

Work smarter, work shorter, work better

Author, broadcaster and hit podcaster Emma Gannon on managing her 'multi-hyphen' career

Iwrote my book — The Multi-Hyphen Method — to validate the person I am, someone who has lots of fingers in different pies. A diverse CV is much more beneficial than it used to be and employers want someone who can do different things. I love spotting trends and that's what led me to start my podcast, called Ctrl, Alt, Delete, at a good time, two years ago, just before the big podcast boom. I also contribute to panels, radio programmes such as BBC Radio 4's Women's Hour, conferences and events.

I am very good with my time. Every day is different and I don't have a routine, but I have structure and make my own rules, which I love. Mondays I keep free to work from home so I'm prepared for the week ahead. I like to know what I'm doing in advance and planning makes it easier to say no to last-minute demands on my time.

I use a lot of co-working spaces — members' clubs — and change up my location each day. Different spaces help me come up with new ideas and I like the energy I get from working around others, even if they are strangers. I feel I am in a work environment, but no one bothers me. The key to productivity is knowing when you are most productive

— for me, it's between 10am and 3pm. I spend four hours a-day tops at my desk, working in 90-minute bursts. During 'deep work', I put my phone on aeroplane mode or in another room, and set an out of office so I'm not disturbed. A relaxing playlist helps me focus — pianoandrain.com is my preference.

I do my most boring tasks first, and write emails in one binge session either in the morning or evening; I think sitting behind an inbox all day can really take away from the work. I schedule emails — through Boomerang on Gmail — and quite a lot of my website content as well. I use Slack to connect with my team and share documents, and any interesting articles I find I'll save in Pocket to read at the end of the day.

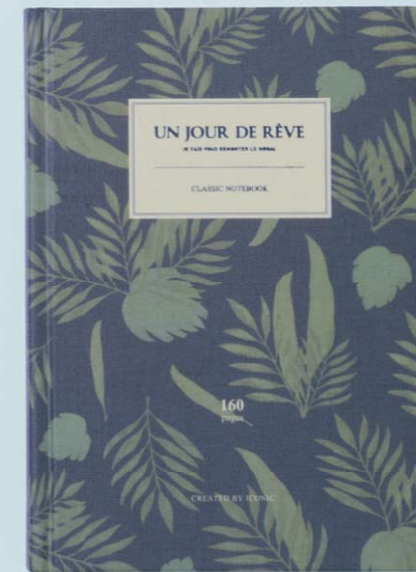
After each work burst, I'll take a short break and move my body in some way to reset my mind and energy levels. Away from my screen, I think about ideas, reflect on decisions and plan ahead. It allows me to get proper work done at my desk in less time.

Red Bull's 4pm Finish Day is an amazing



initiative — working smarter and getting everything done in a shorter time is a stepping stone to greater flexibility.

I would suggest using the extra hour to learn a new skill through a course or a YouTube tutorial, or else to create a side-project. Start small and don't feel you have to go instantly public with it. Every one of my projects that has become successful has been about putting one foot in front of the other. My podcast is constantly evolving and improving but the important thing was to get started. Forget 'perfection' and plant the first seed."



Plan meetings to best suit your schedule



Nikki Armytage-Foy is a leadership coach and founder of international coaching business Electric Woman

How busy people like Emma can be even more productive...

1 Assess your schedule

Some days are so packed with back-to-back meetings there's no time for actual work. Is every one necessary? Could one be a five-minute call, taken at a later date or cancelled? A well-thought-out email, detailing ideas and a plan of action, will often suffice.

2 Learn that you can say 'no'

Saying "no" when you need to is

an important skill to learn, but sometimes difficult to do. Take control of your deadlines and make sure you give a concise reason with a realistic timeline.

3 Hold 'walking meetings'

If you need to stretch your legs but have a meeting planned, why not suggest a "walking meeting"? It energises the body and allows you to brainstorm ideas with a definite cut-off point, meaning meetings are kept short and to the point.



Fancy a 4pm finish?

Red Bull's #4pmFinish Day has arrived. This Friday, why not take up the challenge to be more productive and finish work early, leaving you more time to do the things you love? Get involved now at RedBull.co.uk/4pmFinish

To learn more about working smarter, not harder, head to RedBull.co.uk/Productivity