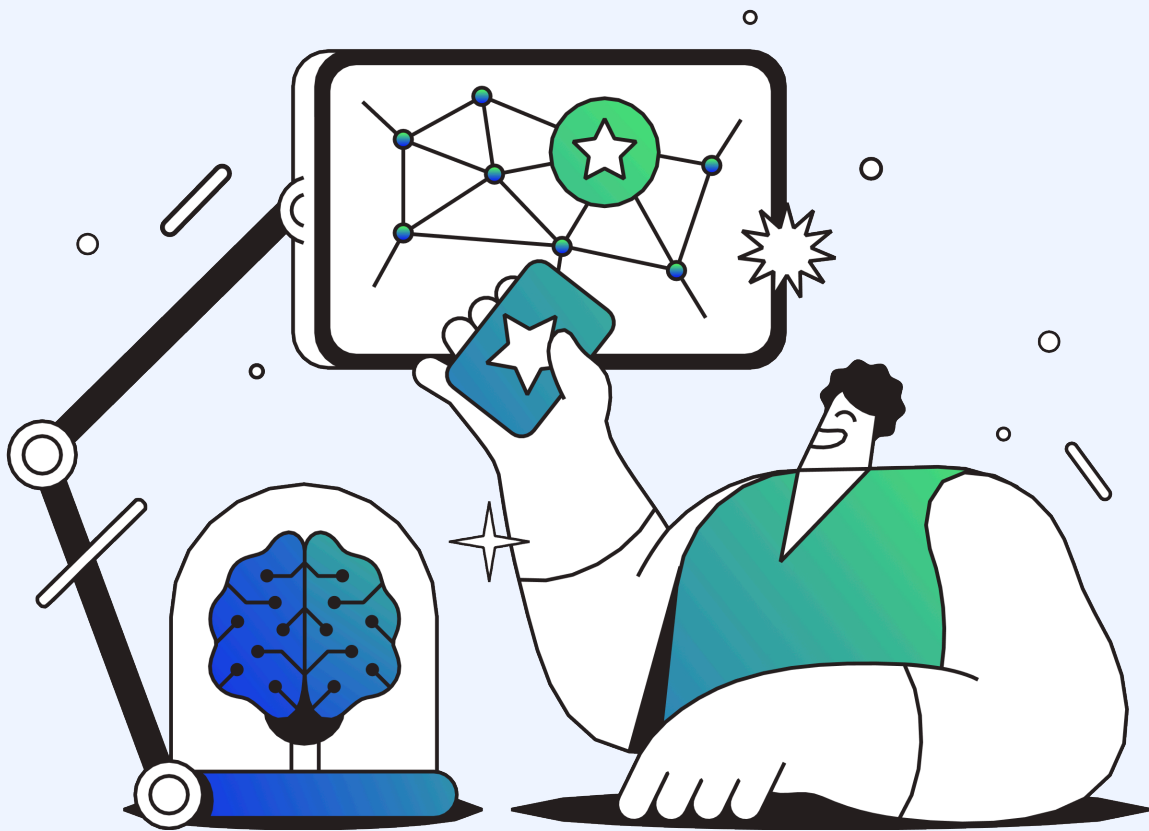


//Magical

The 8 Golden AI Productivity Habits



How to automate your work life
and get back valuable time

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This is a productivity guide written by a life-long procrastinator. 😓

All my life, I've struggled to become a more "productive" person. I've listened to hundreds of hours of podcasts, tried a countless number of apps, and read all the big-name books that have promised and failed to help me get more done in the day. ("Eat That Frog" in particular can eat my butt.) A small portion of the habits I've discovered along the way—I'd estimate about 5% of them—have helped me increase my productivity... but I can usually only sustain these habits for a short period of time before I either get lazy or annoyed. (Or both.) Most of the productivity habits I've tried—the other 95%—haven't made a lick of difference in terms of the actual amount of work I'm able to finish anyway.

In September 2022 though, I began to experiment with AI productivity tools for my work. I had just started a new job, and in the process discovered a whole new world of apps and automations that were designed specifically to save me time and improve my productivity.

Now, I've packaged together the best of these new AI tools with the top productivity habits to create a new type of guide for productivity. I'm calling these "The 8 Golden AI Productivity Habits"—and I want to stress that these are ready-made for anyone looking to improve their productivity at work. You don't need to be a writer or know how to code to try out any of these habits. I've seen everyone from salespeople to customer support workers adopt these techniques to amazing effect.

Welcome to the new era of AI productivity

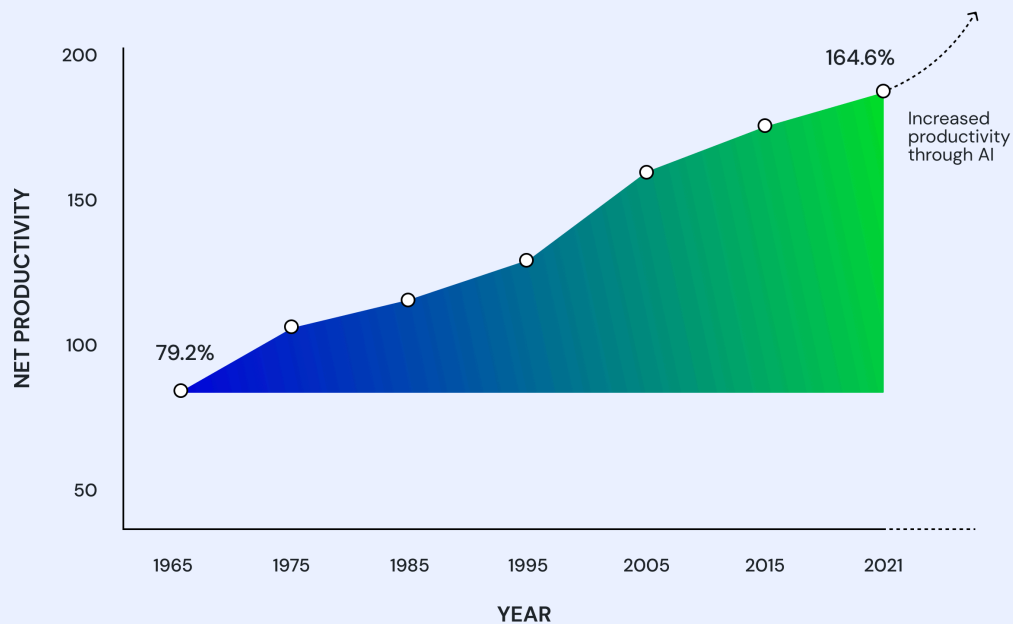
There's a myth out there right now that employees are getting lazier and accomplishing less at work as each year goes by. This is partly because of all the recent layoffs that have been happening in various industries. ("All of these employees are getting laid off because they were doing nothing all day!") It's partly because of the typical generational strife that happens whenever a new set of young people enter the workforce. ("Oh, Gen Z? Those young folks don't even know what it means to work hard.") And of course, it's also partly because more teams are now working from home. ("Pshaw. Employees just want to work from home so they can sit on their couch and watch Netflix all day.")

Let me tell you right now: **All of that is straight-up bullshit.**

Let's put aside that companies are oftentimes caught [rehiring many roles after layoffs](#), that Gen Z has proven to be [just as productive](#) as their older coworkers, and that [multiple studies](#) have shown teams are more productive when they work from home.

When you look at productivity purely from a statistical perspective, it has consistently increased over the last several decades. Compare the output of an average worker in 2021 to one in 1965, and they are a massive [164.6% more productive](#), on average. **So it's a total myth that people are becoming less productive over time—in fact, they're more productive now than they have ever been in recorded history.**

Productivity Growth Over Time



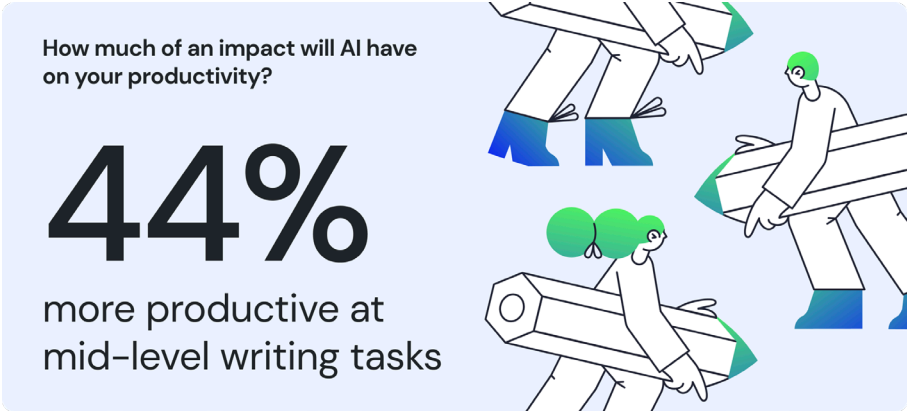
SOURCE: Based on data from the Economic Policy Institute

The driving force behind this line going up and to the right? You guessed it—it's technology. Back in the 1960s, most office workers were still using inkwells, steel pens, typewriters, and carbon paper to get their work done. Slowly but surely, tools like computers and the internet unlocked faster ways of doing things. People could type quicker, send and receive information instantly, and generally get more done in less time with each passing year.

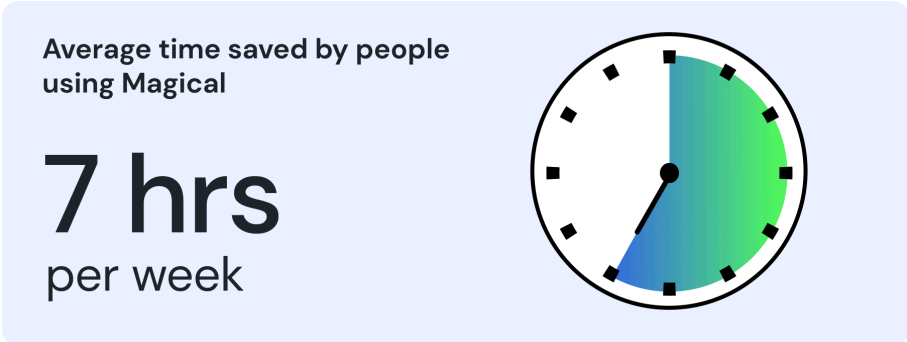
But you'll notice that the graph ends in 2021. Gosh, that feels like a lifetime ago, doesn't it? (It was a simpler time of "Squid Game" and sweater vests.) Since then, we've seen an absolute boom in artificial intelligence (AI) technology and apps like ChatGPT explode onto the scene. Experts are predicting that as AI continues to improve and become more integrated into our workflows, it will usher in a new era of productivity.

How much of an impact will AI have on your productivity?

One [research report from MIT](#) has shown that tools like ChatGPT can make individuals up to 44% more productive at mid-level writing tasks. That's a quantum leap in productivity—and it's really just the beginning. AI will soon move beyond writing and into every type of task and job imaginable.



Okay, but that's in the halls of academia. What about in the real world? Here at [Magical](#), we have over half a million people using our AI-powered productivity app to automate tasks like messaging, data entry, and filling spreadsheets. And every week, these **users save an incredible average of 7 hours** on these tasks they previously had to perform manually. That's a 25% increase in their overall productivity—and that's just from one simple app.



Remember what they say, though—a tool is only as good as the person using it. The same is very much true of AI tools—you need to know how to use these tools effectively in order to get the most out of them. (After all, there’s a reason we aren’t giving robots hammers yet.)



So it’s not enough to just install these tools and call it a day. (That’s how you end up with an app you want to use but never actually do.) In the same way, I don’t recommend you try any of these productivity habits on their own—you’ll likely end up just frustrated because you can’t maintain them with your own manual efforts. In order to create a sustainable uptick in your productivity, you need to **combine the right AI tool with the right productivity habit or workflow.**

Because when you do it just right—the results are golden. 🏆

Why should you only focus on these golden productivity habits?

I often find myself scrolling through Twitter threads of people listing out all the different ways you can improve your productivity or optimize your life. Like this one from [Sam Szuchan](#), that I found particularly inspiring:



There are some good ideas here. But realistically, can anyone actually do all of this stuff? There are so many different names to remember, habits to form, and new actions to take. It's totally overwhelming. "Oh, I'll start my morning with the 90-90-1 rule, practice the 10/10/10 rule when I'm making a decision, use the 1-3-5 rule for daily planning, and of course the 10-3-2-1-0 formula for sleeping." Come on. Nobody in their right mind can keep track of all this stuff.

Instead, for the purpose of this guide, I've chosen to focus on the areas of work that are **the biggest time sucks for most people**. These are universal parts of work that almost everyone has to deal with on a daily basis and the practical ways you can tackle them more efficiently using AI.

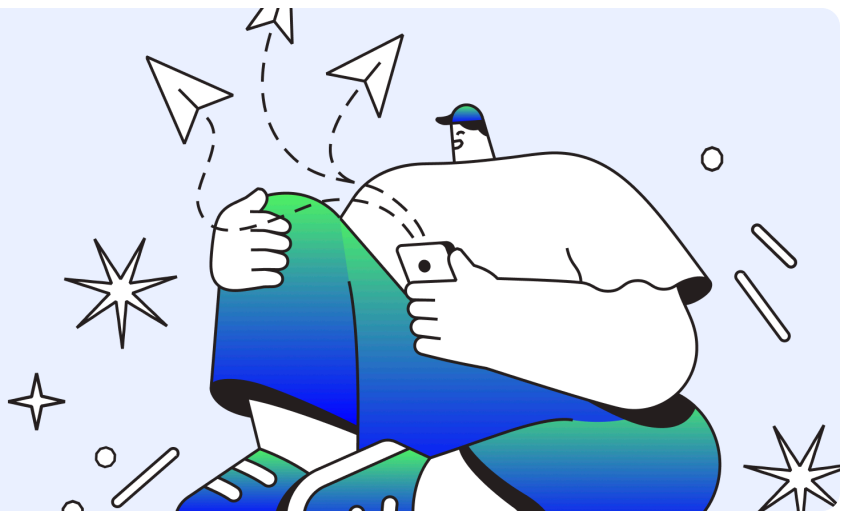
- Emails
- Meetings
- Creativity
- Research
- Calendars
- Focus
- Data entry
- Reporting

Forget everything else. If you can become more productive at these eight crucial areas of work, you'll become more productive than 99.9% of your coworkers and competitors. Adopt these habits today, and you're likely to see a **50-100% increase in your productivity**.

HABIT #1

Achieve inbox zero

EMAIL & MESSAGES



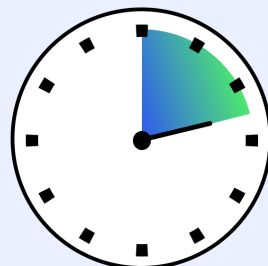
The problem: email and messages are a quicksand trap

When I speak to people about how they spend most of their time at work, one word always comes up more than anything else. **Emails**. It doesn't matter whether you work in sales, marketing, customer support, ops, or any other department. Chances are high that you spend a big chunk of your day reading and responding to emails.

In fact, the average worker spends an absolutely disgusting **2.6 hours a day on emails**. For most people, opening their inbox often feels like falling into a quicksand trap. You say: "I'll just go in and out, nice and quick." But as soon as you're in there, you see any number of unread messages that require your attention. Oh, and then you remember that you have to respond to that note from a client last week. And just as you're about to leave—kapow!—you get hit with a company memo.

Average time a professional spends
reading and answering emails

2.6 hrs
per day

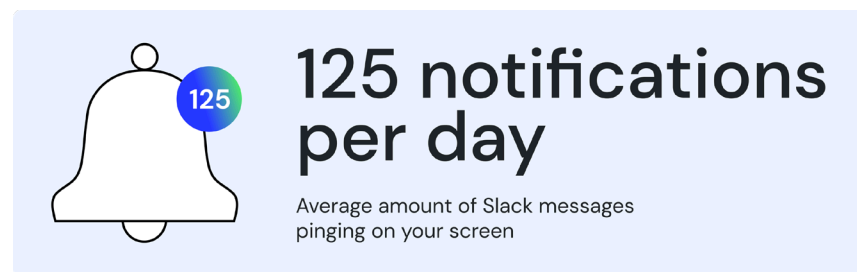


Unfortunately, emails are not the only culprit here. In the last couple years, many offices switched over to a chat platform like Slack or Microsoft Teams for internal comms. These platforms were billed as the answer to “too many emails.” Instant communication meant less annoying time spent on the inbox. Right?

Well, we all know how that one turned out...

Ping! Ping! Ping!

Chances are you actually get more messages on a platform like Slack than you do even in your inbox. The average person gets **125 Slack notifications in a day**—usually attached to little alert noises and a red bubble to attract (or distract?) your attention. And that’s not even mentioning other platforms like **LinkedIn** or **GitHub**.



And so you sink. Deeper and deeper into your emails and messages until you’ve wasted either your entire morning or afternoon’s worth of productivity.

Tired productivity habit: Why the two-minute rule doesn't work on its own

The old-school solution to too “many emails” is something called the [two-minute rule](#). The idea behind this rule is simple: you set aside two times in the day to check your email. Once in the morning, and once at the end of the day. During each of these calendar blocks, you go through all your unread emails, one at a time, using a simple framework to tackle your mountain of unread messages.

This is how the two-minute rule works:

- If an email will take **under two minutes** to deal with, you handle it right then and there. Write your response, send it off, and delete the email from your inbox or archive it.
- If the email will take **more than two minutes**, you add it to your list of priorities for either later that day or the following day. Make sure you keep track of these emails though, as they're the ones that tend to get lost.

Now this productivity habit sounds great on paper. But in practice, it tends to fall apart quickly. (I lasted about two weeks before I started to slip.)

For starters, most emails require more than two minutes of your time to deal with. Think about it: you typically need to spend at least 60 seconds reading an email to figure out what it's actually about, and to sift through all the formalities. (“Bla bla bla... Thank you for your quick response... bla bla bla... Just following up on... Bla bla bla...”) That leaves you under a minute to respond to the email? Even if you know exactly what you want to say, it'll likely take you more time than that to type it out.

Then there are **all the other emails** that will take you longer than two minutes to deal with. This habit does nothing to speed up your workflow with these suckers—you're just punting them to deal with at a later date. And what about **all those Slack notifications** and messages on other platforms like **LinkedIn**? Sorry pal, you're still stuck in the quicksand.

Golden productivity habit: How AI can help you finally achieve inbox 0


With an AI tool like Magical at your side, the two-minute rule becomes much more practical. Generative AI can do the heavy lifting here and write entire emails for you with the simple click of a button. Here are the step-by-step instructions on how to start building this habit:

- [Add Magical](#) to your Chrome browser. (It's free!)
- Set calendar blocks at the start and end of each day to check your email.
- During each calendar block, click into each unread email, one at a time.
- Spend no more than 60 seconds reading the email.
- At the bottom of each email, you'll see Quick Reply buttons. (You can choose between "Yes" answers, "No" answers, and "Custom" answers where you provide more context.)
- Use these buttons to generate a response in under 10 seconds.
- Review the message generated by Magical, tweak to your liking, and hit send.

You'll be amazed at how on-point the AI-generated responses are that Magical writes for you. But what you'll be more amazed by is how good it feels to finally stop letting unread emails flood your inbox on a daily basis. **This golden productivity habit can save you up to two hours a day**, with very little difficulty or upkeep. The more you do it, the easier it becomes. And the cool part is that this works for any email—not just the simple ones.

Oh, and those constant notifications you're getting on Slack and LinkedIn? (Ping! Ping! Ping!) Yeah, Magical will work for you there, as well.

AI TOOL — Magical



HABIT
2-Minute Rule

EFFECT

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HABIT #2

Schedule time ruthlessly

CALENDARS



The problem: Your time in between meetings is being tainted

Your calendar is one of the most underrated productivity tools you have. No, I don't mean which color you choose for your meetings. (Although let's be real, "Basil green" is the color of productivity.) I'm talking about the way you choose to organize and protect your time on a daily basis. This can mean the difference between a productive week and one where you fart around on your laptop doing nothing for hours on end.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
10	11	12	13	14
		Focus Day - no me		
	watch brand vid, 8am			
Workflows, 9:30am	Lunch & Luke <-> Marketing, 9 - 10am	Transfers/Variables docs, 9am - 12pm	HOLD: w/ Live Dem	Maynie x Raff 1x1, 9am
Company Sync, 10am, https://zoom	1:1 - Claire / Elan, 10:30am Nick / Claire, 10:30am		Harpaul / Claire - AP	Team admins rollou Magical demo, 10 - 11am
	Company-wide focus tim meetings, Claire / J		Demo Dry-run: Magi, 11 - 11:45am	Explore querying Sn
Weekly Leads, 12 - 12:50pm	API for the internet, 12 - 2pm	Appointment, 12pm, Midtown		Claire / Elan - buyer Maynie <-> HS (1:1 Ca
Marketing Weekly, 1pm, https://us06w		Naming Workshop, 1 - 2pm	Rosie <-> Claire week	
	Greg / Claire - API		Score those OKRs! 🎯	Magi, Claire / J, 1:30pm, ht Remin
check Slack commu	feedback briefs, 3 - 5pm check Sla	Tax meet, 3 - 4pm check Sla	check Slack commu	Partners, 2:30 - 3:30 GTM upd check Sla
		Repurpose webinars, 4 - 5pm		

Think about all of the constant interruptions you face on a daily basis when you're trying to actually get your work done. You have your daily stand-up meeting every morning. (Gee, you wouldn't want to miss that.) But then you also have that client meeting at 11AM where they want to ask a bunch of questions about something or other. And don't forget about the lunch and learn at 1PM. (Can they really call it a lunch and learn if they don't provide any lunch? 🙄) Oh, and of course you and your manager have your weekly check-in at 3PM.



Now to be clear: The problem here isn't that you have two or three hours of meetings in the day. (Those are a necessary evil. But don't worry, we'll get to how to make those meetings more productive in the next section.) The problem is that these pesky in-person chats or Zoom calls are constantly interrupting the flow of your day and forcing you into something called "context switching."

Because if you're anything like me, a meeting doesn't just make you unproductive for the length of that meeting. There's a ramp-up period before the meeting where you're going to be less productive than usual. ("I could start that task... But I have that meeting in 20 minutes. Better wait until after.") And then there's the cool-off period after the meeting where you need to digest what happened, and restart whatever task you were working on previously. ("Where was I again? Oh right...")

All of this time adds up—a lot. The American Psychological Association calls this the "switching cost" of business. They estimate that it taints around 40% of someone's time in the day. **40%?! That's nearly half your day lost to switching gears.**

The problem: Your time in between meetings is being tainted

If you were to ask the productivity gurus how to solve this problem, they would have a simple solution for you. It's called "time blocking" and you probably don't need me to say anything else about it because that's already pretty clear, but I'm going to go into a bit more detail anyway.

Time blocking is the act of chunking off blocks of time in your calendar and dedicating them to a certain task. So if you need to work on an important client proposal, you might want to block off several hours in your afternoon calendar to ensure you don't have any meeting interruptions. This can also mean batching related tasks together—for example, one former colleague used to schedule all her admin tasks (checking reports, updating forms, responding to emails) in the morning so they could all get done at the same time.

Smart! But does time blocking actually work in practice?

The answer, in my experience, is kinda sorta maybe. I've been able to successfully cut down on the amount of context switching I do in a day by blocking off chunks of time, it's true. But manually doing this each week proved to be its own little distraction, with me constantly having to adjust and reshape my calendar as new events popped up. When you have to schedule a time block each week to time block your calendar, you feel a bit like a snake eating its own tail.

And then there's all those other dang people you work with. Inevitably, they'll book over your precious "focus time" for some important reason. (The audacity.) And so your careful time blocking and by extension your productivity falls apart, like a color-coded Jenga tower of meeting invites.

Golden productivity habit: Use AI to maximize your productive time blocks

Time blocking helps in a big way, you just need an easier way to do it. This is where AI can come in major handy, serving as your personal calendar assistant to help you protect your time more ruthlessly and automatically blocking off focus time for you.


There are any number of calendar tools you can use to help you time block—I’ve tried over 12 of them myself—but the one I think does the best job right now is [Reclaim.ai](https://reclaim.ai). Here’s how you can use it to start scheduling your week with AI:

- Download Reclaim. (It’s free!)
- Connect it to your work calendar and personal calendar.
- Set up your tasks, habits, and smart meetings.
- Turn on decompression time. This gives you 15-minute buffers before and after meetings automatically.
- Reclaim will automatically block off time for your tasks, habits, and shuffle around your meetings to help you avoid context switching as much as possible.

Now this won’t necessarily solve the problem of someone ignoring your calendar and double-booking you. (Again, the absolute audacity.) But this is where generative AI can also help you out. Try using the Magical template generator below to instantly draft a polite, but firm note saying that you have a scheduling conflict and will be unable to attend the meeting. Save it as a template within Magical and give it a simple shortcut trigger like “-nomeet.” Then whenever someone tries to take away your focus time, all you have to do is respond with a -nomeet.

The time for being overly nice is over. You’ve gotta protect that precious focus time.

AI TOOL — Reclaim.ai



reclaimai

HABIT

2-Minute Rule

EFFECT

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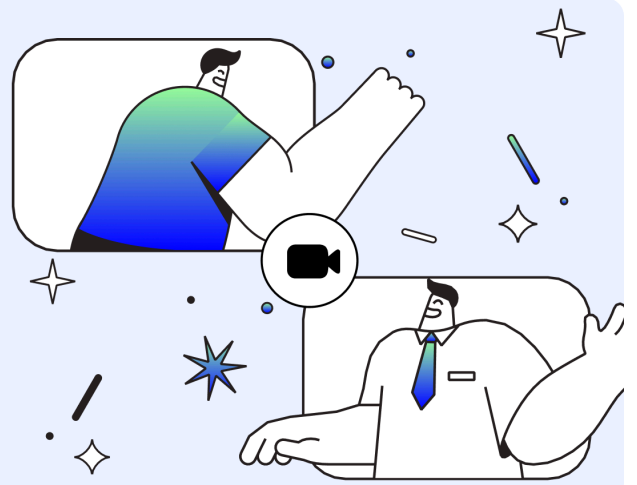
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HABIT #3

Make every meeting matter

MEETINGS

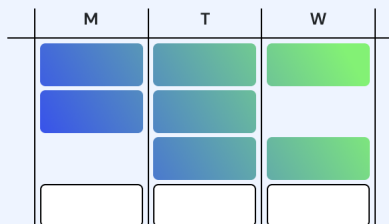


The problem: Nothing gets done in meetings because they're inefficient

While we're on the subject of meetings—gosh, they suck don't they? Like, talk about an absolute waste of time and energy. I know I'm not the only one who thinks this way: [research from the University of North Carolina](#) shows that 70% of all meetings keep employees from working and completing tasks. The two words people use to describe the majority of meetings they attend are "unproductive" and "inefficient."

70% of all meetings

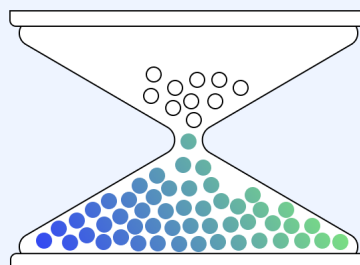
Keep employees from working and completing tasks



One of the big culprits here is that meetings are far too long. Long meetings can feel like they go on forever, and could probably have their length cut in half without losing much. And short meetings? Well you know what they say. Most short meetings probably could've just been an email or a Loom.

Average meeting length

50.6 minutes



Now before you meeting advocates out there get all up in my @ mentions, I should be clear that I'm talking about #notallmeetings. Some meetings are absolutely necessary and maybe even fun. I actually once worked for a company that experimented with eliminating all meetings for a period of about a month. And the result was just pure chaos and mayhem. Projects fell behind schedule, people met in secret to give each other updates on time-lines, and there were oh so many miscommunications.

So we can't quite get rid of meetings. But there has to be a way to make them more productive and efficient. Right...?

Tired productivity habit: Build better meeting practices with your team

If you can't win the battle for fewer meetings, then productivity experts will tell you to try to make more of the time you have to spend sitting in those meetings you do have to attend. The traditional advice here is three-fold: 1) Make your meeting shorter, 2) Set a clear agenda ahead of time, and 3) Create a meeting summary with action items or next steps afterward.

The common hack for shorter meetings I see all the time is to change the default meeting length in your calendar settings from 60 minutes to 50 minutes and 30 minutes to 25 minutes. This saves you 10 minutes and 5 minutes respectively. Not bad—although I've seen this backfire a number of times. You hit the end of your scheduled meeting and everyone decides to schedule a follow-up because you didn't have enough time to get through everything. 😞

The other two items are also easier said than done. Agendas are really useful, but hard to write succinctly. Meeting summaries and action items are great for afterward, but can be time-consuming to create. (And if nobody actually reads them? Well then you just burned some more of your precious time.) Plus, you can champion these best practices until the cows come home... but there's no guarantee your coworkers will actually follow suit.

Golden productivity habit: Use AI to make your meetings actionable


Combine these habits with an AI meeting transcription tool like [Otter.ai](#) or [Parrot AI](#) though, and suddenly you're in business. These tools are like your own personal assistant who sits in on the meeting and takes detailed minutes about everything that gets talked about and creates summaries for next steps. Using a tool like this is simple:

1. Install an AI meeting transcription tool, like Otter.ai or Parrot AI.
2. Sync with your video conferencing tool, such as Zoom.
3. Invite your AI transcription tool to any meeting you wish to record.
4. After the meeting, these tools will automatically create note summaries and action items for you to share with the team.

This simple solution is huge because you can add these tools to not only the meetings you create, but to any meeting you attend as well. Not only does this give you a clean record of everything discussed, but the more you share the notes the more it'll encourage your team to keep things actionable in the meetings themselves. Hooray for peer pressure!

Oh, and as for the meeting agenda? You can also try out the [free meeting agenda generator](#) from Taskade to quickly build these out.

AI TOOL — Otter.ai



HABIT
Agenda/Action

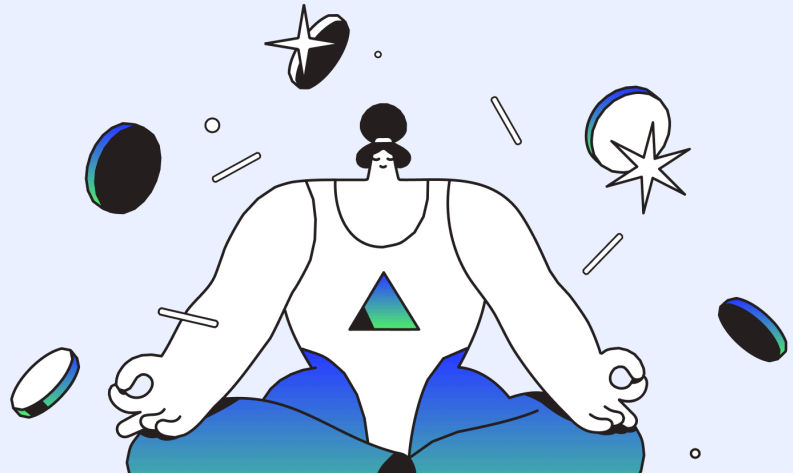
EFFECT

DIFFICULTY

HABIT #4

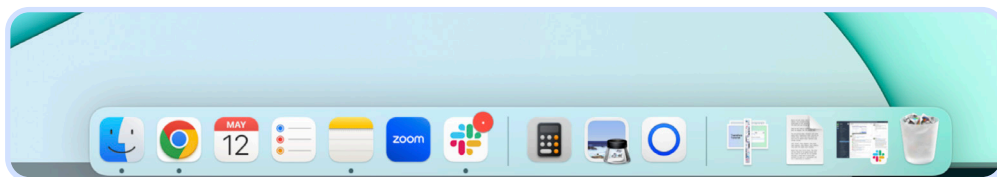
Get into robo-flow

FOCUS

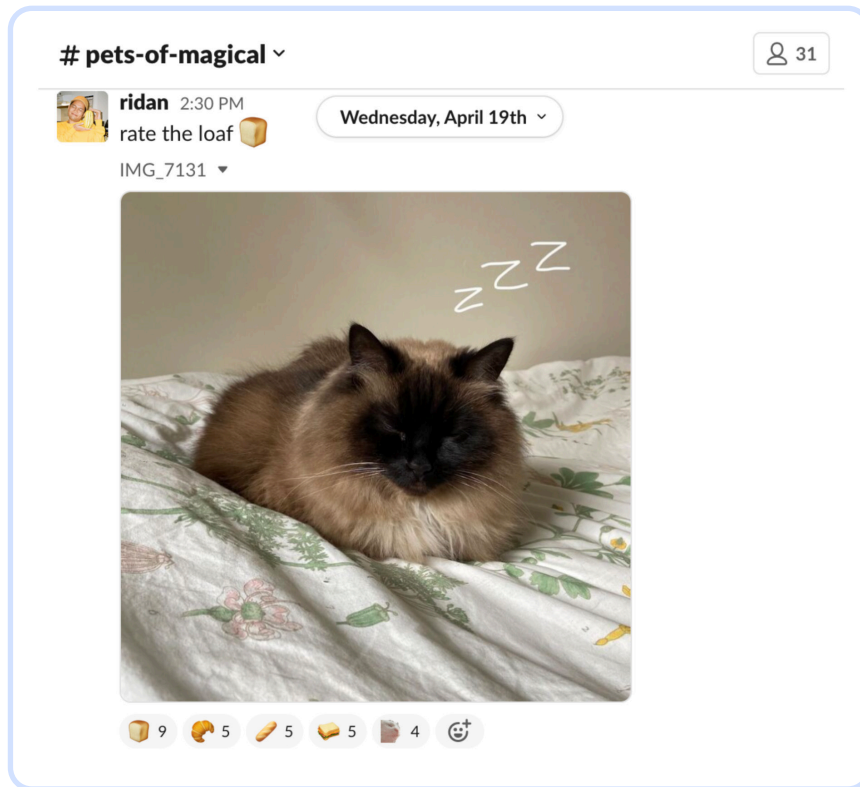


The problem: There are constant distractions interrupting your flow

Picture this: You've got a block of three hours set aside in the afternoon to finally tackle that task you've been putting off. You grab a bowl of pistachios, pop on your noise-canceling headphones, crack your knuckles, and open the project on your laptop screen. About five minutes go by before you see a little ping on the bottom of your screen.



"Oh! A Slack notification. Better check that—it might be important."



Dang! Now you've just gotten distracted. (But to be fair, it is totally a 10/10 cat loaf.) Back to work just as soon as—oh wait, is that a text message on your phone? And what's that email that just came in from your boss? Oh, a friend just tagged you in a photo on Instagram? Also, what was the name of that movie you wanted to watch this weekend? Better do a quick YouTube search to see if you can find the trailer...

You probably didn't have to strain yourself very hard imagining this scenario, **because for most people this is our daily life.** We live in a hellscape of distractions that are constantly trying to worm their way into our brains and split our focus. That's why it feels so friggin' good whenever you're able to shut out all that noise and get into a groove with your work—even if it's just for an hour or two.

The goal here is to get into something psychologists call a “**flow state.**” This is when you get so totally absorbed and engrossed in a task that you lose track of time itself. You know what I’m talking about? That indescribable “in the zone” feeling. What you might not realize though is that **you’re up to 500% more productive** when you get into this flow.



Tired productivity habits: Website blockers and “Lofi Girl” playlists

So what do experts say the best way is to get into a flow state?

The traditional advice here usually boils down to one thing: eliminate all distractions. Human beings cannot multitask, despite our collective daily attempts to do so.

So how do you go about eliminating distractions? Well, if you’re like me you’ve probably tried one (or several) of these traditional methods:

- **Turn off your phone:** Americans check their phones around 100 times a day, on average. If I ever have a task to complete or want to get into a flow state then this is the first thing I do. I turn it off, I put it away in another room or desk drawer, and I try my best to forget that smartphone technology exists while I work on the project. (That is, unless you need to use an app that requires two-factor authentication. 😞)
- **Blocking websites that distract you:** There are any number of website blockers out there, including [Cold Turkey](#) and [StayFocusd](#). These always sound like a good idea—but if you’re anything like me, you’ll hit the page that says “Stay focused!” and then click the little “Ignore” button and browse it anyway. Worse still, you can’t block an entire search engine like Google because you might need it for your task. (But then, it can also lead to countless distractions as you head down search rabbit holes.)

- **Playing focus music:** Creating an atmosphere of focus is one of the best ways to stay in a flow state. Shout-out to the [Lofi Girl playlists on YouTube](#), which have been my go-to productivity music for going on half a decade now. But while these help you get in the right mindset, they can also occasionally pull you out of your concentration if a track comes on that doesn't quite fit with the vibe you're trying to set.

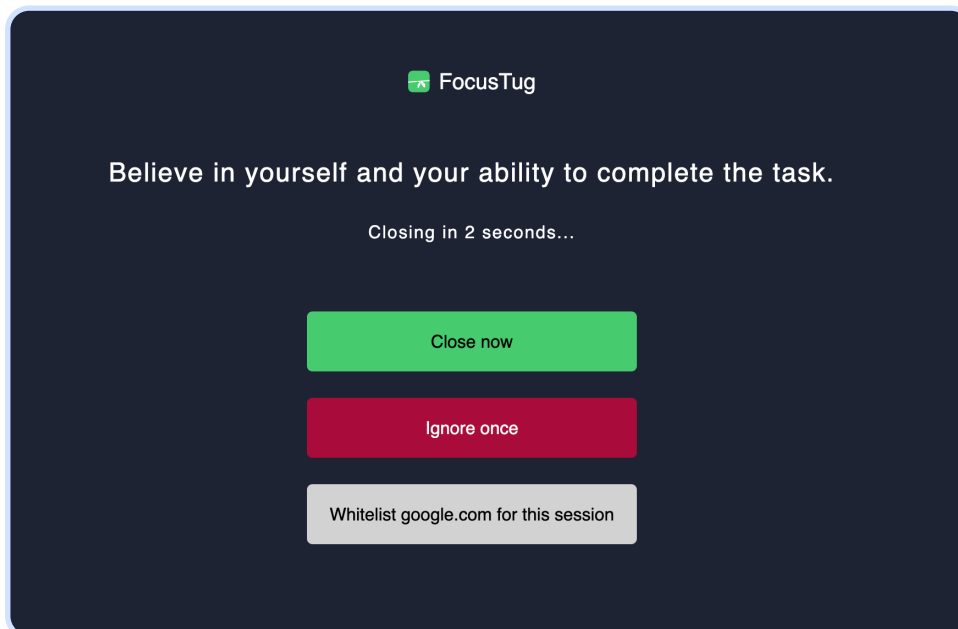


Golden productivity habit: Use AI to switch into deep focus

You know who knows how to focus really well on one task at a time? Robots. (That's kind of their thing.) So it makes sense that if you're trying to create an aura of deep focus, that AI can actually play a part in making that easier.

Here's how you can limit your distractions using AI:

1. Download the hidden gem of a tool called [Focus Tug](#). (It's free!)
2. When you start working on a task that you need to focus on, open the FocusTug assistant and describe your task in plain english. (For example, I used it when I was writing this ebook by saying I was "writing an ebook about AI and productivity.")
3. **Optional:** Add break times at regular intervals if you're worried about losing track of time or are trying to follow a Pomodoro-type of workflow.
4. Click "Start Session."
5. Rather than block entire websites, Focus Tug uses AI to recognize what is and isn't relevant to your task at hand. So if I start to Google "productivity tips" for this ebook, that's totally cool. But if I start to Google something stupid like: "who is Kylie Jenner" then it'll prompt me to stay focused.



I know, I know. You can still hit “Ignore” and distract yourself. But in my experience, this works much better than those generic website blockers that just blanket block an entire URL. It’s situational to keep you distraction free, but still smart enough to let you access all the tools and search engines you might need.

Need deeper focus? Here’s how you can up your focus music game using AI:

- 1. Purchase a subscription to brain.fm. (It’s \$6.99 a month.)
- 2. Click on their “Focus” playlist. The songs in this playlist are dynamically created by AI and have been scientifically proven to increase productivity.
- 3. Work for at least 15 minutes to experience the effects.

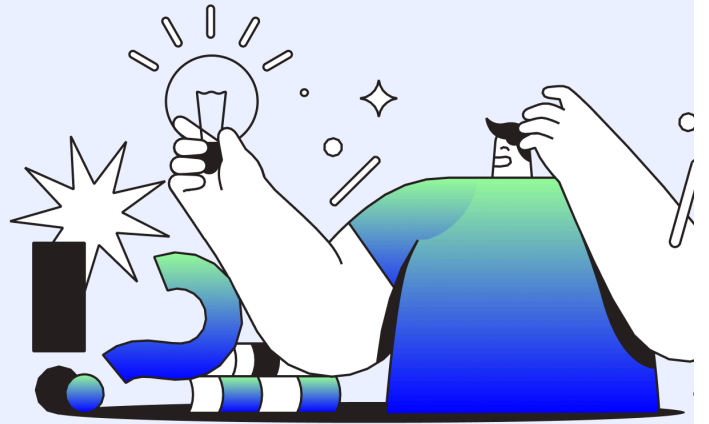
You can try a sample of the brain.fm focus music on their YouTube channel if you want to try it before pulling out your credit card. As a skeptic, I have to tell you that in my anecdotal experience I really did feel more productive working to their music compared to my typical lofi playlists. (Sorry Lofi Girl. I still love you!)

The image shows a screenshot of the Brain.fm AI tool interface. On the left, there is a logo for brain.fm featuring a stylized brain with headphones. The text "AI TOOL — Brain.fm" is at the top left. On the right, the habit "Close & Clear" is displayed. Below the habit name, there are two progress indicators: "EFFECT" with 10 colored circles (7 filled, 3 empty) and "DIFFICULTY" with 10 white circles (1 filled, 9 empty).

HABIT #5

Brainstorm with batteries

CREATIVITY



The problem: Creativity doesn't come out of thin air

Almost every job requires some amount of creativity. Whether you're trying to brainstorm an "outside the box" solution to a problem, write a persuasive email, or put together a presentation for your team and want to get the slide animations just right. If you don't consider yourself to be a "creative" person, these tasks can often feel daunting and actually sap up your productivity if you get stuck on them.

The hardest part is always at the beginning. Because where do you start when you have nothing but a blank page, an empty canvas, or a whiteboard in front of you? You need to create "something" from "nothing." And that is no easy task.

So what do you do? Maybe you brainstorm an outline or throw out some bad ideas to kickstart your creative juices. (Ew.) They say there are no bad ideas when you're brainstorming—but let's be honest: there definitely are. (And I'm pretty sure I've had them all.) So you scratch all of those out and get frustrated, starting over once again.

Tired productivity habit: “JuSt Go FoR a WaLk tO gEt InSplrEd”

While creativity tends to fall out of the realm of traditional productivity, there is one piece of advice that I often see gets repeated to people facing this challenge.

Just take a break. Go for a walk to get inspired!

Listen, I walk about two hours every single day with my dog. I have nothing against walks. But if you think that going for a walk will help you have some sort of “Eureka!” moment to solve whatever creative problem you’re having? Just like my dog—you’re barking up the wrong tree. Yes, it can help to give you some distance from the problem and potentially think of [some new ideas](#). And yes, being around nature is absolutely good for your mental health. But is this the best solution if you’re trying to complete a task efficiently? I don’t think so.

You see, **there’s a myth that you have to wait for creativity to strike**. But some of the most successful creative thinkers say the opposite is actually true. In order to be successful as a creative person—you have to schedule your creativity so you’re able to strike inspiration. Take author Stephen King, for example. He writes every day, no exceptions, around six pages or 1,000 words. He does this whether he’s feeling inspired or not.

Which brings us back to that empty page and the dreaded blinking cursor.

Golden productivity habit: Use AI to kickstart your creativity


Strangely enough, you can help boost your creative productivity with one of the most popular and commonplace of AI tools: [ChatGPT](#). I know creativity seems like a strange use case for ChatGPT, but you'll want to hear me out on this. The hardest part about being creative is getting started. And the best thing about ChatGPT is that it can help get you started on anything, much faster and easier.

Here's how to use ChatGPT to kickstart your creative brainstorming:

1. Sign up for an OpenAI account. (It's free!)
2. Head on over to the ChatGPT playground.
3. In the "System" prompt, tell ChatGPT they are a "creative and outside-the-box thinker." You can even ask them to act like a fictional character, like Don Draper from Mad Men, if you're feeling a bit saucy.
4. Using the sliders on the right, dial up the "Temperature" all the way up to 1.0. This will help the AI "hallucinate" and get more creative with its responses.
5. Then, ask the AI to create the most relevant starting point for your project. This could be a list of brainstorming ideas on the topic at hand, an outline for the article you want to write, or a funny introduction to the presentation you need to give.
6. If you're not happy with the results, ask the AI to "try again, but make it more X." (Funny, unique, unusual. Whatever.) You can work with the AI to hone its answers.

Important note: AI will not replace your creativity. It will never be as creative as you can be. But what it can do is give you some ideas on where to begin. It might use an interesting phrase that you want to build on. Or give you the spark of an idea that you can start to run away with.

AI TOOL — ChatGPT



ChatGPT

HABIT

Charge Up

EFFECT

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DIFFICULTY

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HABIT #6

Stop doing repetitive tasks

DATA ENTRY



The problem: Data entry makes you want to poke your eyes out

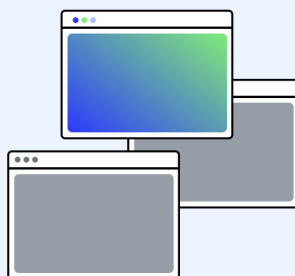
Every job has some amount of data entry—the only question is how much. Some people spend a few hours a week updating spreadsheets. (Ugh.) Some people spend multiple hours every day updating customer info after every interaction. (Uggggh.) And for some unlucky doldrums, their entire job consists of taking data from one place and putting it into some other destination. (Ugh doesn't even cut it.)

Nobody likes data entry. Oh sure, some people lie about it to make themselves feel better about having to do it so much. "It's actually not so bad. It's a nice break from my other tasks, because I don't have to think about anything while I do it." But come on. You know what would be a better break than data entry? An actual freakin' break.

And it's not like it can't happen, either. Research from McKinsey shows that of work activities can be automated in nearly 60% of jobs. So why are we wasting so much of our precious time on this type of repetitive, copying and pasting, completely soul-crushing type of work? And how do we start to get more productive with how we do it?

1/3 of work activities

Can be automated in nearly 60% of jobs



Tired productivity habit: Just say “no” to extra admin tasks

Highly productive people love to say the word “[no](#).” (It’s right up there with words like “Pomodoro” and “5AM.”) But this is one piece of productivity advice that most people aren’t able to put into practice. It’s not because most people wouldn’t love to say no to their mundane tasks like data entry. Rather, it’s because most people can’t say no to these tasks because **they simply must get done** and because the **task is too ingrained in their current workflows**.

Take a junior salesperson, for example. Their data entry usually involves updating Salesforce with the latest information on their leads and customers. Adding new contacts, updating organization info, adding in administrative notes from their phone calls. It’s not glamorous work, but someone has to do it.

Could a junior salesperson say “no” to these tasks? The answer, of course, is no. If they were to stop updating their forms in Salesforce, they would be left with incomplete information the next time they get on the phone with that customer, client, or lead. The records on the account would start to get messy quickly, and the chances of a mistake or slip-up occurring would increase. Even worse—you better believe their sales manager would take notice and give them a stern warning about the importance of data upkeep. (Tsk, tsk.)

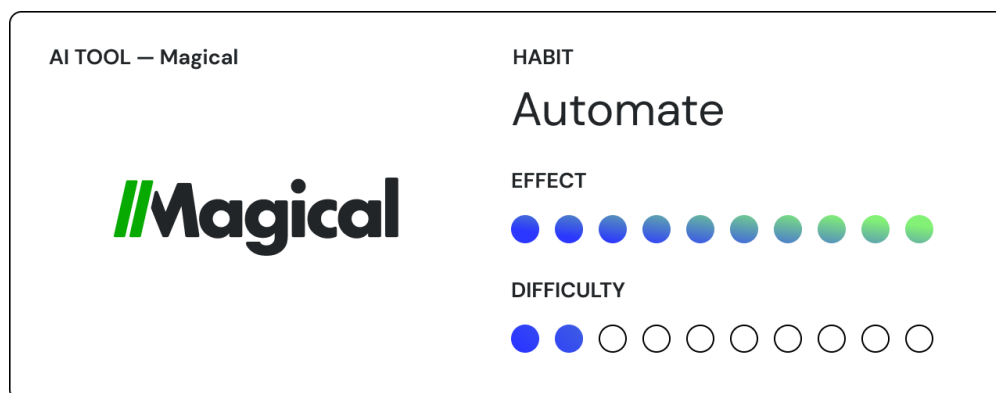
Golden productivity habit: Use AI to complete your data entry instantly

So while you may not be able to say “no” to data entry tasks entirely, you can say “no” to doing them piece-by-piece. Magical can help you transfer data from any website source (like a lead profile, or a product listing) to any website destination (like a database, or a spreadsheet) with the click of a button—instantly.

Here’s how it works:

- [Add Magical](#) to your Chrome browser. (It’s free!)
- Open up the source of the information you want to transfer.
- Click the Magical button and onto the Transfers tab.
- Identify which pieces of information on the page you want to transfer. For example, name, job title, company name, etc. (Do this once, and Magical will remember which pieces of information you care about.)
- Choose where you want to transfer the information to go.
- Hit transfer and va-va-voom, you’re done.

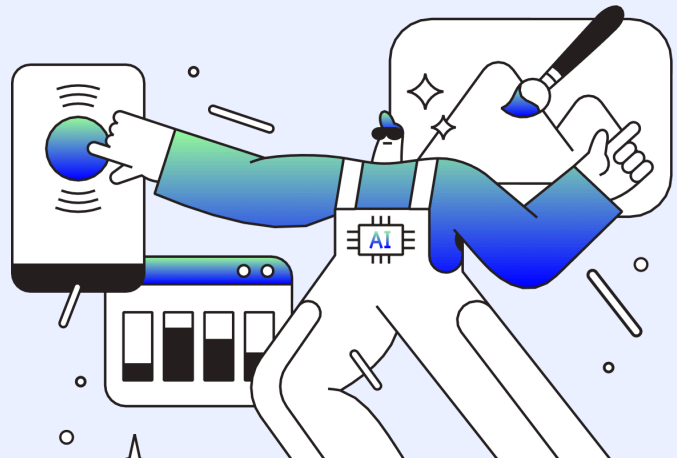
With Magical, you should never have a reason to perform manual data entry again. Be conscious of any time you need to copy and paste information from one place to another, and call on Magical to do the heavy lifting for you. You’ll be amazed at how even small data entry tasks can add up to big time savings for your productivity.



HABIT #7

Delegate your legwork

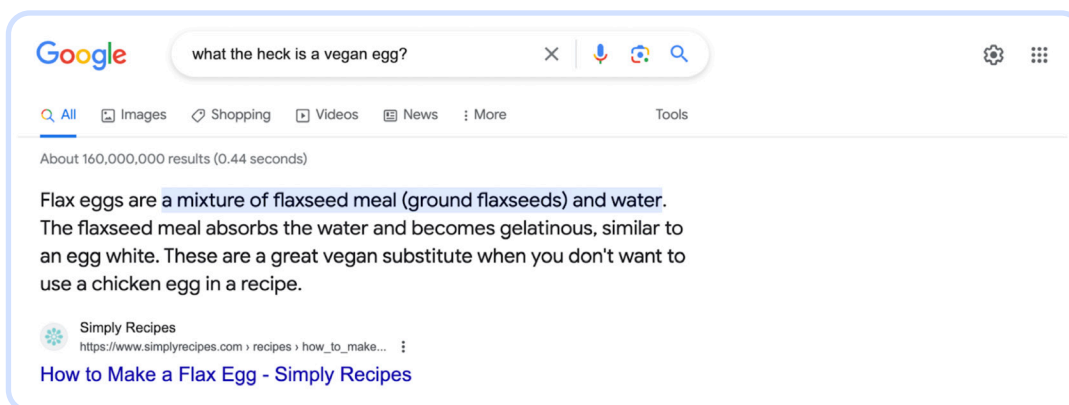
RESEARCH



The problem: Good research takes time, energy, and patience

At some point in your job, you're going to need to find the answer to a very important question. Maybe it's... "Who are our competitors in this market?" Maybe it's... "What other tools can we use to solve this problem?" Or maybe it's even... "Where is the best place to get vegan eggs for our next breakfast meeting?"

These are the types of questions that can eat away at your productivity. They send you down a rabbit hole of Google searches, Wikipedia pages, YouTube videos, TikTok videos, and other sources of information overload. Like Alice, you tumble down the rabbit hole until you either A) get annoyed and just pick an option at random, or B) you spend way too much time digging through all the noise to find exactly what you're looking for.



Tired productivity habit: Delegate, delegate, delegate

The traditional productivity habit here would be to delegate your research tasks out to someone else. (Basically, make it someone else's problem.) This was a big part of *The 4-Hour Workweek* by Tim Ferriss, and in my experience the advice here is actually sound. If there's a big research task or project that is getting in the way of your productivity—see if you can offload it before getting in too deep.

The problem here is that for most people, **they have nobody to delegate these tasks to**. If you're an entry-level employee or an independent contributor, then who would there be to delegate to? You could take your chances and pay someone on Upwork or Fiverr, maybe. But that's a risk that would have to come out of your own wallet.

Even mid-level managers and team leads often have trouble delegating tasks. You often have to spend just as much time and energy explaining the task and monitoring the results. And that's if your team even has the capacity to take on extra tasks. ([89% of employees](#) have experienced some form of burnout in the last year—so you might think twice before adding more responsibilities onto their plates if it's something you can do yourself.)

Golden productivity habit: Use AI to delegate your research tasks

Research is one area where ChatGPT can't help you. Because the latest models of GPT3 and GPT4 aren't hooked up to browse the web, the majority of its data cuts off around September 2021. That's right—ChatGPT has no idea about the inflation surges, Russia invading Ukraine, or Will Smith introducing his fresh prints on Chris Rock at the Oscars.


But there are other AI tools that can help you with researching much faster. In particular, Auto-GPT is an "AI agent" that can do things like browse the web, scan search results, and compile lists of information for you.

Here's how you can use Auto-GPT to delegate your legwork:

- If you're a coder, you can download the open source code from [GitHub](#). (It's free!)
- If you're not a coder, you can try out a browser-based version of Auto-GPT. For example, [Godmode.space](#).
- Give the AI agent a task, such as: "Research the top 10 most popular productivity experts and give me their contact information."
- The AI will break down your research project into tasks, which you can approve or modify.
- In the end, you'll be able to export a file that condenses all the work done into one easy-to-digest package.

No more delegating to human beings who cost real actual money. You can now delegate to your very own personal assistant, who happens to be an expert at research and can pull up anything you're looking for in under 15 minutes.

AI TOOL — AutoGPT



HABIT

Delegate

EFFECT

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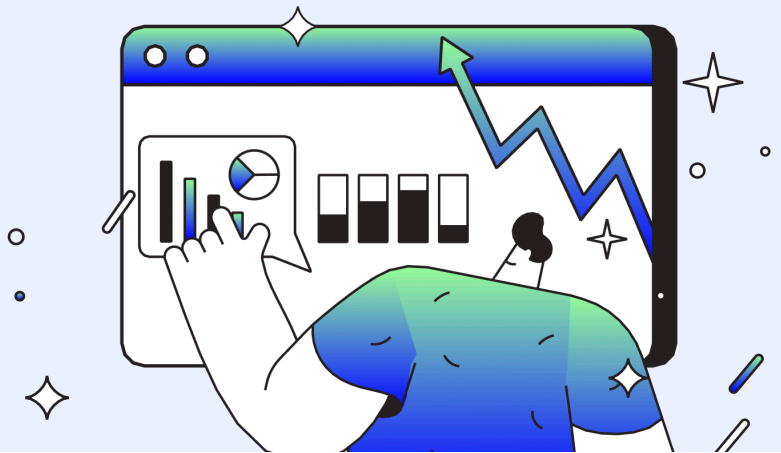
DIFFICULTY

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○

HABIT #8

Frame your best story

REPORTING



The problem: You need to show how productive you're being, too.

If you've followed all the productivity habits up to this point, **you should have been able to boost your productivity by 50–100%**. Between the time you've saved on emails and messages, to the automations you've put in place for your data entry, to the gains you've made in your focus time. You have hit upon a new way of working that is sure to impress both your coworkers and your bosses.

But wait—what's that? Nobody has actually noticed? It seems like you've made all these gains for nothing? And now you're just working yourself silly waiting for the sweet release of non-existence to release you from this prison of capitalism in 50–60 years?

Sadly, this is the case for many overachievers. When you become more productive and increase your output at work, far too many managers will give you little more than a pat on the back. (Oh, and maybe an increase in your workload to compensate. Yaaaay. 😞)

But this is where this eighth and final golden productivity habit comes into play. Because it's not enough to be productive, you also need to show everyone how productive you're being too. (If a tree falls in the woods and no one was around to hear it—was it even being productive?) It's only by reporting on your production increases and your week-over-week wins that you'll be able to hit the career or pay goals you've been working so hard to reach. So let's discover how you can use AI to help you frame your newfound productivity in the best possible way.

Tired productivity habit: Hack your productivity to constantly overperform

The more productive you become, the more tempting it will be to add even more work to your plate. The need to constantly be working is powerful in some people—and it comes at a price. [Toxic productivity](#) is when you feel the constant need to be always busy, all the time, at all costs. And it's the people who tend to Google things like "how to become more productive" that suffer from this the most.

So before you start trying to cram in more tasks and more work with your extra hours in the day? Stop. Take a breath. And instead, focus on how you're going to tell the story of your accomplishments so far.

You can do this the old-fashioned way, by writing out your results and explaining how you achieved them. Or you can breathe some life into your reporting by letting AI help you paint a picture of everything you've been doing to make this happen.

Golden productivity habit: Use AI to show the big picture

With AI tools like ChartGPT, you can show your manager or boss exactly how much work you've been doing on a weekly or monthly basis. (Clock that "r" in ChartGPT—this is a cheeky spin-off from the OpenAI phenomenon.)

Here are step-by-step instructions on how to use ChartGPT for your reporting:

- 1. Begin tracking key metrics for your performance and productivity in an Excel spreadsheet or Google Sheet.
- 2. Sign up for ChartGPT (It's \$15 for 1,500 credits).
- 3. Use ChartGPT to create tables, graphs, and charts to show your metrics in the best possible light.
- 4. Ask ChartGPT to create executive summaries, so you can highlight the bullet points quickly for your boss or manager.

Remember—reporting isn't just for your manager, it's also for you. It's important to see for yourself the gains in productivity you make, and these visualizations will help. Do this from the beginning, and you'll be able to see yourself gaining momentum as these golden productivity habits become a part of your daily routine.


AI TOOL — ChartGPT

ChartGPT

HABIT
Document

EFFECT

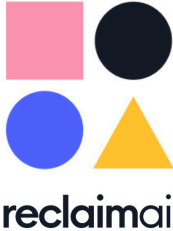
DIFFICULTY



Essential AI tools for boosting productivity

Looking for the TL;DR? Here it is—these are the eight essential AI tools to help you boost productivity. Remember though, these tools won't do anything for you unless you pair them with the right productivity habit.

//Magical



ChartGPT

Remember the most important productivity question

No, the most important question isn't: How do I become a more productive person? (But the very fact that you're asking this question already tells me a lot about you.) More important than the how is to get to the core of the why.

Ask yourself: **Why do you want to become more productive?**

The reason I ask is because chances are you're already more productive than most other people in the workforce today. If you went through all the trouble of downloading this guide and actually are taking the time to read it through, that tells me you're someone who cares about their work. You want to do not just a good job—but a better job. That means you're miles ahead of all the people out there who just want to get the bare minimum done and scrape by. (Shout-out to all the slackers of the world, I used to walk among you.)

After all, nobody on this planet wants to become more productive just for the sake of being more productive. There's always some underlying motivation or reason. Pinpoint the why and you'll be able to discover the thing that really motivates you.

Top 5 Reasons People Try to Increase Productivity

1. Advance in career
2. Make more money
3. Free up more time
4. Reduce stress
5. Feel more accomplished

Whatever the reason, I encourage you to really own it. Even if it's just as simple as you want to make more money—there's nothing wrong with that, as long as you're honest about it with yourself. (I'm more of a "free up more time" and "reduce stress" guy myself, but I respect the hustle.) There will always be times when you feel less motivated or productive than usual. And having that core reason clearly defined—the reason you're working so darn hard—that'll help you sustain any of the habits in this guide for much longer.



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