

Action Unleashed!

I Have NO Idea Why You're Not Doing This Simple Stuff

By Derek Franklin

<http://www.theactionmachine.com>

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ABOUT DEREK



Derek Franklin is a writer (including copywriter), consultant, software developer, and all-around creative thinker.

Derek has been online since he got his first computer in 1995.

A year later, in 1996, he discovered Adobe Flash (Macromedia Flash back then) and discovered it was a great way for him to express his creative spirit.

In 1998, **Derek** create a series of online tutorials that showed others how to use Flash. This lead to his first book deal - a how-to book on Flash for Macromedia Press (now Adobe Press).

Since that time, **Derek** has achieved a number of milestones:

- [Written 5 best-selling print books on the topic of Adobe Flash](#) that have sold over 250,000 copies in more than a dozen languages worldwide
- Worked as Creative Director for a nationally recognized company, with clients that included Adidas and Papa Johns
- Given presentations at top Internet marketing events, including those for Yanik Silver and Joel Christopher
- Created several search-related software products used by 1000's of satisfied users

- Achieved multiple 5-figure sales days for his products/services
- Launched more than 15 projects online - everything from software, to ebooks, to a membership site

IS YOUR LIFE A WASTELAND?

How much of your life is simply being wasted-away?

Please think about this. It's important.

When you step back and honestly evaluate what you accomplish each day, what kind of results are you typically getting?

Let's look at some simple figures and do some simple math. I think that what you'll see unfold will stun you a bit.

An Honest, Hard Look At How You're Spending Your Life



After accounting for 8 hours of sleep, you have 16 hours left over each day to do stuff, or 112 hours a week.

Are you making the most of those 112 hours?

Of course, you're not really supposed to 'make the most' of the time you spend eating or doing other leisurely activities, but even if you give yourself a very liberal 3 hours a day for food and recreation, that still leaves you with 91 hours a week for getting things done in your life.

Think about that for a moment...91 hours!

Did you *realize* that after sleep and 21 hours of eating and entertainment each week that you had 91 hours left over?

If you're like most people (including myself, at one time), probably not.

Even when you take away 45 hours a week for work and a commute, you still have 46 hours left over.

Let's do one more deduction. Let's set aside another hour a day (7 hours a week) for miscellaneous activities, such as walking the dog, paying the bills and going shopping.

After all is said and done, you're left with 39 hours a week.

Are you starting to feel a bit uncomfortable or uneasy about now? Does the idea that you may have nearly 40 hours **a week** that you probably can't logically account for shock you bit?

Are you *really* wasting that much of your life each and every week with nothing to show for it?

No, you say?!?

How about half that, or about 20 hours a week? Are you wasting away that much you think?

How about just a measly quarter of that, or 10 hours a week? Are you wasting 10 hours a week on nothing?

Now that we've got the waste-figure down to just 10 hours a week, you may not be feeling so bad about it. After all, it *is* just 10 hours. But consider this: That's 520 hours, or 32.5 days (16 hour days) that is going down the dumper each year. And that's a bare minimum! For you, it could be worse... 2, 3, or even 4 times worse (that's over 4 months of waste)!

I know that was a lot a math, something you may not enjoy doing at all, but it was a necessary exercise.

I hope you've been able to see and understand the magnitude of what you may be doing with your most precious resource - your time.

When I did this exercise, I simply couldn't believe it. I had to check my figures multiple times to make sure a number didn't get misplaced or something. It didn't!

What WAS misplaced was my carefree attitude about what I was actually doing with my time.

This led me to do what I normally do, and that's pour through every resource I could in order to uncover ideas, tips and strategies to help turn things around.

This guide is a compilation of some of the best ideas I've found, along with a few of my own discoveries.

I'm sharing it because I know I'm not alone in my desire to want to make the most of my time, and thus my life.

If you're with me on this, then I hope you find information inside this guide simple, clear, and useful - I want it to product results for you!

Get ready to become a Human Action Machine!

How To Use This Guide

You'll notice that the contents of this guide are pretty simple - there's not a bunch of 'fluffy', long paragraphs - just short, simple strategies that are easy to understand, and easy to put to use.

After all, the chances of you using any of them is dependent on how clear, easy, and simple you think they are to put into practice.

I'm not crazy enough to believe you'll use all of them. That's OK. Just use *some* of them, that's all I ask.

And don't think about using the ones you DO like *all at once*. If you do, your brain will probably fight it, as it does most of the time when you try to change too much in your life at once.

Instead, try adding just one new tip or technique to your routine each week.

Don't discount these small steps. They can be life-changing.

As a matter of fact, to close up this section, I'd like to share with you a quote I have posted on my desk. It really sets the tone for the rest of the information you're going to discover.

The quote is: *'Slight shifts create seismic differences'*.

Think about it as you read on...

How To Take More Action!

1. Set Aside A Specific Block Of Time For Consuming Info On The Web

It's time to end the wasting of hours upon hours of your valuable time mindlessly on stuff that really requires no more than 30 minutes each day.

I'm talking about everything on the Web that you do to consume information - reading emails, checking Facebook, Twitter and digg, reading blogs, the news - everything!

Give yourself 30 minutes to an hour each day to do nothing but enjoy it, take care of it, or however you look at it. But once you've used up your time, don't go back to it *at all* until later in the day or evening, once you've accomplished a number of other tasks.

Keep these things in their place and quit letting them control your life!

Give up checking this stuff every 10 minutes. Not only is that a momentum-killer, but chances are, the rest of the world isn't going to sit at a standstill waiting on your next Facebook update. :)

2. Take Control Of Your Inbox

A whole book could be written on the topic of managing email (there have been, many of them), but these would likely be the highlights:

- **Immediately answer any email that can be replied to quickly.** Quickly means less than a couple minutes.
- **Keep your replies short when possible.** Loose the 'small talk' and get to the point (but maintain sincerity). As much as you don't like *writing* lengthy emails, the person receiving one probably likes *reading* them a lot less.

- **Delete any emails you haven't responded to after a month.**
Holding on to them does nothing but make you feel guilty every time you open your inbox. Guilt is an action-killer, so get rid of the old emails and get rid of the guilt!

3. Work As Disconnected As Possible

This means, turn off your phone (you can do it, I know you can), close your instant message program, and close your office door (use a Do Not Disturb sign if necessary).

You have got to get momentum on your side, because once you work in a state of 'flow', you're able to take action much faster, with greater results.

When working, eliminate all distractions!

4. Focus On One Thing At A Time

Think of driving in your car with the destination being the other side of town.

How much faster are you going to get there driving a straight road with your foot constantly on the gas as opposed to starting, stopping, changing directions, starting again, stopping again, changing directions, and so on?

If you take that straight road with your foot constantly on the gas, you'll get to your destination at least 10-times faster than if you're constantly starting, stopping, and changing directions.

Focus has the same effect on your life - it gets you to your destination or goal much faster when you practice it. Loose the 'multitasking' mindset of trying to do several things at once, and you'll begin scratching things off your to-do list faster than ever!

5. Do Plenty Of What You're Supposed To Do

What this means is to make sure you spend a good part of your day, every day, doing what it is that you do, and less time on secondary, time-wasting tasks.

If you're a consultant, then consult. If you're a writer, then write.

Quit wasting your days on things that take away valuable time from your main purpose.

Delegate secondary tasks to someone else to take care of, or at least consider trimming down the time you allow for them.

Bottom-line: The majority of your day should be spent taking action related to your chosen profession or passion.

6. Keep Your To-Do List In Front Of You

Don't make a to-do list on an old dog-eared notepad and then throw it in a drawer you *might* look in every couple of months.

Post it somewhere you can look at it daily - on your desk, the fridge, the ceiling in your bedroom, it doesn't matter.

The clearer you are about what needs done in your life, the more likely you are to take care of it. Keeping your to-do list in front of you is a great way to maintain your clarity of what you need to take care of.

7. De-clutter On A Regular Basis

A confused mind always says 'no'.

This means that if your life is full of clutter, your brain is probably overwhelmed and confused (even at level you may not realize) and it sees all the things you need to do and is constantly saying, 'NO!' - slowing you down *BIG TIME!*

On a regular basis, clean your work environment, and clear out the junk in your life you no longer need or use - give it away. This includes books, magazines, DVD's, clothes, stuff in your garage, junk under your bed, and so on. Let it all go.

In addition, keep your cyber-life de-cluttered as well by clearing out old emails and rarely visited bookmarks occasionally.

Schedule a time once a month to de-clutter and you'll find your brain saying, 'YES!' a lot more often.

8. Increase Your Personal Speed

When you observe the way someone who takes a lot of action carries themselves, you begin to see one of the underlying reasons how they get so much done - their personal speed.

Seriously, action-takers seem to move faster, talk faster, make decisions faster - everything faster than everyone else!

You need to become consciously aware of your personal speed and determine whether it's hindering you from getting things done. If it is, the fix is simple; start doing things faster and with more energy behind them.

This *doesn't* mean you become an overworked, stressed-out, hyped-up, caffeine-guzzling maniac!

It means that every day you focus on adding a little more energy into everything you do, until your mind and body gets into the habit of being in a state of action.

9. Just Start!

It doesn't matter if it's for just 5 minutes, you NEED to start doing something toward your goals and dreams right now!

When you start with a goal in mind, it's easy to become overwhelmed by the realization of all the steps you're going to have to take to reach your final destination.

What you may not realize is that with each step you take, no matter how small, you move a little bit closer to your end-goal and as a result, it gets just a little clearer. In addition to that, the scope of things you need to do to accomplish it, narrows.

In other words, your ability to reach your goal faster and easier is compounded with each step, no matter how small.

Start your journey today!

10. Write Things Down

Give up trying to keep ideas, to-do's, goals, and plans all in your head!

Doing this causes unneeded stress because of a sense of being overwhelmed with 'all the things weighing on your mind.'

When you get in the habit of moving things out of your head and onto paper (or your computer), it not only frees-up precious brain power for the sake of taking action, but it also gives you a clearer picture of all the things you need to to. Typically, this picture looks a lot more manageable when it's on paper.

11. Listen To Music

Music has a way of altering your brain for action. Why do you think so many people use music during their workouts?

If you can find music that 'pumps you up', but isn't distracting, it can be a powerful tool for juicing-up your productivity.

A great place to discover and listen to your favorite music for free is www.pandora.com.

12. Create And Use Checklists

Anytime you can offload things you need to remember from your head onto paper (or your computer), the more you set yourself up for taking action.

Your brain hates stress, and having to remember all the details related to preparing your taxes, or everything you need to schedule, reserve, and buy for a vacation just weighs you down.

Checklists help you get rid of a lot of this stress by acting like a 'mini-blueprint' you can easily follow anytime you need it, without the worry that you're forgetting something important.

For any process or sequence of actions you perform on a regular basis, take a little time to create a checklist for it and use it as needed. It may take a little time to create initially, but it will save you gobs of time and energy in the long-run.

If you need a bit of inspiration when creating your checklists, just search Google for some ideas. For example, to create a travel checklist, begin by searching Google for [travel checklist](#). You'll find plenty of ideas for things to add to your own.

13. Plan Tomorrow, Today!

The more you prepare yourself for anything, the more likely you are to follow through with doing it. This includes your daily schedule.

Every day, before you wrap up your work day, write down the 3 most important things you want to accomplish the next day. Don't just make a mental note about them...write them down!

Leave the list in the middle of your desk (or wherever else you'll easily see it in the morning).

For 'extra-credit', take a little time while you're creating your list to gather together any supporting items you may need to make achieving tasks on your list possible.

For example, if one of the items on your list is to balance your checkbook, then get your checkbook, your bank statement, and a calculator and place them next to your list.

Do everything you can to prepare yourself for accomplishing the tasks you've written down and you'll be more open to taking action when the time comes to take care of them.

14. Simplify Your Life

When you simplify your life, you eliminate a lot of time and resource-sucking *stuff* that does nothing but drag you down. One of the best ways of simplifying is to trim down on all the things you can potentially bring into your life that will require your time to use or maintain.

The problem with trying to 'have it all' is that once you own it, you almost feel obligated to *use* it all *regularly* in order to justify your purchases. This mindset takes a lot out of you, and it's really unnecessary.

When you really think about it, do you really need 4 magazines a month about the same topic, or could you get more out of digging deeper into your favorite magazine and dumping the rest?

Do you really need that shiny new gadget that will require time to learn how to use, or is the similar gadget you bought just 6 months ago still good enough?

Identify the things in your life that are complicating it (especially material stuff), and eliminate them!

15. Purposely Turn Off The TV Occasionally

There's no doubt that watching TV can be a great way to relax, just as long as you keep it under control.

Think about this; When you watch TV, you're involved in an activity that requires very little action from you (other than flipping channels). In other words, it's something that puts your brain in a mode that represents the total opposite of taking action. Do it enough, and your brain could get stuck in that mode - not a pretty place at all!

Spend a little time and decide what shows you *really* want to watch, set aside specific blocks of time to watch them, and give up the mindless channel-surfing.

I can't stress the importance and effectiveness of this enough!

16. Be Unproductive Every Once And A While

That's right, occasionally do a whole lot of nothin' and have a good time doing it.

Doing nothing is easy, but sometimes you do it while feeling guilty inside that you're 'wasting your time' because you have so much to do. This usually is the result of simply being unproductive whenever the mood hits (which is what we often do, such as after you eat, or after checking your email).

The trick to really enjoying your down-time is to plan it ahead of time, and make sure you're productive when you need to be productive.

17. Keep A Tangent Log

No matter how hard you try to stay focused on the task at hand, sometimes a little voice inside your head just won't leave you alone, so to shut it up, you allow it to lead you off on some unproductive tangent.

It's reminding you about something you need to get at the store, or it's sharing with you a great idea you don't want to miss, or it gets really annoying and starts singing a song that you haven't heard in a while, but you remember you love and you don't want to forget again.

Since there's no removing yourself from your voice, at least you can pacify it without letting it derail you altogether.

All you need is a pen and paper.

As you focus on the task at hand, anytime that little voice urges you to fire-up your browser to look for something or to get up, go to the kitchen, and add potatoes to your grocery list, instead of obeying it without argument, write down what your being told or reminded to do, then at the end of the day (or during another break), go through the items your list and take action on them.

Don't let the voice interrupt the flow of your work.

18. Dumb-Down After You Eat

For most people, the worst time to do any kind of 'brain-work' is shortly after eating.

You know why this happens, it has to do with your body's need to divert blood from the brain to the stomach for the energy-draining digestion process.

Despite knowing this is how our body works, it's easy to totally forget about it and dig into something that requires a lot of concentration and focus right after lunch.

This usually results in not-so-great results.

As with most things, the first step to solving the problem is to become aware that you're doing it. Think about your personal work habits and the things you

typically do after eating, and where possible, only take care of things that require a minimum brain power.

For me, that means a short nap occasionally, but if that's not an option, there's always checking email, clearing your desk, reading the news, and so on.

19. Beat It Into Your Head That Small Is Huge!

I'm not a big professional basketball fan, and you may not be either, but it really doesn't matter because when you examine the elements of an entire game, it can teach you a lot about taking action.

Many games have teams scoring more than 100 points.

Have you ever stopped to consider all that goes into scoring that many points?

Last time I checked, there aren't any 20 point shots that make it quick-work to get to 100. The most that can be scored at any time (without a foul) is 3 points. In the overall score of 100, even 3 points isn't that much.

In reality, most of that 100 points is racked-up in small 1 and 2 point increments - or a bunch of small actions.

And to take it a step further, most of each of those small points are scored only after dozens of dribbles, several passes, a blocked shot or two, and many more minute details we rarely stop to give thought to.

In the end, it's the team that executes more of all the small stuff better, even slightly better, that wins!

The point you want to hammer into your head that we all tend to forget sometimes is that it's the small actions you take every day that propel you forward to reaching your goals.

Every tiny bit of time (5, 10, 15 minutes) you spend doing something toward your goals, the closer you get to winning the game!

20. Dig For Plenty Of 'Why's'

For motivation to do anything with some passion, our brains need plenty of 'why's'.

We tend to forget this step when we plow through our to-do lists and goals. As a result, we have a little initial steam simply because we 'know' we've got to get things done for *some* reason. But that kind of steam only powers us so far.

To have a long-lasting, consistent drive to take action toward anything, we need to fully grasp and appreciate the end-result we're after, especially the emotional benefits - or how we're going to feel when we've complete a goal and we're experiencing it.

To give true power to any goal or task, get clear on **why** you want to accomplish it.

Depending on the size of the goal or task, this can be a simple exercise of just closing your eyes and thinking about a couple of motivating reasons why, or for larger goals, getting out a sheet of paper and making a list that you can look at regularly.

Get into the habit of always discovering the why's for what you're doing in your life. Dig deep, and dig with emotion.

21. Practice 'Early To Bed, Early To Rise'

You know by memory what will happen when you do this, right? But do you believe it? Do you think you can go to bed at 2:AM, get up at 11:AM and still be as productive as a 'morning person'?

Well, for some people that may be true. And I used to think I was one of them, but I changed my schedule just to see what would happen, and the saying proved true for me.

Why?

I'm not really sure, but I suspect it has something to do with the psychological boost that comes from realizing how much you can accomplish by 1:00 in the afternoon when you *do* start early. It feels so much better than knowing you just dragged your butt out of bed while the world around you is just a few hours away from wrapping up their day.

Start going to bed earlier and getting up earlier. Just try it for month and see how it goes.

It'll require you to give up the cool and mysterious 'I'm a night-owl' mantra, but it may have a huge impact on your productivity.

22. Take Care Of Your Health

No productivity list would be complete without mentioning the importance of maintaining your health.

Instead of spending a considerable amount of time going into detail about some very simple ideas, let me just get right to the point:

- **Drink more water and a lot less soda.** With the amount of sugar (or high fructose corn syrup) in most soda's, start visualizing each gulp you take as thick, gooey, liquid being poured on a fire, because that's essentially what you're doing - dampening your ability to think and take action with a sugary mess that takes a while to wear off.
- **Throw out most of the processed foods in your pantry (except Doritos!).** If a majority of your diet requires just a microwave to enable you to 'heat and serve' it, you're really doing yourself a BIG disservice in both food quality and taste. Not only that, but most of it is bad for you, thus not too great for your brain. Regularly spend a few minutes to select 4 or 5 fresh foods/recipes to prepare for the coming week. It's not that difficult, and it can really do a lot to contribute to your ability and desire to take action.
- **Occasionally take several deep breaths.** It helps get blood flowing to your brain, instantly energizing it.
- **Exercise a little.** Not a lot is necessary, but just enough to get you blood flowing.
- **Plan to sleep better.** Avoid anything before bed that stresses out your mind or your body (including most prime-time 'entertainment', the daily news, and intense video games.)

23. Use Time Boxing (The Powerhouse Technique)

Up to this point, we've talked about a lot of ways to take more action every day. Each one being an important step to becoming a human action machine.

But probably THE most important skill you can master is that of managing your time for maximum productivity.

There are a lot of 'systems' out there for helping you do this, but many of them require you to live almost like an automated robot with a set of instructions that need to be followed precisely or the system collapses.

This is probably why time-management continues to be a big problem for a lot of people. But it doesn't have to be, because it really boils down to some simple concepts that you can begin using immediately.

You see, in your life, you have:

- Things to do
- Time
- The ability to do your things to do

What you need in order to bring this all together to produce some results is order and structure. That's it!

The way you get that order and structure is to:

1. **Identify** the things you need to do
2. **Assign** a specific amount of time each day to complete them
3. **Focus** solely on the task at hand and take action!

That's the golden-ticket to being a human action machine!

The reason I think it works so well is because it gives your brain 2 key ingredients that drive it to taking action: Clear definable goals (even if they are very small goals), and specific time-frame to accomplish them.

This is what *time boxing* is all about. Each day you:

- Create a list of things you want to get done for the day

- Assign a *box* (chunk) of time for each one, from 15 minutes to 2 hours
- Select a task, start a timer (like an egg timer or your watch), and work on getting that task done, without distraction, until the timer goes off. Afterwards, take a break, and move on to the next task for the day.

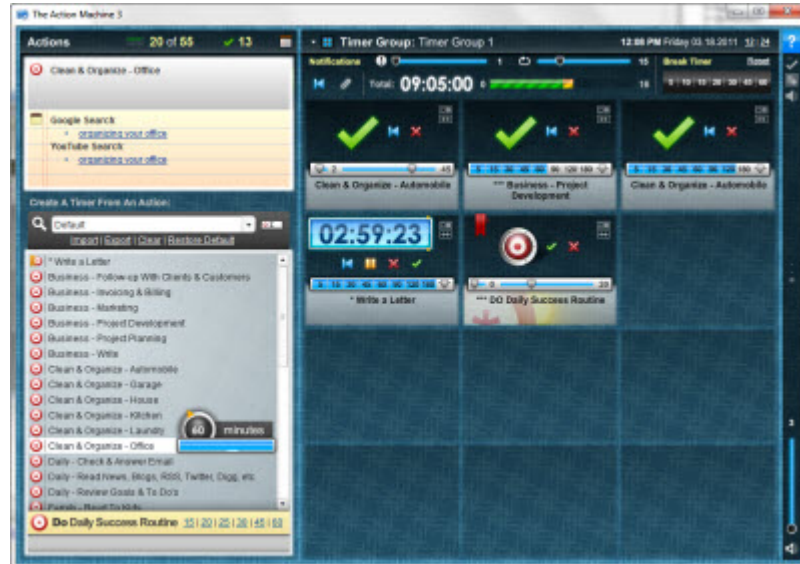
The structure, order, and mysterious driving-force this simple process creates in you, often produces mind-boggling results!

A Machine Built For Time Boxing

I believe that this powerhouse productivity technique can propel you forward in your life so fast, that I recently set out on a mission to create a simple and intuitive software-based tool to help make using the time boxing process a total no-brainer for you!

The software I created, known as [The Action Machine](http://www.theactionmachine.com), does only one thing - time boxing, but it does it *really* well.

Here's what it looks like:



Don't let the simplicity fool you, this is a beast when it comes to helping you take action!

If you're ready to get more done, starting today, visit <http://www.theactionmachine.com> right now to discover what The Action Machine can do for you.

Please Give This Guide Away!

Before wrapping up, I'd like to express my thanks for you allowing me part of your day to share all these great tips and tools with you.

If you know of anyone that could benefit from the information in this guide, feel free to send it to them.

As a matter of fact, you're free to give it away to as many people as you want (including posting it online or mailing it to your email list - if you have one). All I ask is that you don't alter it in any way. Sound fair? :)

Best success to you!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Derek".

Derek Franklin