4 Secrets to Becoming an (Even Higher) Achiever

Updating some habits we take for granted can get us to our goals that much quicker.

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We all strive to be prolific, sharp and creative high achievers. And each of us has that capacity, so long as we're maintaining habits that ensure we reach peak potential.

So if you've been feeling a bit "blah" lately or realize something needs to shift to help you power through a busy Q2, try making these minor adjustments to your daily routine, and note the positive changes that occur. The sooner you can get started on these habits, the better.

1. Eliminate your phone and other distractions during work

With so much outer stimuli, we have been programmed to believe that we can multitask. We think that checking our phone to reply to a text then returning to the email we were writing is helping us get more done, faster. It isn't true. A study at Microsoft found that employees took a whopping 15 minutes to return to task after checking their phone once. You lose a lot of white space in the day every time you give into your phone or other distractions.

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If you know you’re guilty of this, start a habit of putting your phone in the other room, leaving it in your car or turning it on airplane mode. And hold yourself to it. Your brain can’t properly think, focus or create with continual distractions, and as long as that potential distractor is looming near you, tempting you, you’ll struggle.

2. Be cognizant of what you put in your body

You are impacted by what you eat and drink, whether you like it or not. That midday greasy hamburger may taste amazing in the moment, but it will certainly impact your ability to get work done later in the day. Harvard Health noted that the brain works best on “premium” food that is high in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. But it’s not just that it doesn’t work as well when “non-premium” foods are ingested; high levels of refined sugar, grains and dairy can work against high brain function.

Beyond *what* you eat, make sure you don’t eat too much, either. Aaron Selkrig, founder of Selkrig Performance Unit, advises eating slowly is the best way to become more mindful of how much you’re consuming. “It takes the gut 20 minutes to send a signal to the brain that it’s full,” he shares. “Eat slowly to avoid feeling too full after, which can dramatically decrease energy levels.”

Selkrig also notes that the University of Rhode Island did a study on slow eating in which they found that those who eat slowly hydrate more, which is key, as studies have found that being even 3-4 percent dehydrated can decrease your work performance by 25-50 percent.

3. Plan each week and day by priorities

Many entrepreneurs make the mistake of being reactive to their schedules and demands, rather than proactive. Every week and weekday will pose a different to-do list; a habit of high achievers is to know what on their dockest has the highest priority, and to plan their day around getting it done. Tony Robbins recommends creating this priority-based schedule the night before each day and actually creating the schedule in whatever calendar or agenda you have. That way, everything – down to your grocery-store runs and evening workout classes – is reserved.

Now, if you pair this with eliminating distractions, you'll already see your productivity start to soar. The times of the day you set aside for putting a dent in big projects or knocking items off your to-do list will be far more focused and fruitful without the tempation of your phone.

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4. Get your heart pumping once a day

Finally, yes – you need to work out in order to be a high achiever. This doesn't mean you have to become a world-class athlete or take up an intensive sport, but you do need to get your heart pumping. In fact, those who take time to work out during their workdays noticed a 72 percent improvement in time management and productivity. That's significant.

Don't think you have time? Make time. Wake up 30 minutes earlier. Take a phone call from the treadmill at your gym (all you need to do is walk quickly at an incline). Walk to lunch instead of driving. Once this becomes a habit, you'll wonder

how you ever got through the day without working out. The difference in performance is that stark.

Just because it’s already March doesn’t mean it’s too late to implement habits as New Year’s Resolutions. Try these, see how they feel, and then adjust. What matters most is that you feel like a high achiever.

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