

How I keep my fitness blog running

Kim Ngo on ensuring both her job as a personal trainer and her side projects stay in good shape

“**F**ood and Lycra: these were my escapes from a demanding job I was doing in technology audit and assurance. My job had sounded great, but I quickly realised it wasn't going to be easy. During busy season I worked crazy hours.

I used multiple techniques to stay productive during that time. I'd write lists prioritised by numbers and set targets of how many to get through by the end of the day. Desktop sticky notes were a useful tool. I'd write a series of notes and order them into days so nothing got missed. I was a stickler for filing emails — what was left in my inbox I knew I could trash.

If I had to move between office floors during the day I'd take the stairs, as regular movement helped keep me focused. I'd often run the 6km home after work, whatever the time, because putting foot to pavement gave me clarity of thought and it became my meditation.

I co-founded my side-hustle, food and fitness blog Food and Lycra, during that period. It gave me the chance to express myself when I felt restricted by the corporate world and like I had to become someone else to succeed.

When the blog started doing well I became more myself at work — I found I performed better as a result. I've left the corporate world now and work as a personal trainer for a sports brand and a fitness instructor for 1Rebel. I focus on my side project around these roles.

A WhatsApp group between myself and my Food and Lycra co-founders helps our flow of communication as it's much quicker than emailing. Most of the things we chat about are organic but if we have an event coming up — such as a race — we'll use it to quickly plan a series of posts in advance.

When I need to blog, I set my phone to ringtone only and put it in my bag so instead of checking it all the time and being tempted to scroll through social media, I only look at it when it rings. In your phone settings you can see how much time you spend on your device; my friends and I set up challenges to reduce our social media usage to less than six hours a week.

I also shut down my inbox so I'm not distracted by email notifications and if I feel like my brain is a mess, I make tidying my desk a priority. I file papers, throw away what I don't need, and — this makes things so much easier — get rid of



pens that don't work. I feel much clearer in my thoughts afterwards.

I like challenging myself to make good use of my time. Knowing I have to get a certain amount done by a set time encourages me to take ownership of my workload — something that can reward me with an earlier finish.

I'd use an extra hour to set up a vlog to complement Food and Lycra — something I've been meaning to do for a while.”

Manage conversations and reminders



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

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

1 Use the two-minute rule for emails

Can you answer this email in two minutes or less? If "yes", answer it there and then, don't put it off. It stops emails piling up. Then set aside blocks of time — an hour in the morning, at lunch and in the evening — to answer emails that need longer.

2 Decide on a method of communication

When we have conversations across multiple platforms —

whether it's on WhatsApp, email, or project management tools — it is easy to lose track of exactly what has been agreed. Decide on one platform where decisions get made, and then, at the end of the week, send an update on the key actions taken.

3 Take photographs of handwritten notes

Lits and sticky notes have a habit of getting lost. Take a photograph of them once they're written and you'll have a digital record as back-up.



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