching their goals.

#### Time Blocking and Short-Burst Productivity

On its own, time blocking isn't necessarily a short-burst productivity technique. However, it goes hand in hand with the concept if you keep a few things in mind:

#### **Schedule Regular Breaks**

When you set up your week, make sure you block out plenty of time for breaks and other leisure activities.

#### Time Block on a Micro Level

You could also use smaller blocks of time for your time blocking. Some people plan their days in intervals as small as 25 minutes. This micro-level attention to detail makes a lot of sense if you are also using the Pomodoro method.

#### Use a Short-Burst Technique and Time Blocking in Tandem

You don't even have to add a short-burst productivity technique into your schedule physically; you just need to know you are using it. For example, if you block off 3 hours for an important project, you can still use Pomodoro or 52/17 during that block.

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#### **Other Short-Burst Productivity Practices**



The above practices aren't the only ways to tap into the power of short burst productivity. Here are a few more productivity practices that you should consider.

**Note** – some of these aren't designed specifically for short-burst productivity but can easily be tweaked to fit.

#### The Flowtime Technique

Flowtime is a modified Pomodoro technique created by Zoë Read-Bivens. Like many people, Read-Bivens found the Pomodoro timer system to be a bit too rigid. Sometimes she would work past exhaustion just to make it to the timer, and other times, the timer would go off right as she got in the flow,

With this technique, you start by writing down one task you will work on during a session. This

unitasking is the one irrefutable law when it comes to Flowtime – you must stick to one task.

Once you have written down your task, you write down when you started it. Then you simply work away on it until you naturally feel a need to take a break. There is no timer, so you need to rely on internal cues. Feeling bored, distracted, or making many silly mistakes are all signs you might need a break.

There are no specific rules on how long your break is, but in general, the longer you worked, the longer your break should be.

#### Gamification

Gamification is when you take typical aspects of games (scoring, competition, etc.) and then apply them to other areas. Gamification is most commonly used in marketing. If you have ever collected points as you shopped, then you have experienced gamification.

There is now an entire cottage industry of productivity apps that have tapped into the power of gamification. The concept behind most of these is that you collect points as you complete important tasks or avoid certain bad habits.

The Forest app is probably the best example of gamification and productivity I have seen. At its heart, it is a fancy Pomodoro timer. Except, instead of alerting you that your time is up, you grow a digital tree.

It's simple, once your work session starts, your digital tree starts growing. If you cave to distractions and check your phone before time's up, then your tree dies. If you make it until times up, you gain a tree in your forest. The more sessions you stay focused on, the more trees get added to your forest.

Essentially, the Forest app makes the boring, repetitive act of setting a timer into a fun game that catches your imagination. Another interesting twist is that you earn in-game currency that you can use to plant real trees in real life.

#### The Action Method

The Action Method is a productivity system, software, and physical journal created by <u>Behance</u>.

The Action Method treats every task (professional and personal) as a project. Following a project development process helps you break your large plans and goals into concrete action steps. One big advantage of this method is that it naturally forces you to break large tasks into actionable steps. While there is no timer used, smaller, more actionable steps are a natural fit with short-bursts of maximum effort.

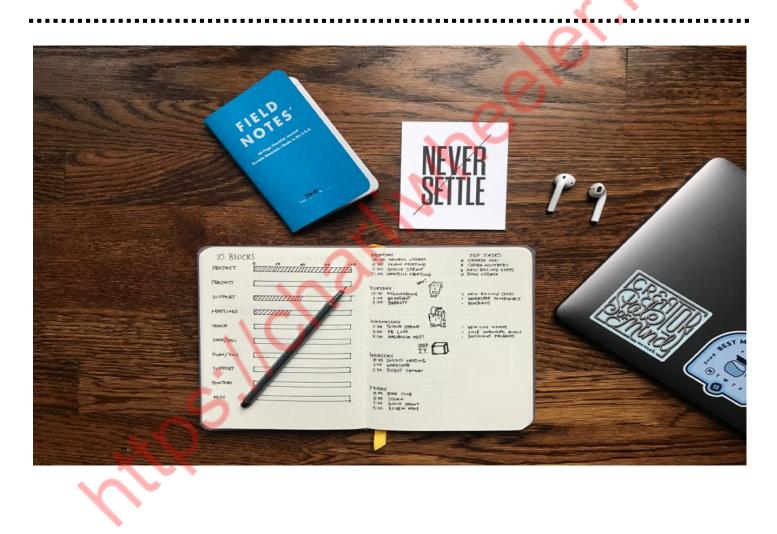
#### Tocks

Tocks is another productivity system that relies on the Pomodoro Technique as its inspiration. It was created by the founder of the Beeminder app (another productivity tool).

This system works with a 45-minute focus session, followed by a 15-minute break.

Outside of the different timing, the only other difference with Pomodoro is that you should keep a blank piece of paper (or a blank page in a notes app) with you. Any time you feel distracted, write down what distracted you and get back to your task.

Tracking your distractions like this is important because it gets them out of your head and onto paper. Subconsciously you can stop worrying about the distraction because you know you wrote it down and can address it later. This brain dump can help keep you focused on your current work session. Another bonus is that your next great idea might end up on that list of distractions.



People who work in focuses short bursts are typically happier, healthier, more engaged, and most importantly - more productive.



## Conclusion



If that sounds familiar at all, you are in the right place. There is nothing wrong with you. There is nothing wrong with your work ethic. You just need to figure out where and how to direct that effort in the best way possible.

Remember, working hard should always be combined with working smart. People who properly prioritize their tasks, work in short bursts, and give maximum effort, are accomplishing both.

You gain all the benefits of hard work because you have that much more energy and focus to really get after it. At the same time, you gain all the benefits of a better life balance because you recognize the opportunities that regular breaks provide.

#### In this book, you have learned:

- The dark side of rise and grind
- The power of short burst productivity
- The Important-Urgent Matrix
- Extra methods to prioritize your tasks
- The Pomodoro Technique
- 52/17 Rule
- Time Blocking
- Extra methods to embrace short-burst productivity

If you have never taken steps to address your productivity before, arming yourself with this knowledge will boost your productivity massively.

If you commit to choosing and using prioritization and a short-burst technique as soon as next week, you will be surprised at your progress ten days from now.

#### What are you waiting for?

Get out there and start changing your life 25-minutes at a time.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charli has helped hundreds of small business owners learn the strategies they need to grow their business, while still having a good work/life balance. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing Management and a Master's Degree in Business. She's a Certified Business and Entrepreneurship Coach, as well as a Certified Life Coach.

She's also a mom of 3 (2 boys and a girl). She loves cats (has 4) and dogs (has 2). She takes care of her dad, loves to read and has a collection of succulents she's trying to keep alive.

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