

# Unproductivity: 8 Fantabulous Ways to Make the Most of Your Laziest Days

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Ever have one of those unproductive days when you just feel lazy, and don't want to work on anything on your to-do list?

I sure have. Yesterday was one of them — I didn't publish a post here on Zen Habits (and a few readers took me to task for that!), I did a little work but not everything I had planned.



Photo by [~chicchun~](#)

We all have our lazy and unproductive days. Sometimes we didn't get enough sleep, sometimes we just don't have motivation, and sometimes we get distracted by a fun new game (mine yesterday was [befuddlr](#)).

So what do you do? Today, we'll look at some of my favorite unproductivity-day strategies.

Reader [Ben Helps](#) recently asked:

Do you go through cycles of increased and decreased productivity?

It seems that whatever I try to manage the myriad things I have to keep track of and get done (running my own businesses), I have weeks where I'm on top of it all and feeling great. Unfortunately I also have weeks where I feel like I'm letting lots of things slide and not achieving much.

Great question, Ben! Quick answer: I totally, totally have cycles of increased and decreased production! I hope I don't convey the wrong idea, that I'm productive all the time.

I think, for me, it's a matter of finding ways to still get the important stuff done when I'm not feeling productive, and also allowing myself to take breaks now and then. Our minds need a break — we can't go full charge all the time.

Here are my most favoritest ways of making the most of an unproductivity-filled day:

**1. Find something fun to do.** If you're feeling unmotivated, it may just be that the things on your to-do list bore you. You need to find something exciting to do! This can be a bit of a challenge for some, but here's how to do it: take a step back, close your eyes, and just let your mind go. What would be fun to do today? How can you get

outside of your normal routine? What are you passionate about? What would be fresh and new to you? Let the ideas flow, then start writing them down (you can open your eyes at this point). Then choose something fun and exciting from your list, even if it's not something urgent — it's better than doing nothing!

Getting excited about something is the best way to get out of those unmotivated doldrums. Find your passion, and pursue it!

**2. Kill distractions.** What is it that's distracting you today? Whether that's some new website you discovered (Zen Habits?), a forum, Digg, some form of solitaire or Bejeweled, or whatever ... if you find a way to block yourself from that distraction, you can get a lot more done. It's hard, I know. A good method: have a friend or coworker stop you from using the distraction. Another good method: disconnect the Internet. I know I get a lot more done when I do that. :)

**3. Put something dreadful at the top of my list.** If there's something that I've been putting off for awhile, something that put fear into my heart, I put that at the top of my list for today, and put a bunch of other things I need to do below that.

Guess what? I might not do the thing at the top of my list. But in order to procrastinate on that dreaded item, I crank through a bunch of other things on my list. That's productive unproductivity for you!

**4. Just relax.** OK, so you don't get anything done today. Does the world end? Sometimes, especially if you've been doing a lot of work, your brain just needs a rest. Take that rest day! Let yourself rejuvenate. If you can take the day off, do it! If not, just goof around today, and get back to work tomorrow. You might just find yourself recharged.

**5. Take a walk.** Sometimes you just need to get the blood circulating. Sitting at your desk all day can take a lot out of you. Get up, walk around, go outside if you can. Ten minutes of fresh air can get you relaxed and ready to crank out the work!

**6. Take a shower.** If you work at home (like I sometimes do), it's very tempting to just get up and start working in your pajamas (or worse). But if you don't feel clean, you might not feel productive. So go take a shower! You'll feel much better, and ready to work. It's amazing how much of a difference a shower and a shave can make!

**7. Take a nap.** The ultimate unproductivity tool. If I can sneak in a nap, it always helps me out. I feel refreshed and much more ready to face the work in front of me. Some [great tips from Ririan Project](#).

**8. Crank up the music.** Nothing gets you going better than an upbeat tune. Seriously, give it a try. Anything that's got a good beat will do. Here's my current playlist of oldies, **guaranteed** to get you moving (**money back** if it doesn't work!):

Tommy James and The Shondells - Hanky Panky  
Dusty Springfield - I Only Want To Be With You  
Ronettes - Be My Baby  
Sam Cooke - Don't Know Much About History  
Frankie Valley - Stay (Just A Little Bit Longer)  
Diana Ross and The Supremes - Baby Love  
Sam Cooke - Stand By Me  
Diana Ross and The Supremes - You Can't Hurry Love  
The Temptations - My Girl  
Temptations - Just My Imagination  
Dusty Springfield - Son of a Preacher Man  
Frankie Vallie and The Four Seasons - Walk Like A Man  
Beatles - Can't Buy Me Love  
Kinks - What I Like About You  
Kinks - Come Dancing  
The Staples Singers - Let's Do It Again

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