

Getting momentum on your side

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Some days you get up, get going and everything just “clicks.” You set out to do something and — presto — you do it. You actually pick up steam as you power through your day. You feel energized and productive.

Other days you have setback after setback. It feels like you’re playing catch up all day; you can’t seem to make any real progress. You feel discouraged and exhausted.

Most of us have both kinds of days. What makes one day fruitful and another day frustrating?

Momentum is key

Momentum is energy — both mental and physical — that grows as you get things done. Each accomplishment — no matter how small — helps build momentum that propels you to your next challenge. And every challenge you meet fires you up for the next.

What’s the secret to momentum?

It can be this easy: Structure your day so you’re building energy from the moment you wake up. And you can use that momentum to succeed all day. Here’s how:

- **Follow a morning routine.** Mornings can set the tone for the rest of the day. If your first few hours are chaotic, it can be tough to turn the rest of the day around. A low-key, structured morning routine can help. Eat breakfast, work out, meditate or do whatever helps you create a calm foundation for the rest of the day.

- **Make a daily to-do list.** A to-do list helps you organize your time. Plus, it gives you things to check off as you do them — a great momentum-builder. Each time you check off a completed task, you feel motivated to get more done.
- **Eat your frog.** Mark Twain said: “If the first thing you do in the morning is eat a frog, you can go through the rest of the day knowing the worst is behind you.”¹ For some people, this strategy works: Do your least favorite task (your “frog”) first. Once that’s done, the rest of your day will seem easy. If you prefer, try the reverse: Start with the simplest task and build up to your “frog”. Do what works best for you.
- **Avoid too much multi-tasking.** Multi-tasking is counter-productive. Why? Our brains can’t effectively process two different things at once — much less three or four.² This is especially true if each task requires thought and attention. Jumping back and forth or trying to manage too many things at once actually decreases productivity and creates stress.³ So when you multi-task, you usually lose momentum instead of building it.
- **Don’t forget the rewards.** Reward yourself for successes throughout the day. The rewards can be small — a ten minute call to a friend, a short walk or stretch. These keep you working toward the next reward — a great way to boost your momentum.

¹www.fastcompany.com

²www.forbes.com

³www.coschedule.com