



# Creating space for deep work in an always-on culture

**Deep work** is made up of tasks that require prolonged periods of time without distractions such as doing research, writing a story, strategic thinking, etc.

**Shallow work** is made up of tasks that can be done while you're distracted such as replying to emails and chat communications, entering data etc.

Source: "Deep Work. Rules For Focused Success In A Distracted World" (Cal Newport)

- What percentage of my work day or week is made up of **deep work**?  
What tasks are involved?

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- What percentage of my work day or week is made up of **shallow work**?  
What tasks are involved?

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- Given the responsibilities of my job, what would be a more **ideal balance of these types of work**?

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- When are my **energy levels** best for performing deep and shallow work?  
Deep work usually requires more energy and concentration, shallow work less.

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## *How can I create space and time for deep work?*

- Where will I work? (**location**)

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- **How much time** do I want to set aside? Be specific with duration of time and on what days.

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- Which **structures** do I need? For example, what digital tools need to be turned off?

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- What do I need to proactively **communicate to my team** members so I can feel at ease blocking off this time?

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### **After you have answered these questions, consider doing the following:**

- Block off deep work time in your calendar.
- Let your colleagues know that you need uninterrupted time. Be specific about how much time you need.
- Set boundaries. If someone interrupts you and you've confirmed it's not urgent, acknowledge them and ask to come back later or to send you a message through the digital channel you prefer.
- If you cannot disconnect fully from your digital devices, be clear about what channel you want colleagues to use for an emergency during your deep work time.
- Make sure to schedule a small break during (if more than an hour) or after your deep work to sustain it or to allow you to recover and switch to your next activity
- If you're not being productive during the time you set aside for yourself, don't force it. Accommodate yourself. Reschedule it for later in the day or in the week.

**Don't give up on yourself. We are not machines and we all live and work in different circumstances. Your answers or the suggestions above may be inaccessible or may not be possible all of the time. Try out what feels feasible.**

**Small can be big.**