

Program for Focused Work Retreat

Warming Up / Getting in the Zone

- Describe the project – list or draw out all the parts that you would like to see done.
- Why is it important?
- How will you feel when it is all done?
- What results do you expect / hope for?

Approaches to Starting

- Steps – write out the steps to completing this project. If needed, divide into categories, and then list out steps for each. Take a break, come back to it, and get started.
 - Optional – get even more detailed. Make a chart with 3 columns – **Steps, First Action, Tools/Help**. Fill out the chart. Be very detailed. For First Action – truly choose the first thing to do, however tiny it is. For example, if you needed to change your domain name, you might write, “log into NameCheap.com”. Tools/Help is where you list what you need for this step – tools, research, getting help from someone else, DIY guides online, being taught a skill.
- Just dive in / find a way to trick yourself into starting:
 - Circle around it – Tell yourself, “I’m just going to review the project right now. No need to do anything ... I’m just going to look over notes, ideas, etc.” Then when you notice yourself being pulled in, just say, “I’ll just dabble here for a minute. See what happens!”
OR
 - Easiest First – Open up your materials, mentally catalog what needs to be done (or write it out) – then choose the easiest, tiniest step first. Take a break. Then go back and repeat.
OR
 - Most Fun First – Do the same as above, choosing what is most fun.
OR
 - 2-Minute Trick – Open up what you need to work on / set it out on the table. Do something else nearby. For example, if I’m going to do some writing, I open the file on one side of the computer, and then might do some reading online. At some point, tell yourself, “I’m just going to do 2 minutes of work – even if it’s just reviewing something I’ve started.” Do two minutes. Take a break, come back and repeat, until the momentum picks up.

While working

- Take breaks
- Eat/drink lots of glucose (it helps with will power)
- Consider using a timer for work sessions
- Keep your body comfortable, make it extra pleasant
- Perhaps offer awards for each step
- Note: It’s okay to procrastinate for 1-2-3 hours. This is often part of the creative process. The project will eventually pull you in.

Closing up

- Save 10 minutes at the end of the day –
 - If you completed the project – Hurrah! Be sure to reward yourself and ooh and ahh over your project – by yourself, or share with others.
 - If still in progress – list out what you accomplished, name the next starting steps, perhaps put work sessions on your calendar, list any help you’ll need. Celebrate your progress!