

20 Habits To Increase Creativity & Productivity You Can Use NOW

Garrett Hope



Many of the following habits overlap and run into each other. Often it is difficult to determine where one idea ends and another begins. Taken as a whole this collection of habits that you can use to increase creativity and productivity is amazingly powerful. If you begin to practice them you will see benefits in almost all areas of your life—it won't be restricted to your composing and work.

Many of these habits are concerned with our brains and optimizing brain performance. As composers, and creative people in general, our brains are our most important tool. Our society is moving away from the Information Age, where linear, sequential, and logical thinking ruled, and towards a Conceptual Age, which is “built on the inventive, empathic, big-picture capabilities”¹ of right-brained thinkers. And as James Altucher has claimed, ideas are the currency of the 21st Century.²

Are all of these habits good ideas? You bet. When will you begin to see benefits? For some, almost immediately. For others it might take some practice. Should you incorporate all of the habits into your life? Ideally, the answer is yes. Practically, that could prove to be difficult. Each of our lives, and our individual responsibilities, make for a unique set of time constraints and roles (i.e., student, spouse, parent, etc.). Read through all 20 habits and immediately begin to incorporate the ones that stand out to you. Over time you can add more and more until you've achieved your goal lifestyle that allows you to maximize your creativity and productivity.

1. Sleep Better

The benefits of a good night's sleep extend beyond increased creativity. However, if you want to optimize your brain for problem solving, lateral thinking, and creativity, enjoying quality sleep is a must. There are stories of how insomnia helps jump-start creativity—I've experienced it and I'm sure you have, too. However, if you want to be consistently creative and at your best, and not fighting sleep debt, then you need a good night's rest. New York Magazine published an article with an interesting graphic showing the sleep habits of 27 of the world's geniuses³. A majority of those represented in the article slept between 6–8 hours every night. And so should you! As lifehack.org concluded, "So really, brilliance is a result of a well rested mind, and not staying awake by candle light slowly losing your mind like movies and biographies would have us believe."⁴ It has less to do with the amount of time you spend sleeping than it does with the quality of your sleep.

For a summary of current research (with links) on the connection of sleep and creativity go here: <http://www.sleepdex.org/creativity.htm>.

If you struggle with sleep you can try the following⁵:

- Set a schedule
- Exercise
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol
- Relax before bed
- Sleep until sunlight
- Don't lie in bed awake
- Control your room temperature
- No screen time for the last two hours before bed⁶
- Make your room as dark as possible⁷
- Eat right⁸
- Get a lot of natural sunlight⁹

2. Enjoy Solitude

Solitude gives your mind the room to freely explore. Our minds struggle to fully process multiple threads simultaneously so you must provide your mind the time and space to roam. This is why so many good ideas happen when we're in the shower—it's a place where one is alone and there are no other inputs distracting our focus and thoughts. Author Leo Babuata collected quotes from creative individuals on solitude in this article: <http://zenhabits.net/creative-habit/>. In Babuata's study of creative individuals he concludes that the number one creative habit is solitude.

3. Get Some Green

Get outside and enjoy nature. You don't have to travel to the nearest national park (although for extended trips it's highly recommended). City parks will do. What your brain needs is to be outside in a natural environment free from electronic stimuli. There are an abundance of anecdotal stories from the best crea-

tive minds on the value of taking walks through the forest and enjoying nature—typically associated with the Romantic poet, composer, or philosopher. Many of the creative people represented in this fascinating [infographic](#) take a walk every day. Apparently Tchaikovsky walked for over two hours daily. So what are the benefits of getting outside:

- It can lengthen your attention span¹⁰
- It can improve your focus¹¹
- It can improve your ability to think creatively and problem solve¹²
- ADHD symptoms vanish¹³
- A simple walk in the park can improve attention and memory¹⁴
- Brain performance can even be improved by simply viewing pictures of outdoor settings¹⁵

As psychologist Dr. Gabrielle Principe wrote, "Exposure to natural settings improves brain performance, it seems, because it provides a mental break from a world stuffed with artificial stimuli."¹⁶ The extremely creative and successful film director James Cameron even lamented the fact that all of us suffer from nature-deficit disorder¹⁷.

4. Meditate

This is another powerful brain booster. Meditation is not only for yogis and the granola set. Nor does it have to have any religious connotations. At the simplest level meditation is merely the training of the mind. Mindfulness meditation, amongst others, helps you filter out the noise—it is not about emptying the mind. Here are list of some of the benefits that have been associated with meditation:

- Increases focus and attention¹⁸
- Improved memory¹⁹
- Improved ability to practice introspection²⁰
- Increased ability to regulate emotion²¹
- Decrease of depression²²
- Decrease of anxiety²³
- Decrease of stress²⁴

Practicing meditation does not mean you have to sit cross-legged for an hour. You can spend as little as 5 minutes if you'd like. If you've never meditated, or want guidance I recommend the smart phone app *Buddhify*. Practicing meditation has benefits that extend into all areas of life. For a more extensive list of benefits check out this link:

<http://www.emmaseppala.com/20-scientific-reasons-to-start-meditating-today/#.VKVPQyfwY1Y>

There is also a great infographic based on the research here: <http://www.emmaseppala.com/10-science-based-reasons-start-meditating-today-infographic/#.VKVKLifwaSU>

5. Establish a Morning Routine

Few things have made such a positive difference in my productivity and focus as establishing a strong morning routine. I have always found the morning to be the most creative and inspiring part of my day. In his book *The Miracle Morning* Hal Elrod outlines a six-part routine that anyone can implement as part of their morning routines. Elrod calls these six steps the Life S.A.V.E.R.S.. This routine can be done in as little as six minutes, but after implementing this into your life you'll find that you'll be motivated to wake early and dig deeper into each of these steps:

- Still—Practicing meditation, quietness, and prayer
- Affirmations—Repeating to yourself statements of encouragement and purpose
- Visualization—Spending time picturing yourself achieving your goals
- Exercise
- Reading—A time for study and self-improvement
- Scribing—Journaling your goals and thoughts and creating a plan to achieve your goals

6. Eliminate the Unimportant

Have you ever looked at your To Do list and been overwhelmed with the small tasks? Or have you ever been unable to complete the your big tasks because of the dozens of items that have to be done today? Steven Covey dedicates an entire chapter this topic in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effectively People* and refers to it as putting first things first.²⁵ Later in the chapter Covey makes the point that time management is really about minimizing inputs and maximizing outputs.

In *The 4-Hour Workweek* chapter on time management Tim Ferriss introduces the Pareto Principle as a way to determine what needs to be cut and how to maximize your outputs. The Pareto Principle says that 80% of outcomes are produced by only 20% of inputs. His examples include:

- 80% of the consequences flow from 20% of the causes
- 80% of the results come from 20% of the effort and time
- 80% of company profits come from 20% of the products and customers
- 80% of all stock market gains are realized by 20% of the investors and 20% of an individual portfolio²⁶

What this means for you is that you need to determine what are the 20% of things you do that give you 80% of the results you desire and eliminate the rest.

7. Outsource

This habit is directly related to the previous habit, “Eliminate the Unimportant.” Sometimes the things that don't fit in your productive 20% still need to get done. So what are you supposed to do with them? Outsource them! Outsourcing is de-

legating the tasks you don't want to, or cannot, do to others. This can be extremely difficult for people who love having complete control over their life and environment.

I recently began outsourcing the time-consuming, non-20% tasks, in my life and it has been wonderful. Cost is a factor, but if your time is worth x amount of dollars per hour and the cost of outsourcing is y dollars per hour (given that x is greater than y) than shouldn't you be spending your time on the 20% that helps you produce at the x rate?

What sort of everyday tasks can be outsourced?

- Administrative—emails can be filtered, written, or sent
- Research—need to know something or do you need to have data compiled but don't want to spend the time doing the research yourself?
- Shopping—there are companies in place that will do all your personal shopping (groceries, clothes, you name it)

What about composition related tasks?

- Score Editing—checking parts or adding bow markings
- Engraving—even if you use the latest version of either Sibelius or Finale can you really make it look as good as Boosey & Hawkes can? And do you want to spend the time doing so?
- Printing, binding, and posting scores—Yes, there are actually companies that will do all of this for you on the paper size and weight you choose. More than that, they will even set up a store front for you so when someone purchases a score they will do the printing, binding, and shipping while even putting your address on the return shipping label—this is called drop shipping, by the way.²⁷

Hollywood and Broadway composers outsource the editing, engraving, as well as the orchestrating. This way they can spend more of their time focused on the primary task of composing.

So where can you find the people to outsource your work to? You can start by looking at www.elance.com. For more information (and inspiration!) on what outsourcing can do for your life read Tim Ferriss' chapter on outsourcing.²⁸

8. Read Fiction

Several recent studies have shown that reading fiction has positive short- and long-term effects on the brain. Reading fiction can increase brain connectivity and overall brain function. It has also been shown to increase empathy and imagination.²⁹ Reading, in general, also forces your brain to focus on the task at hand, which aids in concentration. It also helps your mind to slow down—something that, in my opinion, has become critical as we fill our lives with distraction and technology.

When was the last time you sat down to read a novel? Do you fall into one of the following statistics?³⁰

- 42%—The total percentage of college students who will never read another book after graduation

- 80%—Total percentage of U.S. families who did not buy a book this year
- 70%—Total percentage of adults that have not been in a book store in the past 5 years
- 57%—Total percentage of books started that aren't read to completion

As a New York Times article concluded, “Reading great literature, it has long been averred, enlarges and improves us as human beings. Brain science shows this claim is truer than we imagined.”³¹

9. Limit Email and Social Media

This is also closely related to No. 6, “Cut Away the Unimportant.” Really, how critical is it that you have continual access to email and Facebook? How is going down the black hole of recommended videos on YouTube helping you achieve your goals? Based on research by The Nielsen Company and Pew Research most people spend 22% of their day on social networking, 19% on email, and 13% on multi-media sites.³² A survey conducted by Edison Research revealed that nearly a quarter of Americans check their Facebook account 5 or more times during the day.³³

If you need assistance in controlling the time you spend on e-mail and social media try installing one of the many productive programs available on the market. One of the best products is RescueTime, a program (and app for your smartphone) that not only allows you to block certain websites, but it also measures the time you spend doing different activities on your computer. If you really want to know how much time you spend each week on email or Facebook install the software and find out. You can download it at www.rescuetime.com and use it free for 14 days, which is plenty of time to open your eyes to the amount of time you waste on your computer.

A suggestion for limiting the time you put into email is to use autoresponders and to check email only one or twice per day. To be even more effective make it the same time every day. For instance, you can allow yourself 30 minutes to respond to email at noon and another 30 minutes at 4:00pm. Check out Tim Ferriss' excellent posts about email and auto responders at the following links.

- <http://fourhourworkweek.com/2007/03/22/how-to-check-e-mail-twice-a-day-or-once-every-10-days/>
- <http://fourhourworkweek.com/autoresponse/>

10. Exercise

A 2003 article in the *Creativity and Research Journal* demonstrated that by participating in moderate aerobic activity creative potential can be increased.³⁴ The study looked at the immediate benefits (right after the exercise), and the residual benefits (several hours after the exercise). Another study, this one published in the journal *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* claims that regular exercisers have higher levels of creativity than do their sedentary peers.³⁵

Aerobic activity increases the flow of oxygen to the brain, which leads to elevated brain functioning. When we exercise we can think more clearly, recall information readily, and are more receptive to learning—tasks necessary for creativity. To maximize this benefit you should exercise within two hours of beginning your creative task.

11. Take Regular Breaks

Focus is extremely important. In fact, many of the habits in this ebook help you increase your ability to focus which in turn will benefit your creativity and productivity as well. That being said, science has demonstrated that to maintain focus for extended periods of time it is actually beneficial to take breaks.³⁶ To increase the effectiveness of the breaks, get up and move your body. Movement can be as simple as standing up and stretching or taking a brief walk down the hall or around your office/house.

A very effective technique for balancing intense bursts of focused work with breaks is the Pomodoro Technique.³⁷ To use this technique you set a timer for 25 minutes (this is arbitrary, but you wouldn't want it to be longer) and work diligently until the timer goes off. Follow that work period with a 3–5 minute break and repeat the cycle. After completing four work cycles (about 2 hours worth of work) take a longer break of 15–30 minutes. You can use a kitchen timer or a timer app, but there are online resources as well. Check out this list of free Pomodoro timers at gigaom.com: <https://gigaom.com/2010/11/10/9-free-pomodoro-timers/>.

12. Eat Better

The quality of your outputs is a direct reflection of the quality of inputs. This applies to your diet as well. As neurologist Paul Bendheim said, “If you think of the brain as an engine, it's going to run better on high-grade fuel. That's what a brain-healthy diet provides.”³⁸ Do you want to think more clearly? Do you want to have more energy? Do you want less afternoon fatigue? Do you want to sleep better? If the answer is yes, then you need to improve your diet.

A brain-enriching diet is based upon whole, unprocessed, foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and fish. A 2004 Harvard University Medical School study showed that a further benefit of eating this diet is that it slowed down the rate of cognitive decline of the participants.³⁹

13. Daydream

Don't feel guilty for daydreaming! It may, in fact, be aiding in your creativity. A 2012 study published in the journal *Psychological Science* had study participants complete a creative task—in this case, they had to come up with as many unusual ways to use an object as possible. Following the task, some par-

ticipants performed a demanding task, some an undemanding task, some took a 12-minute break, and the last group repeated the creative task immediately.

The research showed that the group that performed better on the creative task was the one that did the the undemanding task in the middle. According to the researchers this is because the undemanding task allowed the participant's minds to daydream, "These data suggest that engaging in simple external tasks that allow the mind to wander may facilitate creative problem solving."⁴⁰

The take-away here is that when taking breaks from our creative work we should be doing things that let the mind wander. Do not jump from one attention-consuming task to another.

14. Listen to EVERYTHING

In his book *On Writing* author Stephen King says, "If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot. There's no way around these two things that I'm aware of, no shortcut."⁴¹ It is equally true if you replace the words "writer" and "write" with "composer" and "compose."

Let your listening extend to all genres and styles. Become a musical pluralist. There is something to learn and take away from every song. You have to remember that in order to gain fans you have to first be a fan yourself.

Lastly, fasting from aural input occasionally can help to reset your ear and make sounds a music fresh again. Even though virtually any music ever recorded is available to us with a few clicks of the mouse we still need to take listening breaks.

15. Write All the Time

This habit is really an extension of the previous one, but you need to be writing all the time. Your mind becomes proficient at what you practice—your habits. If you are writing every day the process will become more fluid and productive.

To help establish this habit set aside a time of day that is reserved strictly for composition. Follow this schedule every day of the week. If you don't reserve the time to write in your calendar your schedule will get filled with other activities and jobs. Also, don't look at the time you've set aside as a chore. You are an incredibly privileged individual if you have the opportunity to create new music and you should approach this habit with joy. Do you look forward to your writing time or do you dread it? Do you begin your writing with anticipation expecting good things?

As you write monitor your frame of mind and practice hopeful expectancy believing you have the ability to write well. Your mind will provide you with what you are focusing on. Don't approach writing with fear or dis-empowering beliefs of doubt and inferiority.

16. Invest in Yourself

The habit of investing in yourself will lead to incredible amounts of creativity, skill, and knowledge. It's a habit that all creative individuals should foster. Here are just a few ways you can practice this habit, all of which are consistently referenced by highly productive, highly creative people across all industries. A bonus feature of participating in these is that many of the costs can be written off your taxes if you are participating in them for your business.⁴²

- Read Non-Fiction—Biographies, histories, and self-help books will give you inspiration, ideas, and help you think clearly.
- Continue Your Education—Take advantage of workshops and trainings in your area or at conferences you attend.
- Hire a Coach—The top performers across all fields have coaches. Coaches provide the support, accountability, and encouragement for you to achieve your goals.
- Become an Idea Machine—Practice idea creation every day. The ideas can be on any topic, but you need to exercise your ideal muscle. James Altucher has made the claim that ideas are the currency of the 21st-Century and so far he has been right!⁴³

17. Collaborate

Creatives, composers included, can no longer get by in the world by acting as solo acts all the time. Develop the habit of collaborating with others in order to create new and wonderful pieces of music. Collaboration can be as simple as bouncing ideas off a performer and allowing the performer to be a part of the writing process or as complex as co-writing works with another composer.

Some of the most fruitful and interesting works I have ever created were born out of unusual collaborations with scientists, visual artist, poets, and choreographers. There are an endless amount of interesting things happening in the world, all you have to do is find people who are not doing what you are doing and choose to work together.

The primary benefit of collaboration is increased creativity. When you work with other people several things happen. First, you have to kill your ego and allow others to influence your process; second, most collaboration force you to limit your options which in turn forces you to be more creative with the resources you have available to you; and third, allowing other creative individuals to influence your process—and in turn you influence theirs—can be a catalyst to break out of the patterns and habits you have.

18. Teach and Mentor Others

When we are fortunate enough to experience success in our lives one of the greatest things we can do is to multiply that

success by helping others. Writer and poet Austin Kleon goes so far as to say that we owe it to our artistic communities and fellow artists to walk alongside them and share our good fortune.⁴⁴

Practicing the habit of “Paying it Forward” will also help you become more fluent in the language of your discipline and will come back to you with even more success. It is true that in order to receive we must first give and to be first we must be last. That being said, do not try to help others just to receive—you have to want to share and help.

In addition, do not hold the success of others against them. If another composer is fortunately enough to be successful with his or her music you should celebrate with them, and do so with a joyful heart. Begrudging the success—or even comparing yourself to them in regards to what seems the apparent ease with which they write—only disempowers you. You cannot move forward to achieve your own goals and to increase creativity and productivity if you are full of bitterness and self-doubt.

19. Take Risks

The act of creativity is inherently risky. In order to be truly creative we must take leaps of faith regarding the success of our projects. The opposite of risk taking is playing it safe. There is no such thing as a safe composer who is being innovative and pushing developing his or her skill in the pursuit of excellence. If you want to play it safe than you need to get a job where you can clock in and clock out and the entire time not have to make decisions that can have a dramatic influence on the product of your labor.

I do not believe we, or anyone for that matter, is called to play it safe. Be adventurous with your goals and dreams. Push the envelope with what you believe is possible with music. Write for ensembles and instruments you’ve never written for before. Go to concerts and network with the performers and conductors. Email someone famous and ask a question. Take a composer or performer out to coffee and ask questions.

20. Set Goals

The habit of goal setting consists of three parts. First, you have to determine where you want to be, or what you want to have achieved. You should set both long-term and short-term goals. Personally, I have goals that I hope to achieve within twenty years and goals I hope to achieve by the end of the week. As part of your morning routine while journaling you should write out the goals for the day, week, month, year, and longer.

The second step is to ask yourself, “Who do I have to be, and what do I have to believe about myself in order to achieve these goals?” Goal setting by itself will get you nowhere. The goal setting *must* be accompanied with action. But what actions do you need to take to accomplish your goals? One of the first ones should always be to seek out personal improvement and growth. For instance, if a long-term goal is to teach composition in a university you should work on developing all the skills associated with teaching: empathy, coaching, mentorship, and communication among others. Furthermore, you would be well served to grow in the skills of negotiation, discourse, presentation, and possibly management. If you don’t know what you have to do or who you need to become to achieve your goals find someone who is already doing what you want to do and ask them.

The final step is to repeat steps one and two regularly. Though some of your personal and professional goals may never change, your circumstances, resources, and interests will. Revisit the goal setting process often. One of the first tasks Steven Covey asks readers of his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* to complete is to create a mission statement which is both a statement of beliefs about who the reader is and the goals he or she aims to achieve.⁴⁵ I encourage to you also create a personal mission statement.

BONUS HABITS

21. Attend Concerts

Nothing in my life inspires me more to be creative and to increase my productivity than to attend concerts. I believe live music is a very powerful experience and if the performers are practicing their craft well the moment can be magical. Listening to recorded music at home or in the car is great, too, but it cannot touch the power of live music.

I'm sure you can remember moments when your life was changed or your breath was taken away during a concert. One of the more recent ones for me was when I had the opportunity to hear the Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin perform Respighi's *Pini di Roma*. During the glorious fourth movement when the off-stage brass began playing from an upper gallery behind the audience I was transported to a place beyond myself—it was truly an ecstatic experience.

Granted, few performances will provide that level of rapture, but the first thing I wanted to do while walking out of the performance hall was to go home and write my own music. Go to live concerts and be inspired.

22. Find Your Tribe

The act of composition can be a lonely one. Even while collaborating with others we have to remove ourselves from the pack in order to write in isolation. Staying in isolation, however, will only hinder your creativity, productivity, and growth.

One of the most effective ways to grow is to join a master mind where like-minded individuals can bounce ideas off of each other, refine strategies, and work together to better each other's work and lives. Composer on Fire calls these Round Tables.

If you truly want to take your composing to the next level you should develop the habit of meeting regularly with other composers and creatives. Your creativity and productivity will skyrocket.

Further Reading

- Claudia Altucher, *Become an Idea Machine: Because Ideas are the Currency of the 21st Century*
 - Claudia is the wife of financial expert James Altucher and together they have written books and produce podcasts. Claudia is also the owner of a yoga business. I have found her thoughts and advice on how to exercise my idea muscle to be very valuable.
- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*
 - This is perhaps the definitive work on creativity. Csikszentmihalyi is the Distinguished Professor of Psychology at the University of Chicago. His other major book, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* explores the state of flow, or being in the zone.
- Hal Elrod, *The Miracle Morning: The Not-So-Obvious Secret Guaranteed to Transform Your Life Before 8AM*
 - In this short book Elrod walks the reader through a six-step morning routine that helps provide focus and clarity. Elrod went from being pronounced brain-dead and diagnosed with permanent brain damage and physical dis-abilities to being able to run an ultra marathon and being an in demand keynote speaker and coach using the principles he gives.
- Timothy Ferriss, *The 4-Hour Workweek*
 - Excellent and highly entertaining read on creating a lifestyle business. Contains great advice on cutting out the unimportant, the Pareto Principle, time saving, outsourcing, and email auto-responders.
- Todd Henry, *The Accidental Creative: How to Be Brilliant at a Moment's Notice*
 - Todd Henry makes his living helping creative people optimize their productivity and eliminate distractions. His follow-up book, *Die Empty*, continues the theme. He gives much of this valuable material away on his blog (www.accidentalcreative.com) and podcast.
- Austin Kleon, *Steal Like an Artist: 10 Things Nobody Told You About Being Creative*
 - This is a short, but very powerful, book. He shatters the idea that you have to be a genius in order to be successful. Be sure to check out the his second book, *Show Your Work*.
- Daniel H. Pink, *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*
 - A concise and easy read about the sea changes in our economy and society regarding the move away from the in-formation age towards the conceptual age and what this means for creatives.
- Gabrielle Principe, *Your Brain on Childhood: The Unexpected Side Effects of Classrooms, Ballparks, Family Rooms, and the Minivan*
 - Gabrielle is a psychologist and leading expert in the cognitive development of children. This book is written about the factors in our society and culture that affect the development of children. Her chapter on the importance of playing outside is incredibly relevant to this eBook. If you have children, or plan on having them, I cannot recommend this book enough.
- Shawn Stevenson, *Sleep Smarter: 21 Proven Tips to Sleep Your Way To a Better Body, Better Health and Bigger Success*
 - This book compiles the latest research on sleep and its many incredible benefits and is worth the time to read. Sleeping well is one of the few things you can do that will benefit nearly all areas of your life.

Notes

- ¹ Daniel H. Pink, *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future* (NY: Riverhead Books, 2005), 2.
- ² James Altucher, "Become an Idea Machine," *The James Altucher Show* Podcast AA Ep 191 (January 19, 2015).
- ³ <http://nymag.com/health/bestdoctors/2014/genius-sleeping-habits-2014-6/>
- ⁴ <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/27-historys-most-creative-minds-and-their-sleep-schedules.html>
- ⁵ http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/brain_basics/understanding_sleep.htm#Tips
- ⁶ http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletters/Harvard_Health_Letter/2012/May/blue-light-has-a-dark-side
- ⁷ <http://www.life-enhancement.com/magazine/article/1677-let-there-be-dark-and-melatonin>
- ⁸ <http://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-topics/diet-exercise-and-sleep>
- ⁹ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/daviddisalvo/2013/06/18/to-get-more-sleep-get-more-sunlight/>
- ¹⁰ Nancy M. Wells, "At Home with Nature: Effects of Greenness on Children's Cognitive Functioning," *Environment and Behavior* 32, no. 6 (2000): 775–95.
- ¹¹ Andrea Faber Taylor and Frances E. Kuo, "Children with Attention Deficits Concentrate Better after a Walk in the Park," *Journal of Attention Disorders* 12, no. 3 (May 2009): 402–09.
- ¹² <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0051474>; Janetta Mitchell McCoy and Gary W. Evans, "The Potential Role of the Physical Environment in Fostering Creativity," *Creativity Research Journal* 14, no. 3/4 (2002): 409–26; Mark A. Runco, *Creativity: Theories and Themes: Research, Development, and Practice* (Burlington, MA: Elsevier, 2007), 328–29.
- ¹³ Taylor and Kuo, "Children with Attention Deficits Concentrate Better after a Walk in the Park."
- ¹⁴ Marc G. Berman, John Jonides, and Stephen Kaplan, "The Cognitive Benefits of Interacting with Nature," *Psychological Science* 19, no. 12 (December 2008): 1207–12.
- ¹⁵ Michael D. Hunter et al., "The State of Tranquility: Subjective Perception Is Shaped by Contextual Modulation of Auditory Connectivity," *NeuroImage* 53, no. 2 (November 1, 2010): 611–18; Rita Berto, "Exposure to Restorative Environments Helps Restore Attention Capacity," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 25 (2005): 249–59.
- ¹⁶ Gabrielle Principe, *Your Brain on Childhood: The Unexpected Side Effects of Classrooms, Ballparks, Family Rooms, and the Minivan* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2011), 219.
- ¹⁷ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/deborah-schoeneman/james-cameron-goes-green_b_473855.html
- ¹⁸ Amishi P. Jha, Jason Kropf, and Michael J. Baime, "Mindfulness training modifies subsystems of attention," *Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuroscience* 7, no. 2 (June 2007): 109–119; Fadel Zeidan, Susan K. Johnson, Bruce J. Diamond, Zhanna David, and Paula Goolkasian, "Mindfulness meditation improves cognition: Evidence of brief mental training," *Consciousness and Cognition* 19, no. 2 (June 2010): 597–605.
- ¹⁹ Fadel Zeidan, Susan K. Johnson, Bruce J. Diamond, Zhanna David, and Paula Goolkasian, "Mindfulness meditation improves cognition: Evidence of brief mental training," *Consciousness and Cognition* 19, no. 2 (June 2010): 597–605.
- ²⁰ Jocelyn A. Sze, Anett Gyurak, Joyce W. Yuan, and Robert W. Levenson, "Coherence Between Emotional Experience and Physiology: Does Body Awareness Training Have an Impact?" *Emotion* Advanced online publication (November 8, 2010).
- ²¹ Hooria Jazaieri, Kelly McGonigal, Thupten Jinpa, James R. Doty, James J. Gross, and Philippe R. Goldin, "A randomized controlled trial of compassion cultivation training: Effects on mindfulness, affect, and emotion regulation," *Motivation and Emotion* 38, no. 1 (February 2014): 23–25.
- ²² Wiveka Ramel, Philippe R. Goldin, Paula E. Carmona, John R. McQuaid, "The Effects of Mindfulness Meditation on Cognitive Processes and Affect in Patients with Past Depression," *Cognitive Therapy and Research* 28, no. 4 (August 2004): 433–455.
- ²³ Albert J. Arias, Karen Steinberg, Alok Banga, and Robert L. Trestman, "Systematic Review of the Efficacy of Meditation Techniques as Treatments for Medical Illness," *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 12, no. 8 (October 2006): 817–832; John J. Miller, et al., "Three-year follow-up and clinical implications of a mindfulness meditation-based stress reduction intervention in the treatment of anxiety disorders," *General Hospital Psychiatry* 17, no. 3 (May, 1995): 192–200.

- ²⁴ Shauna L. Shapiro, John A. Astin, Scott R. Bishop, and Matthew Cordova, "Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction for Health Care Professionals: Results From a Randomized Trial," *International Journal of Stress Management* 12, no. 2 (May 2005): 164–176; Michael Speca, Linda E. Carlson, Eileen Goodey, and Maureen Angen, "A Randomized, Wait-List Controlled Clinical Trial: The Effect of a Mindfulness Meditation-Based Stress Reduction Program on Mood and Symptoms of Stress in Cancer Outpatients," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 62, no. 5 (September/October 2000): 613–622.
- ²⁵ Stephen R. Covey, "Put First Things First," *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (NY: Fireside, 1989) 145–182.
- ²⁶ Timothy Ferriss, *The 4-Hour Workweek* (NY: Crown, 2007), 69.
- ²⁷ Check out Black Ribbon Printing at www.blackribbonprinting.com.
- ²⁸ Timothy Ferriss, "Outsourcing Life: Off-loading the Rest and a Taste of Geoarbitrage," *The 4-Hour Workweek* (NY: Crown, 2007), 113–138.
- ²⁹ Gregory S. Berns, Kristina Blaine, Michael J. Prietula, and Brandon E. Pye, "Short- and Long-Term Effects of a Novel on Connectivity in the Brain," *Brain Connectivity* 3, no. 6 (2013): 590–600.
- ³⁰ <http://www.statisticbrain.com/reading-statistics/>
- ³¹ http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/18/opinion/sunday/the-neuroscience-of-your-brain-on-fiction.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&
- ³² <http://www.go-gulf.com/blog/online-time/>
- ³³ <http://www.convinceandconvert.com/social-media-research/11-shocking-new-social-media-statistics-in-america/>
- ³⁴ David M. Blanchette, Stephen P. Ramocki, John N. O'del, and Michael S. Casey, "Aerobic Exercise and Creative Potential: Immediate and Residual Effects," *Creativity Research Journal* 17, nos. 2 & 3 (2005): 257–264, found at <http://www.ric.edu/faculty/dblanchette/ExerciseArticle.htm>.
- ³⁵ Lorenza S. Colzato, Ayca Szapora, Justine N. Pannekoek, and Bernhard Hommel, "The impact of physical exercise on convergent and divergent thinking," *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 7, no. 824 (2013), found at <http://journal.frontiersin.org/Journal/10.3389/fnhum.2013.00824/full>.
- ³⁶ <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/02/110208131529.htm>
- ³⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomodoro_Technique
- ³⁸ <http://www.livestrong.com/article/551717-the-diet-exercise-and-creativity-connection/>
- ³⁹ <http://www.livestrong.com/article/551717-the-diet-exercise-and-creativity-connection/>
- ⁴⁰ <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/08/31/0956797612446024.abstract>
- ⁴¹ Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, 10th ed. (NY: Scribner, 2010), 145.
- ⁴² Please speak with a qualified tax professional before attempting to write everything off. The tax code is dense and constantly changing and you should not consider anything in this eBook, its author, or Composer on Fire as qualified legal or tax advice.
- ⁴³ James Altucher, "Become an Idea Machine," *The James Altucher Show* Podcast AA Ep 191 (January 19, 2015).
- ⁴⁴ Austin Kleon, *Show Your Work* (NY: Workman, 2014), 176–177
- ⁴⁵ Stephen R. Covey, "Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind," *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic* (NY: Fireside, 1989), 95–144.