

TIME TO WRITE

Your time

You want to find time to write, to organise your space and your life so you can start (or finish) a writing project. You've got a busy schedule & need to fit your project with work, family or other things in your life, or you don't know where to start.

DO THIS FIRST

- Get a notebook.
- Make your writing space as user-friendly as possible.
- Give yourself two minutes. Write down as many distractions as you can. Make a list.

SET A WRITING GOAL

1. What would you like to achieve with your writing? Write your goal down in a sentence.

SIGNPOSTS

2. Make a list of months in a year. When would you like to be done with your project? Put a note next to that month. That's your first signpost. When would you like to be half way through your project? That's your next signpost.

WORK THOSE SIGNPOSTS

3. Now add a signpost in 6 weeks, in 3 weeks, in a week and a half, today! Look at your signposts: what will you need to have achieved by each signpost to get it all done?

A DAY IN THE LIFE

4. Make a list. What happens in your typical day? Get as much as possible down. Now add in where the distractions you listed earlier are likely to occur!

TEMPLATE IT

5. Create a template for a day. Divide the day up. E.g. Before breakfast, Breakfast, Morning, Lunch, Afternoon, Tea, Evening. Now you've simply got the structure of a day, and not the content you added in the previous version.



WEEK BY WEEK

6. Not everyone has time to write every day. It's more important to write regularly and to create a writing habit. So: repeat and make a template for a week. This will look a bit like a school timetable. Add in any regular things you do – pick up the kids, go to work, exercise, cook dinner. Block those out.

TWEAK YOUR WEEK

7. Take both your *day* template and *week* templates and add in where distractions occur, where you have most and least energy, and finally, where you could find time to write.



8. If you write at home, walk around your house with a notebook and write down any niggles. Any small thing that distracts you. A light that doesn't work, a messy desk, a pile of stuff on the floor etc.



9. If you have dependents, *plan* to spend special time with them. Now: when will you get time to focus on your writing? First thing in the morning? In bed? After bedtime? Could you do a childcare swap once a week?



10. Read, read, read. If you can't write, read: read in the bath, read before bed, read on the bus.

168: WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOURS?

Manage your habits and your energy not your time. It's actually impossible to 'manage time': we all have 168 hrs in a week. It's what you do with them that counts!



LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

Regular breaks, exercise, healthy eating, hydration, looking after your mental health, all come first - they're not optional extras.

QUICK TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

- **Batching.** This is where you do lots of the same thing in one go as a time saving device. Batch cooking at the weekend should save time cooking in the week, for example.
- **The Pomodoro Technique®.** Get a kitchen timer. Set it for 25 mins. Concentrate on a task for 25 mins. All distractions must be turned off. Rest for 5 mins. Repeat. Check out: cirillocompany.de/pages/pomodoro-technique
- **Automating.** This is where you create a list of the tasks that you repeat during the week or day and you try to automate them where appropriate and where you're able to. Pre-sorting your washing, or keeping a bag by the door are two everyday examples.
- **Templates.** The idea of templates is that you create a plan for anything similar you plan to write regularly. Blog posts, for example, or presentations, or emails. If you're always replying to the same kind of question by email, it saves time to write a template ready to send out, rather than rewriting it each time.

Based on: *A Small Steps Guide to Goal Setting and Time Management* by Louise Tondeur.
Questions? email: contact@smallstepsguide.co.uk
www.smallstepsguide.co.uk/learning-the-small-steps-method