



KYLE BROST

Escalate 3³: Action Hacks

THE 1ST THING

Do something meaningful first thing in the morning. How often do you start your day with social media or email and before you know it, you're lost in low value tasks? How you start your day can set the direction for the remainder of it. So, choose one meaningful activity that will take 10-15 minutes to complete

THE ONE THING

Identify the one thing that you MUST do today and don't end your day until you've done it. Doing this one thing will ensure that no matter what else happens during the day, you will have done the most important thing. Forcing yourself to narrow it down to one thing, also ensures that you prioritize. You can never do everything, so you have to prioritize what is most important.

UNPACK IT

Take the big goal that you have in mind and unpack it into small, manageable tasks. Focus your attention on completing those tasks. It's easier to focus attention on small, doable tasks, than something large that feels overwhelming.

THE 2-MINUTE RULE

Do any important activity that will take less than 2 minutes immediately. Don't wait, don't hesitate, just do it now. If it will take less than 2 minutes to accomplish and you don't get it done, you might ask yourself if it *really* needs doing.

THE 5-MINUTE RULE

Consider your goal and then identify a specific task that can be accomplished in 5 minutes. Set the timer and complete that one small task.

THE 10-MINUTE RULE

For activities you don't want to do; set a timer for 10 minutes and work on it until the timer goes off. When the timer goes off, give yourself permission to stop. Continue to work on it in 10-minute increments until it is completed. This is useful for tasks that you procrastinate. Often, you'll find that a few minutes into the activity, you no longer have the desire to stop.

MAKE IT EASY

Make tasks that need to be done, easy to do. We are really good at creating barriers to things we want to avoid, like removing all the junk food from the house when we're on a diet. But, we rarely spend time making the productive things, easy to do. Ask yourself, what can I do to make this activity easy to do?



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MEASURE PROGRESS

If you want to sustain action, you need to **see** progress. Make a checklist of simple actions you'll take today that are leading you toward your goals. As you do each one, cross it off the list. This will help you see and acknowledge that you are in fact making progress. Each time you check a task off the list, you will gain a bit of satisfaction and motivation to check another thing off the list. Or, leave completed items on your desk until later, so you can see the progress you're making.

CHOOSE THE CREATIVELY RELATED

Sometimes it's not taking action that presents the problem, it's some small component of an activity. When this happens, choose an activity that may not seem directly related, but has the potential to contribute. Need to do some research, but hate researching? Try watching a movie that loosely relates to the topic and document ideas while you do. Need to design a template for a project? Buy a puzzle of architecture and document ideas while you complete it. Once you get into motion, you often discover that it doesn't matter what direction you were headed when you started, you can now steer yourself into the right direction.

POWER SESSION

Don't make a project out of something that doesn't need to be a project. Don't form a committee or launch an initiative for things that, with concerted action, could be solved in one sitting. Instead of planning out steps you'll need to take over the next week, or even month, set aside a specific block of time, typically between 2-6 hours to just power through it. Focus that time exclusively on completing that task and nothing else, I mean nothing else. You'll be amazed at how much progress you make when Power Sessions replace projects as the norm, rather than the exception.

REWARD YOURSELF

Rewards are more effective than punishment. So, before you jump to punishing yourself for not following through on commitments, try rewarding yourself for your successes. Always wanted to try that sushi bar down the road, get the royal treatment at the spa, or catch a game from behind home plate? Set some success criteria and reward yourself when you've followed through. The great thing about rewards is that they don't even have to be big to be effective, even small rewards like an extended lunch break or a printed certificate can be powerful.

CREATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Make yourself accountable, by sharing your goals and commitments with others. When you make commitments publicly and write them down, you become more accountable to them. Sometimes, simply sharing them with others will be enough. Other times, you will need to give someone else permission to hold you accountable. This requires explicitly telling them they have permission to hold you accountable and allowing them to call you out on missed commitments. To assist with this, you may give them some power, like your Netflix or social media password which they can change if you don't follow through on commitments. You can also give this person permission to reward you.



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NOTE: One creative way to enlist accountability is to make a bet. Choose a buddy and tell them the activity you will complete and the timeline. Commit to doing something for them if you do not complete it within that timeline. A few examples include, buy them breakfast or lunch, take them to the movie, give them \$10, etc. etc.

COLLABORATE

You don't have to go it alone. Sometimes the only thing you need to move forward is the support and expertise of another person. If an activity feels just outside of your comfort zone or expertise, consider collaborating with another person. Collaboration builds on accountability by creating a natural form of responsibility. Additionally, it gives you access to information and resources that you wouldn't have going at it alone. The biggest barrier to collaboration is often pride, but would you rather have your pride or progress?

OUTSOURCE

You should consider outsourcing activities for a variety of reasons. They include activities that are outside your skill or knowledge, activities that can be performed much more efficiently and effectively by another person, and activities that you simply have not gotten yourself to do using other approaches. There's no shame in outsourcing your work for the sake of progress. With access to a global workforce through technology, you may be surprised to learn how many activities can be outsourced, from folding laundry to developing functional apps, there's virtually no limit.

PARTNER UP

When you repeatedly find yourself relying on Collaboration and Outsourcing to get similar items completed, it may be time to consider a more formal and structured Partnership. The advantages to Partnering Up are that you can learn each other's ways of working, set contractual expectations, negotiate special rates, and grow together.

BUILD UP CAPABILITY

As you work through all available options for getting things done and sustaining momentum, you should be asking, "How am I building capability?" This is not as critical for one-off and ad hoc activities, but for those activities that are strategic to you and your business, you should be building Capability while you rely on other methods in the interim. The long-term solution for any strategic activity is to build Capability.

BONUS AUDIT YOUR TIME

Tracking how you spend your time can be phenomenally eye-opening, but few people have done this. If you're stuck, one of the most useful things you can do, is to perform a time audit. Simply track your time for 3-7 days, use general labels with specific tags or notes, along with how you felt about the time spent. Then, after you have completed the tracking, review it. Not only will this make your successes and your struggles visible, it will help you identify patterns, bottlenecks, and tendencies to either encourage or discourage.