CHEAT SHEET

CAL NEWPORT'S DEEP WORK

What is Deep Work?

"**Deep Work**" is a productivity method coined by Georgetown University professor *Cal Newport*. The method is rooted in the ability to focus on a cognitively demanding task without distraction. Newport defines Deep Work as:

> Professional activity performed in a state of distraction-free concentration that pushes your cognitive capabilities to their limit. These efforts create new value, improve your skill, and are hard to replicate.
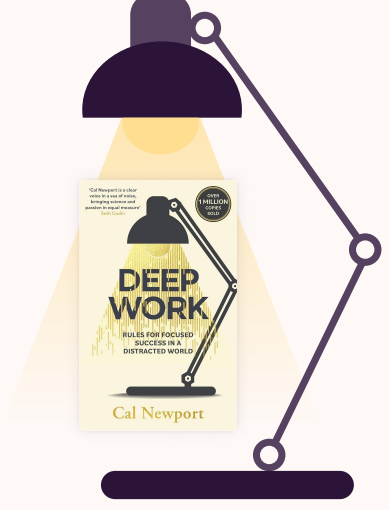
The Deep Work rule book

RULE 1: WORK DEEPLY

Make a conscious effort to work deeply. You must carve out pockets of time for purposeful and directed concentration in your daily schedule

RULE 2: EMBRACE BOREDOM

Train your brain to be okay with being bored. Get comfortable spending your free time without dopamine hits from the internet

RULE 3: SAY GOODBYE TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Newport says to be truly productive, Deep Worker's should log out of communication tools to keep (and) sustain focus. You don't have to quit social media—just use it in moderation

RULE 4: DRAIN THE SHALLOWS

Structure your schedule to eliminate shallow work. Newport suggests choosing between four types of Deep Work: *Monastic*, *Rhythmic*, *Bimodal* and *Journalistic*. Each style has a mix of deep and shallow work depending on what tasks need to get done

Deep Work scheduling strategies

Monastic

Bimodal

Rhythmic

Journalistic

Deep work. *E.g. Research, writing reports, coding, learning a new skill*

Shallow work. *E.g. Checking emails, meetings, admin work, menial tasks*

Pros & Cons

"The ability to perform deep work is becoming increasingly rare at exactly the same time it is becoming increasingly valuable in our economy. As a consequence, the few who cultivate this skill, and then make it the core of their working life, will thrive."

Pros	Cons
A flow state of productivity can increase high-value output	Deep Work cuts off communication during focus periods, so you might miss out on important messages
Improves your ability to do focused work without distractions	Prolonged Deep Work sessions can actually hinder productivity
Develop a routine of more efficient work to get more done in less time	Can result in overly complex systems

Take Deep Work from good to great

ONLY PICK DEMANDING TASKS

Only use Deep Work to focus on something with a heavy cognitive lift. Anything else should be tagged as "shallow work" and allocated into a timeslot that doesn't require deep focus

USE TIME BLOCKING

Train your brain to be okay with being bored. Get comfortable spending your free time without dopamine hits from the internet

TOSS THE TEMPTATION

Work in clearly defined blocks of limited time. Once the block is over, feel free to do some shallow work to relax

CREATE A DAILY SHUTDOWN RITUAL

Clear your mind at the end of every deep work session. Whether it's shutting down your computer or closing your office door, a shutdown ritual is a clear signal that work is over for the day

In Cal Newport's own words 📖

We spend much of our day on autopilot—not giving much thought to what we're doing with our time. This is a problem. It's difficult to prevent the trivial from creeping into every corner of your schedule if you don't face, without flinching, your current balance between deep and shallow work, and then adopt the habit of pausing before action and asking, **"What makes the most sense right now?"**

Looking for more ways to up your productivity game?

Head on over to Toggl and discover how to unlock your time's potential

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