

immediately on the top task on this short list of Most Important Tasks. Single-task on this important task as long as you can — ideally until it's done. Now you've started your day with focus, and you've already accomplished something great.

3. Refocus ritual. While the start of day ritual is great, there are lots of things that get in the way to distract you, to mess up your focus. So every hour or two, do a refocus ritual. This only takes a minute or two. You might start it by closing down your browser and maybe other open applications, and maybe even take a walk for a couple of minutes to clear your head and get your blood circulating. Then return to your list of Most Important Tasks and figure out what you need to accomplish next. Before you check email again or go back online, work on that important task for as long as you can. Repeat this refocus ritual throughout the day, to bring yourself back. It's also nice to take some nice deep breaths to focus yourself back on the present.

4. Alternate focus and rest. This is almost like intervals in exercise — alternating between periods of hard exercise and rest works well because it allows you to do some pretty intense exercise, as long as you allow yourself some rest. Focus works much the same way — if you give yourself built-in periods of rest, you can get some great periods of focus. There are many variations on this, but some ideas might include: 10 minutes of focus + 2 minutes of rest; 25 minutes of focus + 5 minutes of rest; 45 minutes of focus + 15 minutes of rest. You get the idea — you'll need to experiment to find the length and mixture that works best for you. Some prefer short bursts and others like longer periods of undisturbed creativity.

5. Alternate two focuses. Instead of alternating between focus and rest, you could alternate between two different focuses. For example, you could work on two different projects at once, or study for two different classes at once. I'd suggest not switching too rapidly, because there's a short period of adjustment each time you switch. But you could work for 10 minutes on one thing and then 10 on another, or stay focused on one as long as you are interested in it, then switch when your interest lags. The great thing about this method is that switching to a new project can help give your brain a rest from the other project and it can keep you creating for much longer before getting distracted.