

# STAYING ON TRACK WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

HOW TO GET FOCUSED AND MAKE  
THE MOST OF THE TIME YOU HAVE



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# TODAY WE'LL TALK ABOUT HOW TO ...

- ▶ Set boundaries when working from home, and how to communicate those boundaries during ambiguous times
- ▶ Adapt the principles of time blocking to #getstuffdone
- ▶ Establish a personal email policy to keep you out of your inboxes and into your work



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## SO WHY SHOULD I LISTEN TO YOU?

- ▶ Owner of Flanz Writes, a Reno-based business that offers content services, including writing, editing, and strategy, since 2016
- ▶ Ran business from home for first few years
- ▶ Spent most of Q4, 2019 working from home and staying home too



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# 1. BOUNDARIES



# WHAT ARE BOUNDARIES?

- ▶ Limits you set regarding:
  - ▶ How you want to be treated
  - ▶ What types of interactions you are willing to accept from others



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# WHY ARE BOUNDARIES IMPORTANT WHEN WFH?

- ▶ Boundaries set clear expectations for you and the people around you
- ▶ Boundaries allow you to take responsibility for you and your actions
- ▶ Boundaries help you avoid feeling like you've been taken advantage of or treated unfairly



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# WHAT KIND OF BOUNDARIES ARE HELPFUL DURING WFH?

- ▶ **Physical**
  - ▶ What do you need from your environment?
  - ▶ What do you need to do to support your health?
- ▶ **Time/Energy**
  - ▶ When can you commit to doing your best work?
  - ▶ What energy do you have to give right now?



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# WHAT KIND OF BOUNDARIES ARE HELPFUL DURING WFH?

- ▶ Emotional
  - ▶ What kind of topics are OK to discuss?
  - ▶ What is off limits right now?
- ▶ Mental
  - ▶ How you can support your mental health right now?
  - ▶ How can you empower others to help?



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# EXAMPLES OF BOUNDARIES FOR WORK FROM HOME:

- ▶ **Physical:** I choose to work from a specific place in my home that is designated as my work space.
- ▶ **Time:** I establish working hours with my supervisor, colleagues and clients.
- ▶ **Energy:** When possible, I monitor my energy levels and work in ways that maximize them.
- ▶ **Emotional:** I engage in deep conversations when appropriate.
- ▶ **Mental:** I avoid mindless scrolling.



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# HOW DO YOU SET BOUNDARIES?

1. **Establish your boundaries.** What is and is not OK right now?
2. **Communicate your boundaries.** Be clear and specific when you tell the people who need to know, such as your partner, boss or colleague.
3. **Honor your boundaries.** Don't back track! Stay honest with yourself and others.
4. **Encourage others to do the same!** More boundaries makes for healthier working relationships.



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## 2. TIME BLOCKING



# WHAT IS TIME BLOCKING?

- ▶ Time blocking is a time management method where you divide your day into blocks of time.



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# HOW CAN TIME BLOCKING HELP WHEN WFH?

- ▶ Especially useful for people who:
  - ▶ Juggle many different projects/responsibilities
  - ▶ Spend too much time in “reactive mode,” responding to email and messages
  - ▶ Find their day chopped up by meetings
  - ▶ Battle constant interruptions throughout the day



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SO PRETTY  
MUCH ALL OF  
US RIGHT  
NOW.



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# HOW DO I TIME BLOCK?

- ▶ A few methods:
  - ▶ Task batching
  - ▶ Day theming
  - ▶ Pomodoro Technique



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## TIME BLOCKING: TASK BATCHING

- ▶ Switching tasks burns your brain. It takes you up to 15 minutes to realign your brain when moving from window to window.
- ▶ Task batching means taking similar tasks and grouping them together.
- ▶ Rather than working on all things related to a project, you work on one aspect at a time.

### Examples of Task Batching

-  Email/Messages
-  Social Media
-  Professional Development
-  Networking
-  Writing
-  Coding
-  Designing
-  Research
-  Paperwork
-  Planning

# TIME BLOCKING: DAY THEMING

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Planning Day 	Administrative Day 	Writing Day 	Audio/Video Day 	Training Day 	Deep Work Day 	Family Day 

- ▶ Takes task batching to the next level.
- ▶ You theme your days based on what you're going to do.
- ▶ Can work very well for leaders, entrepreneurs, freelancers and others who can work a bit more independently
- ▶ May not work as well for teams, unless the whole team agrees.

# TIME BLOCKING: POMODORO TECHNIQUE

- ▶ Named for the tomato-shaped kitchen timer the creator used to track his work cycles.
- ▶ Basically, break down the work day into shorter intervals with breaks in-between.
- ▶ Forces you to focus on one task at a time
- ▶ Can feel very accomplished when done!



# TRY WORK CYCLES BY ULTRA WORKING

- ▶ Combines task batching and Pomodoro technique
- ▶ Applicable for themed days
- ▶ Has a spreadsheet! [ultraworking.com](http://ultraworking.com)



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# 3. EMAIL POLICY



# WHAT IS A PERSONAL EMAIL POLICY?

- ▶ A set of boundaries you create around when and how you will check and respond to email.
- ▶ You can also adapt this for other forms of communication, such as Slack, text or Microsoft teams.



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# WHAT IS A PERSONAL EMAIL POLICY IMPORTANT?

- ▶ Because emails suck.
- ▶ No really, they do.
- ▶ Adobe surveyed more than 1,000 people and found that they spent more than five hours per day checking their email on average.
- ▶  $5 \times 5 \times 52 = 1,300$  Hours



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BUT, YOU  
CAN'T STOP  
THE EMAILS  
FROM COMING



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# WHAT SHOULD YOUR PERSONAL EMAIL POLICY INCLUDE?

- ▶ When you check your email
- ▶ When you respond to emails
- ▶ How people can connect with you when it's legit urgent



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# TOOLS YOU CAN USE

- ▶ Change when emails come into your inbox
- ▶ [inboxwhenready.org](http://inboxwhenready.org)
- ▶ [boomeranggmail.com](http://boomeranggmail.com)
- ▶ [Yesterbox](http://Yesterbox)



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# TOOLS YOU CAN USE

## ► Email signature to communicate clearly

If you need to reach me ASAP, please text or call me on my cell: 775-230-6839.

To stay focused and produce high-quality work, I use Tony Hsieh's [Yesterbox Method](#) with [Inbox Pause from Boomerang for Gmail](#). I check my email once a day, usually in the morning, Monday through Friday. I respond to emails within 72 hours of receipt. When I'm not checking my email, I'm working on kick-ass content for clients I love!

If you need to schedule or reschedule an appointment, please email Brooke Peterson at [admin@flanzwrites.com](mailto:admin@flanzwrites.com). If you need to schedule or reschedule an appointment with less than 12 hours notice, please text or call me on my cell: 775-230-6839.

Otherwise, I'll email you back soon with a thoughtful and timely response.



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### BOTTOM LINE:

- ▶ Do what you can to get out of your inbox.
- ▶ This is not a one-size fits all solution.
- ▶ But, doing nothing will keep you trapped in the endless cycle of email.



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# QUESTIONS?



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# LET'S CONNECT! (DISTANTLY, OF COURSE)

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