

# Self-Publishing Authors PODCAST

## Cheat Sheet

# Productivity Hacks For Authors

Here are the SPA Girls' best writer productivity hacks - i.e., a big ole list of tips to increase your productivity, based on things that we do each week to help us write more!

## Routine

Prepare yourself for your writing session like you would if you were heading out the door to work. Follow the same process to form a routine each time you write. This will help in the early stages of your career.

Some people find the beginning hard. Just sitting down and letting the words flow, so they use techniques, apps, and other resources to help them achieve the right state of mind. Here are a few we have used:

- ◆ [Headspace](#) The Headspace phone app will teach you to meditate in just 10 minutes each day. It's a great stress reliever too!
- ◆ Shakti mat Lying on the Shakti mat for 20 minutes can be useful if you are stressed or tensed, both things that can stifle creativity.
- ◆ Listening to music is also an excellent way to focus the mind. Build a playlist that suits you, and then sit and listen to it before writing. Your mind will get used to it, and form an understanding that it's writing time. Try [www.asoftmurmur.com](http://www.asoftmurmur.com) for some soothing background noise.
- ◆ Stretching before you sit down to a writing session can help relax your body, and prepare it for inactivity and creativity. Find 5 or 6 basic positions, and do them daily.

## Experimentation the SPA Girls way!

The SPA Girls have been writing for many years now, and in that time have experimented with different ways to increase our productivity. Here are a few tips, from what we've learned, and has worked for us:

With a young family, it's hard to find the time to write, so we suggest you sit with your family in the evenings, or whenever it's family time, and get out your laptop and write. Plug in those headphones, and learn to tap away with your family around you. This will please them, as you're not in a separate room, and make you happy also. Mornings are great too. Getting up an hour before your children to get those words down, you'll be amazed at just how productive you become.

Make a diary note of your expectations for your writing session, but make it realistic. Be sure it's achievable in the time available. Flexibility helps when you have more, or less, time than you thought. It's a great feeling to hit a writing target. But if you don't hit it, don't be hard on yourself, work toward it the next day.

Broaden your horizons by trying something new. Writing is not a one-size-fits-all scenario!

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### Deal with distractions

- ◆ Life gets in the way, so you need to learn to minimize those distractions, and put things in place so your writing time is protected.
- ◆ Use a timer to limit your social media activity. Let's face it this is a major distraction, and something that can't be avoided, so be strict on the time you spend online.
- ◆ Make sure your P.C./Laptop, has no internet access.
- ◆ Write on another device like a Neo Alpha Smart keyboard that is battery operated, or a computer that is only for writing.
- ◆ Using noise cancelling headphones for blocking out distractions.
- ◆ Schedule your writing time with your family or partner, so that everyone is clear when you will be writing.

### Set daily priorities

Getting organized is vital in the early days of your writing career, especially if you have another job. Using a diary will help you do this. You can color-code the most important tasks if need be. Ticking them off will feel great at the end of the day! Lists are another great way of prioritizing. Put it somewhere prominent so you can see what needs to be done. Use wall planners, and calendars, anything that will help keep you on task.

Putting a daily word count in your planner is vital. This should be something you do for whenever you schedule writing time, and will help you find writing consistency. Once you get further along in your career, your scheduling will change as you move into marketing etc. But establishing those daily routines now, will help you in the long run.



**Episode #85:**  
**The Productive Writer:  
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### Train yourself to work anywhere in any mood

You turn up to your day job and work, right? You don't say to your boss that you're not in the mood do, you? So writing time is no different. I think one of the most important things to establish early in your writing career, is the ability to be able to write anywhere. Sure, we've just given you things to help get you in the mood, but with time, you should be able to sit down and write when required, and anywhere. It's a learned skill, and something you can teach yourself. So start learning!

Sit in a café for an hour, and write. Go to noisy places, like parks or train stations and write. Headphones on with your play list playing will help. The point we are trying to make here is that life changes. You may start out writing in silence in a quiet room with no distractions like children squealing outside your office door, but one day that may change. So don't make things hard on yourself, learn to write with noise now, and forget about getting that large DO NOT DISTURB, WRITER AT WORK, sign laminated and put on your office door.

### Plan what you are going to write each day

There's nothing worse than looking at a blank page with no idea what to write next. We've all been there and have that t-shirt! So when you finish your writing for the day make notes of where you want to start the next day. If you are in the car and driving somewhere and a thought comes to you, use your phones voice recorder app and make some verbal notes, (after pulling over of course). Keep the plot percolating inside your head, so that when it's time to write, you're ready. If you get an awesome idea, then write it down. Writing everyday, or every second day is important for consistency and keeping your head in the story!

### Set Targets - daily or weekly

Just set a target, any target. Word count, pages, a scene, a chapter anything that works. Make it achievable but push yourself a little. Targets help keep you honest. They make you accountable to yourself. No one else needs to know what they are, but we would rather get down 50 words, than no words at all.

Book in edits or other deadlines, these will give you a target to aim for. But be wary of putting too much pressure on yourself in the early stages of your writing career.

Hope these ideas help! Happy writing!

*'You don't start out writing good stuff. You start out writing crap and thinking it's good stuff, and then gradually you get better at it. That's why I say one of the most valuable traits is persistence.'*

*-Octavia Butler*