Special Report

Done By Noon:
Three No B.S. Strategies for Increasing Productivity

By Gary Stauble
www.donebynoon.com
Done By Noon Overview

*Done by Noon* is an attitude, a mindset and a set of skills for helping Entrepreneurs & Independent Professionals create a better life.

It’s about creating maximum freedom with minimal effort.

I truly believe that no matter what your current situation, there are ways for you to create more free time to do the things that really matter to you. Literally being “done by noon” is not necessarily the target. The goal is for you to be able to be done as early as you want to be and for you to have a set of tools to choose from for making that happen.

This special report will help you start living the *Done by Noon* lifestyle by teaching you three of the primary techniques that will increase your productivity.

**Note:** I encourage you to share this report with others as long as you don’t alter the PDF.

1. Create “Strategic Urgency” In Your Schedule

Many people work better when there is a short term, immediate target in front of them. For example, if you heard from a client earlier today that they wanted to see a proposal from you regarding a large project within ten days, you’d likely work with a moderate level of focus and intensity. But if that same client called back fifteen minutes later and said they need that proposal by tomorrow, you’d immediately amp up your level of intensity regarding getting that proposal finished.

There is a subtle balancing act that you need to be aware of in terms of what constitutes “strategic urgency” versus “neurotic urgency”. **A term I like to use for the perfect balance is focused intensity.** This is the “sweet spot” of productivity where you’re highly productive but not rushed.

You don’t need to work with focused intensity all day but you do need to be able to do this in specific segments of the day. Your “money activities” are the tasks that you’ll want to execute with this type of single minded focus. I’ll outline a simple way to sharpen your focus in the example below.

**A Simple Tool for Creating Strategic Urgency**

Some of the best ideas are also the most simple, low-tech and easy to implement. With all of the advice out there on personal productivity and time management, it’s easy to overlook this simple tool: the egg timer. One of the best ways I know to boost my productivity on workdays is to utilize a countdown timer during my “golden hours”.

---

Copyright 2010 Gary Stauble. You are encouraged to share this report with others as long as you do not alter the PDF.
I define, “golden hours” as my most important early morning hours when I want to work without interruptions.

It is that sacred time in the morning when I focus on the critical activities that generate revenue and that demand my intense focus. It’s often when I’ll use a countdown timer. I find that a good segment of time for using a timer is 50 minutes. I turn off my phone, shut down my email and close my office door to prevent all disruptions. I set my countdown timer to 50 minutes and then I get busy.

It’s important that the timer counts down (not up) so that there is a set deadline. This creates an intensity to the activity that is difficult to get without the artificial deadline. Also, it is a “self-management” technique that can be utilized by high performers who want to get leverage on their own habits.

Here are some of the activities you might use a timer for:

- Sales calls
- Your “money” activities
- Content development
- Article writing
- Planning
- Meetings (the shorter the better)
- Critical thinking
- Mind mapping and strategizing

A word of caution:
Have fun with this idea- think of the timer as a friendly reminder and keep a light attitude. I say this from personal experience because the timer can be counter productive if it makes you feel stressed.

A good way to think of it is that you’re playing a video game for the next 50 minutes.

Of course you want to win the video game (finish the article, make the calls etc) but you’re also aware that if your man dies (you don’t get it all done) you just hit “reset” and play a new game.
2. Single-Task to Create Leverage

When you’re engaged in critical money making activities, is it best to multi-task or single-task?

By far the answer in most cases is to single-task. For a lot of us type-A entrepreneurs, this concept seems to defy logic as we assume we can spin more plates than the average person. The truth is we can spin more plates than the average person but that doesn’t mean that all of that plate spinning is making us more productive.

Keep in mind that there are three phases to any activity:
1. Start up
2. Doing
3. Winding down

The “start up” and “winding down” phases take the same amount of time regardless of how long you spend “doing”. So for example, it takes the same amount of time to start up and wind down a 1 hour block of sales calls as it does for a 15 minute block of calls. However the “doing” time is very different. According to Peter Drucker, one hour of uninterrupted time is worth 10 times the amount of four 15 minute segments because the leverage of the “doing” time has increased by that much.

An example from my personal experience:
When I first started out as an executive recruiter, I was told that I needed to make 50 calls per day in order to become a top producer. I began tracking my calls and was surprised to learn that I was only getting out around 20 calls a day. For several days I tried to speed up my pace but still ended up around the 20 call mark. I was becoming very frustrated as I knew I was capable of much better performance.

Then I made 2 critical changes:
1. I started planning my calls out the night before
2. I started single-tasking during my outgoing calling blocks

The first day that I made these 2 changes, I jumped from 20 calls per day to 37 calls. Within a couple more days I was up to 50 calls per day. The result was that I witnessed an immediate jump in my performance and my self confidence.

What I came to understand was that when I was only getting 20 calls out per day, I was multitasking and working in a reactive mode. For example, here’s what an hour of my time looked like while multitasking: I’d make a sales call, then switch to a recruiting call, then I’d look up information on another prospect, then I’d take an incoming call from an applicant, then I’d enter some data into the database, then I’d make another sales call, then look up some company info, then I’d get a call from a person I couldn’t help, then I’d make a recruiting call etc…even typing this makes me feel neurotic.
I was working my ass off but was terribly ineffective.

**When I began single-tasking, here’s what that same hour looked like:**
Make a sales call, make another sales call, make another sales call, make another sales call, make another sales call, make another sales call, make another sales call, make another sales call, etc.

I would not accept incoming calls during an outgoing calling block unless it was a critical, deal-making call. All other callers (including clients) went to voicemail. I then returned their calls at the end of the hour in one batch. This made me much more productive.

**Here are some ideas for implementing the power of single-tasking:**

- Give it a try for just a small set of hours such as from 9AM-11AM.
- Tell your staff/family/friends etc that you’re unavailable during certain hours of the day and to hold their questions until you’re available unless it’s a time sensitive issue.
- Let your calls go to voicemail while single-tasking (unless they’re money calls).
- Return all calls and check email at set times during your day.
- Separate preparation from performance. Do all of your research and planning for tomorrow at the end of the day today. Then tomorrow you’ll spend your golden hours *performing* without the need to think about what you’ll do next.

---

**3. Utilize “Intelligent layering”**

Now I’m going to advise you to periodically do the exact opposite of what I just told you a minute ago.

You can and should do more than one thing at once some of the time. **Intelligent layering means that you’re able to layer 1 activity on top of another in a seamless way that makes you more effective.** When I talked about single-tasking, I said that it was for your prime, money making activities. Intelligent layering is for activities that don’t require that level of single-minded focus.

**Here’s a personal example of intelligent layering:**
By the time I was 20 I had a mortgage, a wife and 2 children to support. The mortgage was on a tiny condo in Fresno that cost $28,000 but it was still a lot of responsibilities for a 20-year-old.
I was also committed to putting myself through college and earning a degree so I was working full-time and going to school full-time. But there weren’t enough hours in the day to attend classes, commute, work 8 hours, raise a family and then do homework.

So, I found a way to "layer" my homework with my full time job. I specifically looked for full time positions as a security guard where I’d have time to do my homework while on my post. Not every post allowed for this but a few did and I always managed to sniff those out and land them. What this meant is that I could work the swing shift 5 days a week and by the time I was home from work, all of my homework would be complete as well. This one strategy allowed me to finish college and support my family.

The reason I use the term “intelligent layering” is that not all layering is a good idea. For example if you took a business call during your daughter’s dance recital- that would be stupid layering. Doing your homework in front of the TV would also not fit with this concept.

Here are some more examples of intelligent layering:

- Combining cardio + strength training during a 20-minute workout: you can get both done in 1 shot plus you’ll have the added benefit of varying your heart rate.
- Making calls you’re not excited about while commuting (you’re stuck in the car anyway, might as well get them done).
- Watching football while riding an exercise bike.
- Making low priority calls while sitting in the sunshine (you have to make them anyway, why not soak up some rays).
- Listening to personal development audios while commuting or doing cardio.
- Standing up and walking around your office while making calls (good for your focus, mental clarity, confidence and your spine).

Parting Shot

As I said at the outset, I truly believe that no matter what your current situation, there are ways for you to create more free time to do the things that really matter to you. If you’re not going to start creating your ideal lifestyle now, when will you? Do you really want to be 10 years older before you get a handle on this?

My advice; do it now.
About Gary Stauble:

- With the systems I’ve created and installed, I’m able to be done by noon whenever I choose and to take about **10 weeks a year to travel** and explore.

- I’ve spent my entire career developing, testing and simplifying systems that allow people to get more done in less time.

- I’ll be rolling out more information regarding *Done by Noon productivity tools* in the near future so be sure to **sign up for the free report at www.donebynoon.com** so we can keep in touch.

- You can **receive weekly productivity strategies** from me on Facebook [http://facebook.com/donebynoon](http://facebook.com/donebynoon) or Twitter [http://twitter.com/donebynoon](http://twitter.com/donebynoon).

- You can also connect with me on LinkedIn [http://www.linkedin.com/in/garystauble](http://www.linkedin.com/in/garystauble).

- **Lastly, I encourage you to share this report** with co-workers, associates, family and friends as long you as you keep the entire PDF in tact.

Best,

Gary

[Image of Gary Stauble]