

# Stop chopping yourself to pieces

by Jason Cohen on December 30, 2013

**Achieve more by doing less: one task at a time, ample rest, and deliberate focus lead to greater fulfillment.**



"Cathy, can you please have me taken out of the loop?"

My personal experience, confirmed by numerous studies, is:

1. It's faster to process email in batches rather than checking in 30 times/day.
2. Humans cannot multi-task, they just complete both tasks slower, and with lower quality. (Texting and driving, meetings and email)
3. The best ideas, new ideas, come in a flash when you're not working.
4. You are most productive when you're "in the zone," a contiguous period of focus, without interruption by human or computer. (E.g. "I have to work from home today so I can actually get something done.")
5. You are happier and more productive (both!) when you've had enough sleep.

6. You are happier and more productive (both!) when you get regular exercise.
7. You are happier and more productive (both!) when you spend time in quiet contemplation (e.g. meditation).

Given that all of these are selfishly useful—concerning your happiness and productivity—it's amazing how we persistently ignore these facts as we navigate our daily lives.

The conclusions are simple, and obvious.

One task at a time. Don't allow arbitrary people on email and twitter dictate your attention or use of time, because they'll demand it all. Be mindful of the present moment. Use regular downtime and rest to stay healthy and happy.

Does that paragraph describe your life?

No?

Are you ok with that?

Can you face the fact that *you get to decide* how to spend your time, and you're willfully hurting yourself?

Who are you fooling?

Stop it.

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