

WORKING FROM HOME

5 Productivity Methods You Should Try



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Introduction

Contrary to popular belief, employees who work from home tend to be [more productive](#) than their peers in the office.

However, when you're struggling to stay focused on a task at home, that exciting productivity research will do you little good. It's easy to feel like your day is slowing to a grinding halt because you just can't seem to get focused, start that challenging project, or finish a complicated task.

Sometimes, the right productivity method can make all the difference. While there's no one-size-fits-all solution, these are some of the most popular ways to get more out of your remote-work time. Try a few on for size and see how your workday changes.

The Pomodoro Technique

The Pomodoro Technique has been around since the 1980s, but it's had a recent resurgence in popularity thanks to remote workers.

"Pomodoro" means "tomato" in Italian. Here, it references the tomato-shaped timer used by the technique's inventor. In this method, you work in 25-minute sections, called pomodoros.

All you need is a timer (you can use an old-fashioned kitchen timer or the one on your phone). Set your timer for 25 minutes and get to work. During that time, you can only do work-related tasks. But when the 25 minutes are up, take a 5-minute break. Be sure to set a timer for your break, too.

Repeat this work-break cycle until you've done four 25-minute pomodoros. Then, you can take a longer break of 20 minutes or so before jumping back into work.

While it might sound intense, countless remote workers swear by this method. The key is to avoid distractions while you're in a Pomodoro. If you get interrupted, you must reset your time--so you have an incentive to get rid of all potential interruptions in your way. However, if you're in a good zone and aren't ready for a break, you can keep working for longer than 25 minutes at a time.

This method can help kickstart your brain into that super-focused state where you get your best work done, while also ensuring you get enough healthy breaks. Even if it sounds strange, we recommend giving it a try.

The Snowball Method

The snowball method is often used in reference to paying off debt. You'll pay off your smallest debt first; then, you can "snowball" the funds from those payments into the next-smallest debt. The idea is that each small win gives you the confidence to keep going.

However, this can also work well for remote-work productivity. The idea here is to start with the smallest task on your list. Checking it off will make you feel accomplished, giving you the motivation to move on to the next task.

The snowball method may not be an ideal way to structure your whole workday, though. Saving your biggest task for last isn't always a great idea. However, if you start your day with a few small tasks to get the snowball rolling, the feeling of success can help you tackle bigger tasks with more confidence.

Eat-the-Frog

The name is a lot less pretty than pomodoros and snowballs, but "eating the frog" can work just as well.

When you "eat the frog," you tackle the hardest or most unpleasant task on your list first. (This places it in opposition to the snowball method. Both can work, but you'll have to choose the right one for a given work situation.)

The name for this method comes from an iconic quote attributed to Mark Twain: "If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first." The idea is that if you do the hardest thing first, the rest of your day will feel easy.

This method gives you a significant sense of accomplishment and reduces the stress of having a hard task hanging over your head all day.

The Two-Minute Rule

Do you feel like your workdays get bogged down by small tasks that keep coming in and making your to-do list longer? The two-minute rule might be just what you need.

This rule mandates that if a task takes less than two minutes to accomplish, you should do it right away. This could mean replying to an email or paying a bill. It could also involve more domestic tasks, like washing a dish or taking the compost out.

Whatever it is, doing it now will mean you can't stress about it, procrastinate on it, or let it make your to-do list longer. This method can also help you accomplish tasks faster. For example, instead of agonizing over how to word an email, you now have an incentive to write and send it in just two minutes.

The Checklist Manifesto

This concept comes from the book by the same name. The author is a surgeon, and he applies the idea of using checklists to surprising industries, including the medical field. But we also love this method for work-from-home tasks.

The concept is simple: break down each task into a comprehensive checklist so that you won't miss a single step. Checklists create a game plan, so you don't have to think about the next step as you work on the previous one---it's already mapped out for you. And you'll get a small feeling of accomplishment with each small step you accomplish. Plus, you can easily see ways to make your processes more efficient when you look at them in a checklist form.

This is just a taste of the countless productivity methods out there. However, these techniques are the ones we love best for working from home. Some of them might seem to contradict each other, while others can be easily combined. But they're all valuable methods. You can pick which one fits each work challenge, or your personal work style, best.

Looking for more ways to stay productive? Learn how to accomplish your goals [with a bullet journal](#) next.