

PRODUCTIVITY

How to Be More Productive than Ever Before

Chris Bailey's Year of Productivity



“I WANT TO MAKE OTHER PEOPLE AS PRODUCTIVE AS POSSIBLE.”

These are the words of Chris Bailey, productivity experimenter extraordinaire. At barely 24 years old, he has barrelled head-first into the world of productivity hacks and time-management techniques. He runs A Year of Productivity, a website dedicated to his year-long pursuit of elevated energy, boosted output, and a more holistic perspective of his goals. “It’s this way where I can throw a bunch of ideas at the wall,” he says, “and see what sticks.”

He experiments extensively: He meditated for a total of 35 hours in one week. He watched 70 hours of TED talks in another week. He lived without any social interaction for ten days.

Chris aims to aid people

who want to reach their own productivity goals. He keeps the site up-to-date with posts about productivity that include scholarly research and first-hand experience.

The project grew out of Chris’s passion for productivity and the value he places on time. “There was a point when I realized, okay, I only have so many years on this earth, and I have so many hours every day to do stuff with,” he says. “How do I know if I’m doing the best things in the first place?”

After graduating business school, Chris got down to business answering that question

in May 2013 when he launched his site. While he has unique ideas of his own, he claims that some of the best productivity tips are the ones we’ve all heard of already. “The boring things that seem so cliché are the things that are going to make you the most productive,” he says. “Like exercising, like eating well, like meditating.”

Those aren’t empty words. When it comes to eating, he really does reject empty calories. Instead of mindlessly guzzling down all nourishment in sight, Chris views food as fuel that powers him through each day and forms the basis for any other attempts at improving efficiency. Without a decent diet, he believes, you won’t have the energy that productivity hacks need to succeed in the first place.



Chris's diet centres on "a ton of vegetables and proteins, very, very frequently." Fruits, nuts, grains, and little bit of dark chocolate are his favourites, and when he eats carbohydrates, he makes sure that they're veggies or whole grain. **Foods fuel focus – so eating well is critical.**



In addition to what he consumes, Chris cares about what he does with his body, and that means exercise. After rising at 5:30 am each morning, he jolts over to the gym for a crack-of-dawn workout. His conception of productivity holds staying in shape as a core component of success. "If meditation or exercise came in pill form, every single person on the planet would take it," he says.

Indeed, he believes that everyone should meditate.

For Chris, meditation serves

as a springboard to a higher level view of your work – doing nothing for awhile can spur your efforts to do anything later on. "Meditation is the most powerful thing you can do to become more productive," he says.

Committed meditation brings tangible results. He stresses its ability to cut down stress and increase focus. He also says that it "allows you to step back from your actions and see the

intention behind them. It boosts your energy." He maintains that those who meditate reap real rewards, but the practice is often overlooked because its benefits are nuanced and long-term.

Discerning the intention behind action is important for Chris, and his meditative mindset paves a path for goal-setting acumen. After his early-morning gym trips, he sits with pen and paper to plan out his key goals for the day.

"I start off by reducing the day to the three essential things that I have to get done," he says. "Then I go out and do them."



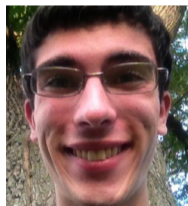
Chris values a focus on essential outcomes because overarching goals are necessary for good time management. Time is wasted, he argues, when you do something that you didn't intend to do, when you do something that fails to further your goals. **That's why seeing the intention behind your actions is key.**

Even as his underlying philosophy remains rooted in these basic concepts, Chris explores new areas of productivity and posts his thoughts to his site.

As his year of productivity experiments winds on, Chris has developed a number of strategies, tips, and techniques. Alongside those hacks, he has embraced new mindsets and insights that herald better productivity and a better quality of life.

Yet he doesn't assert that his findings represent universal wisdom. Yes, he wants to make other people as productive as possible. Yes, he built his website as a way to communicate his experiences. But he acknowledges that each individual will forge their own approach.

"People really need to throw a bunch of these tools at the proverbial wall, see which ones of them stick, and then keep on doing that and incrementally improving how they work until they become as productive as they want to be," he says. The mission of A Year of Productivity is to help people do just that.



Andrew Urevig is a freelance writer from Minnesota. When he's not experimenting with words or complaining about the cold, he can be found arguing at debate competitions.

