**Writers’ Bootcamp: Summer Writing Edition 2012**

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[](http://www.flickr.com/photos/mpclemens/2964757672/)

Summer time is almost here.  For many of us, this means vacations and travel with family.  For others, summer may mean time spent reading for pleasure, taking up a new hobby, or kick starting an exercise and diet program.  For most of us in higher education, though, the summer is time we spend hunched over a keyboard revising an article, finishing a book, or writing a dissertation.  Well, no worries.  ProfHacker is here to help.  We have summertime tips and tricks for writing productivity.  In fact, we’ve done this before:

* [The 2011 Writers’ Bootcamp (Summer Edition)](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/writers-bootcamp-summer-edition/34140)
* [The 2010 Writers’ Bootcamp (Summer Edition)](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/the-down-and-dirty-article/22946), or Nels’ “Down and Dirty”: Summer Writing Plans for Junior Faculty

While these link roundups are wonderful to read, it’s even more beneficial to revisit some of the more important tips and tricks again.  Maybe we should re-title this blog post as “Seven Easy Steps to Summer Writing.”

**First, have a writing plan:** A writing plan will help you focus.  With a sharper focus, it’s easier to schedule and set achievable goals.  Writing for the sake of adding words to a page is fine—and [journaling](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/writers-bootcamp-journaling-edition/29800) can serve this writing function—but you may need more structure to keep your summer productive.  Kathleen Fitzpatrick, in an early ProfHacker post, wrote about how she [spends the first half hour of her morning:  she writes](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/the-first-half-hour-of-the-morning/24064).  Additionally, you might need a text to walk you through a longer writing project when you have limited time to complete it:  [Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks (a review)](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/review-writing-your-journal-article-in-12-weeks/25124).

**Second, create a physical space (or spaces) for writing:** If your goal this summer is to finish a major project, for example, you need to get to that project.  Get writing.  For many, getting started means clearing out a space to write.  Organize your books.  File away the semester’s papers.  Clear off your desk.  Make sure you have adequate light and temperature control.  Use [The DRAW Method](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/writers-bootcamp-the-draw-method/23097) of organizing your work space (DRAW:  Declutter, Read, Assess, Write).  Then just get going.  [Just Do It](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/strategies-for-writers-just-do-it/22962).

**Third, almost as important as having a writing plan and creating a space to write is to limit your distractions while writing.**  We’ve said it before.  You’ve heard it before.  We know the distractions that are around us.  We must strive to eliminate them.  Some of those distractions are easy to eliminate.  Turn off the Internet.  Turn off your Smartphone.  Step away from the television.  These can be great tools for writing and research, but they can be even greater distractions from writing and research.  Other distractions—children, a significant other, pets, family—can’t be eliminated, but their attentions can be diverted elsewhere at least for a short time while you write.

**Fourth, create an emotional space for writing:** For some of us, we need to be in a calm place emotionally and physically before we can begin writing.  An excellent way to calm ourselves and oddly, focus our energies is to exercise.  Exercise can help us clear our heads and it can help us focus on the writing tasks at hand.  A bicycle ride, a run, a swim, or yoga can stimulate the body and brain, making it easier to focus on writing.  Once you have physically worked through your stress (anxiety, worry, lethargy, boredom) about writing, you can begin the intellectual work you need to do to complete your summer projects.  If you think about it, [training to be an athlete is akin to training to be a writer](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/the-writer-as-athlete/22905).

**Collect appropriate writing tools:**  For some, a pad of paper and a pencil are enough to get started writing.  Others, however, prefer technological tools.  The practice of writing each morning (or each day) is easily accomplished with [750words.com](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/writers-boot-camp-using-750wordscom/23383).  You could use the [Pomodoro Technique](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/the-pomodoro-technique-an-overview/31503) (writing in 25-minute bursts).  Or you might need some [“magic software.”](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/writing-tools-or-magic-software/23073)  At ProfHacker, we are big fans of Scrivener (for [Mac](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/scrivener-scrivening-scriverastic/23026) or for [Windows](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/scrivener-finally-available-for-windows/37121)).  Pick your tools, though, and get to work.

**Next, if it helps your productivity, make writing social:**  It’s important to connect with others who are engaged in similar writing goals.  You can encourage and challenge each other.  You can hold each other accountable.  You can celebrate your writing achievements.  If you don’t think you have the time to meet other writers, forming an [Online Writing Group](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/online-writing-groups-dissertatorsnew-faculty/22775) can be a great support and help.  The meeting check-ins can last mere seconds.  However, keep in mind, too, that [face-to-face writing group](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/new-faculty-writing-groups/22732)s could also be beneficial.  Make a plan to meet your writing peers at a local coffee shop on a Saturday afternoon.  The goal of having to share your writing with another person could just spur you on to get your writing finished.

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**But the most important point of all:**  Just write.  It’s easy to complain that our writing space isn’t adequate, or that we don’t have enough time to devote to writing.  It’s easy to say that we don’t have the energy it takes to write or that our lives are too complicated to focus on a specific writing task.  It’s easy to convince ourselves that we will have the time tomorrow, or next week, or next year.  A day will pass, or a week or a year will slip by and we’ll realize that dissertation hasn’t written itself or that the article that needed to be “polished” is where you left it . . . last summer.

You have to be the one to make the decision to write.  You have to do it.  You have to push through and get the work done.  Maybe our tips and tricks will help you.  But it’s ultimately up to you.

<http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/writers-bootcamp-summer-writing-edition-2012/39803>