

PRODUCTIVITY PRIMER

5 tricks for an efficient morning at work

New York City–based time-management expert **Eva Wisnik** gets more done before lunch than most people do all day. (Seriously!) She tells us how to start the day like a type A.

WRITTEN BY Yelena Moroz Alpert



1 | get your head in the game

As tempting as it is to keep your brain shut off until the moment you sit down at your desk, you'll be more effective with some forethought. The night before, or on your morning commute, picture the day ahead and sketch out a plan. If you discover that you're going to be chained to your desk for eight hours, do something nice for yourself before work. It will give you an energy spike and help you hit the ground running: Wear a favorite color, stop for fresh juice, or walk through the park instead of straight to the office. "When you start the morning in control and in a good mood," says Wisnik, "you tend to stay there."



2 | do the worst thing first

Avoiding a hated but manageable task (say, expense reports) can set you on a procrastination path. Knock it out right away or it could derail your whole to-do list.



3 | focus on critical e-mails

Just 30 percent of messages require an immediate response, says Wisnik. Flag important e-mails, then work your way through them before 11 A.M.

4 |

ID your top two

Name the two things that absolutely must get done that day: "those that give you a bad feeling in your stomach when you imagine not taking care of them," says Wisnik. Break them into small, manageable steps (in writing), and take action. Aim to complete both before lunch.

5

stop interrupting yourself

Making appointments, texting friends, placing online orders. "When these tasks pop into your head, you might feel like you have to act instantly or you'll forget," says Wisnik. But they'll eat up your morning. "Keep a piece of paper on your desk—I call mine 'the parking lot'—where you can jot down nonurgent personal to-dos and return to them later." The only interruptions in your morning work flow should be those that you can't control (like your boss stopping by to see you).

