

SHIP DECK

35 WAYS TO SHIP YOUR TO-DO LIST

WHEN YOU'RE PROCRASTINATING, THE UNIVERSE WILL HELP YOU SHIP IT.

1. PICK THE NEXT ITEM ON YOUR LIST.
 2. DRAW A CARD.
 3. SHIP IT THE CARD'S WAY.
- NO REDRAWS. NEXT ITEM, NEW CARD.

01 THE "C+ GRADE" PASS

THE MOVE: DO THIS TASK AT C+ QUALITY. NOT A+, NOT EVEN B. ASK: WHAT'S THE BARE-MINIMUM VERSION THAT STILL COUNTS AS DONE? DO EXACTLY THAT, THEN STOP.

WHY IT SHIPS: GOOD ENOUGH AND SHIPPED TODAY BEATS PERFECT AND STILL PENDING.

02 THE 60-SECOND SKELETON

THE MOVE: BEFORE YOU TOUCH ANYTHING, SPEND 60 SECONDS JOTTING THE 3 TO 5 STEPS THIS TASK TAKES. THEN WORK THEM TOP TO BOTTOM. NO RE-PLANNING ALONG THE WAY.

WHY IT SHIPS: A VISIBLE STRUCTURE TURNS ONE BIG THING INTO A FEW SMALL, OBVIOUS THINGS.

03 THE "CUT IT IN HALF" GUILLOTINE

THE MOVE: LOOK AT WHAT YOU PLANNED FOR THIS TASK AND CUT IT BY 50%. FEWER STEPS, FEWER DETAILS, SMALLER SCOPE. DO THE HALF THAT MATTERS MOST AND CALL IT DONE.

WHY IT SHIPS: MOST TASKS ARE BIGGER THAN THEY NEED TO BE. THE SMALLER VERSION SHIPS TODAY.

04 NO-BACKSPACE SPRINT

THE MOVE: FORWARD ONLY. NO REDOING, UNDOING, OR SECOND-GUESSING UNTIL THE TASK IS COMPLETE. MAKE EACH CALL ONCE AND KEEP MOVING. FIX ONLY WHAT TRULY MATTERS AT THE VERY END.

WHY IT SHIPS: DOING AND JUDGING AT THE SAME TIME DOUBLES THE WORK.

05 THE “STEAL YOUR OWN PAST”

THE MOVE: ASK: HOW DID I HANDLE SOMETHING LIKE THIS LAST TIME? COPY THAT APPROACH, TEMPLATE, OR ROUTINE AND FOLLOW IT EXACTLY. DON'T INVENT A NEW WAY TODAY.

WHY IT SHIPS: YOU'VE ALREADY SOLVED THIS ONCE. REUSE BEATS REINVENTION.

06 THE 5-MINUTE FUSE

THE MOVE: SET A 5-MINUTE TIMER AND GO ALL OUT UNTIL IT RINGS. NO PAUSING, NO SWITCHING. WHEN IT RINGS, RESET IT AND GO AGAIN. KEEP LIGHTING FUSES UNTIL IT'S SHIPPED.

WHY IT SHIPS: ANYONE CAN DO 5 MINUTES. STACK ENOUGH OF THEM AND ANYTHING GETS DONE.

07 THE ASSEMBLY LINE LOCK

THE MOVE: SCAN YOUR LIST FOR EVERY ITEM THAT RESEMBLES THIS ONE: SAME PLACE, SAME TOOLS, SAME KIND OF WORK. KNOCK THEM ALL OUT BACK-TO-BACK, LIKE A FACTORY CONVEYOR BELT.

WHY IT SHIPS: ONE SETUP, MANY FINISHES. YOUR BRAIN STAYS IN ONE GEAR.

08

THE “WORST VERSION FIRST”

THE MOVE: DO THE TASK BADLY ON PURPOSE. FAST, ROUGH, CLUNKY. GET A COMPLETE VERSION 0.1 DONE, THEN TAKE ONE QUICK PASS TO BRING IT UP TO ACCEPTABLE.

WHY IT SHIPS: FIXING SOMETHING THAT EXISTS IS 10X FASTER THAN CONJURING PERFECTION.

09

THE ARTIFICIAL EMERGENCY

THE MOVE: PRETEND YOU LEAVE FOR THE AIRPORT IN 22 MINUTES AND THIS HAS TO BE DONE FIRST. WHAT WOULD YOU SKIP? WHAT WOULD YOU SLAM THROUGH? SET A 22-MINUTE TIMER AND GO.

WHY IT SHIPS: URGENCY STRIPS OUT EVERYTHING THAT DOESN'T MATTER.

10

THE “SHIP ONE TO START”

THE MOVE: FIND THE SMALLEST PIECE OF THIS TASK YOU CAN FULLY FINISH IN UNDER 10 MINUTES. PUSH IT TO 100%. THEN THE NEXT PIECE. NEVER LEAVE A PIECE HALF-DONE.

WHY IT SHIPS: EVERY FINISHED PIECE IS PROGRESS YOU CAN'T LOSE, AND MOMENTUM FOR THE NEXT.

11

THE “DONE WHEN” DECLARATION

THE MOVE: BEFORE STARTING, SAY OR WRITE ONE SENTENCE: “THIS IS DONE WHEN ____.” MAKE IT CONCRETE AND CHECKABLE. THE MOMENT IT'S TRUE, STOP. EXTRAS GO ON THE LIST AS NEW ITEMS.

WHY IT SHIPS: A CLEAR FINISH LINE KEEPS THE TASK FROM QUIETLY GROWING.

12

THE RUBBER DUCK BRIEFING

THE MOVE: EXPLAIN OUT LOUD, IN 30 SECONDS, WHAT YOU'RE ABOUT TO DO AND HOW. TALK TO THE ROOM, A PET, OR A VOICE MEMO. THEN DO EXACTLY WHAT YOU JUST SAID.

WHY IT SHIPS: SAYING THE PLAN OUT LOUD MAKES IT REAL AND CUTS THE HESITATION.

13

THE ONE-THING LOCKDOWN

THE MOVE: UNTIL THIS TASK IS DONE, NOTHING ELSE EXISTS. SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS. PUT AWAY EVERYTHING THE TASK DOESN'T NEED, INCLUDING YOUR PHONE. NO CHECKING, NO SIDE TRIPS.

WHY IT SHIPS: UNDIVIDED ATTENTION FINISHES IN A FRACTION OF THE TIME.

14

THE 2-MINUTE ON-RAMP

THE MOVE: DO THE SMALLEST FIRST ACTION THIS TASK NEEDS, SOMETHING UNDER 2 MINUTES. THEN NAME THE NEXT SMALLEST ACTION AND DO THAT. REPEAT UNTIL YOU LOOK UP AND IT'S DONE.

WHY IT SHIPS: SMALL STEPS NEVER FEEL HEAVY, AND THEY ADD UP FAST.

15

THE NO-RESEARCH RULE

THE MOVE: DO THIS TASK WITH ONLY WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW AND HAVE ON HAND. NO LOOKING THINGS UP, NO GATHERING MORE. WHEN A QUESTION COMES UP, MAKE YOUR BEST GUESS AND KEEP GOING.

WHY IT SHIPS: YOU USUALLY KNOW ENOUGH. EXTRA RESEARCH IS OFTEN STALLING IN DISGUISE.

16

THE CALENDAR CONTRACT

THE MOVE: GIVE THIS TASK AN EXACT START TIME AND END TIME TODAY. SET ALARMS FOR BOTH. WHEN THE FIRST RINGS, START. WHEN THE SECOND RINGS, SHIP WHATEVER YOU HAVE.

WHY IT SHIPS: A TASK WITH A TIME SLOT GETS DONE. A TASK WITH “LATER” DOESN’T.

17

THE BACKWARDS BUILD

THE MOVE: PICTURE THE TASK FINISHED. ASK: WHAT’S THE LAST STEP RIGHT BEFORE DONE? AND THE ONE BEFORE THAT? WORK BACK TO RIGHT NOW, THEN DO THE STEPS IN ORDER.

WHY IT SHIPS: WORKING BACK FROM DONE REVEALS THE SHORTEST PATH AND SKIPS THE DETOURS.

18

THE 25-MINUTE BUDGET

THE MOVE: THIS TASK GETS 25 MINUTES, PERIOD. SET A TIMER. WHEN IT RINGS, WHATEVER EXISTS IS THE VERSION YOU SHIP. FINISH EARLY? SHIP EARLY.

WHY IT SHIPS: CONSTRAINTS FORCE DECISIONS THAT PERFECTIONISM NEVER WILL.

19

THE SPEED RUN

THE MOVE: GUESS HOW LONG THIS TASK WILL TAKE YOU. START A STOPWATCH AND TRY TO BEAT YOUR OWN GUESS. PLAY IT LIKE A GAME. NO PAUSING THE CLOCK.

WHY IT SHIPS: A GAME MAKES SPEED FEEL FUN INSTEAD OF STRESSFUL.

20 THE TOUCH-IT-ONCE RULE

THE MOVE: ONCE YOU START THIS TASK, YOU DON'T STOP UNTIL IT'S DONE. NO "I'LL COME BACK TO IT." NO PARKING IT HALFWAY. START IT, STAY ON IT, FINISH IT IN ONE GO.

WHY IT SHIPS: EVERY RESTART COSTS WARM-UP TIME. ONE PASS IS THE CHEAPEST PATH.

21 THE SOUNDTRACK SPRINT

THE MOVE: PICK ONE SONG, PLAYLIST, OR ALBUM. HIT PLAY AND START THE TASK. YOUR GOAL IS TO BE DONE BEFORE THE MUSIC ENDS. NO PAUSING, NO SKIPPING BACK.

WHY IT SHIPS: MUSIC GIVES YOU A CLOCK YOU CAN FEEL AND A FINISH LINE YOU CAN HEAR.

22 THE LAZY GENIUS ROUTE

THE MOVE: ASK: WHAT'S THE EASIEST POSSIBLE WAY TO GET THIS DONE? NOT THE BEST WAY, NOT THE PROPER WAY. THE LAZIEST METHOD THAT STILL COUNTS. DO IT THAT WAY.

WHY IT SHIPS: THE EASY WAY GETS DONE. THE RIGHT WAY GETS POSTPONED.

23 THE COUNTDOWN LAUNCH

THE MOVE: COUNT DOWN OUT LOUD: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. ON 1, PHYSICALLY START THE TASK. NO THINKING BETWEEN THE COUNTDOWN AND THE FIRST MOVE. THEN JUST KEEP GOING.

WHY IT SHIPS: THE COUNTDOWN GETS YOU MOVING BEFORE HESITATION CAN SPEAK UP.

24

THE BRIBE

THE MOVE: PICK A SMALL REWARD BEFORE YOU START: THE GOOD COFFEE, AN EPISODE, A WALK OUTSIDE. YOU ONLY GET IT WHEN THIS TASK IS DONE. NAME IT OUT LOUD, THEN GO EARN IT.

WHY IT SHIPS: A CLEAR PAYOFF GIVES YOUR BRAIN A REASON TO HURRY.

25

THE HALF-TIME RULE

THE MOVE: ESTIMATE HOW LONG THIS TASK SHOULD TAKE. NOW CUT THAT IN HALF. THAT'S YOUR DEADLINE. SET A TIMER AND FIGURE OUT HOW TO SHIP INSIDE IT.

WHY IT SHIPS: WORK EXPANDS TO FILL THE TIME YOU GIVE IT. SO GIVE IT LESS.

26

THE DELETE-A-STEP AUDIT

THE MOVE: LIST THE STEPS YOU WERE PLANNING. CROSS OUT ANY STEP NOBODY WOULD NOTICE WAS MISSING. DO ONLY WHAT'S LEFT.

WHY IT SHIPS: MOST OF THE WEIGHT WAS OPTIONAL ALL ALONG.

27

THE PING-PONG SPRINT

THE MOVE: ALTERNATE: 10 MINUTES ON THIS TASK, 2 MINUTES OFF. REPEAT UNTIL IT'S DONE. THE BREAKS ARE MANDATORY, EVEN WHEN YOU'RE ON A ROLL.

WHY IT SHIPS: SHORT BURSTS WITH BUILT-IN BREAKS KEEP YOUR PACE HIGH FROM START TO FINISH.

28 THE NARRATED SESSION

THE MOVE: NARRATE WHAT YOU'RE DOING OUT LOUD AS YOU DO IT, LIKE A COOKING SHOW. "NOW I'M STARTING. NOW I'M ON THE FIRST PART." KEEP TALKING UNTIL IT'S DONE.

WHY IT SHIPS: WHEN YOUR MOUTH LEADS, YOUR HANDS FOLLOW, AND YOUR MIND CAN'T WANDER.

29 THE PRO'S PLAYBOOK

THE MOVE: PICTURE A CALM PROFESSIONAL WHO DOES THIS EXACT TASK EVERY DAY. HOW WOULD THEY HANDLE IT, WITHOUT FUSS OR OVERTHINKING? DO IT THEIR WAY, AT THEIR PACE.

WHY IT SHIPS: BORROWING A PRO'S CONFIDENCE SKIPS THE SECOND-GUESSING.

30 THE FINISH LINE PREVIEW

THE MOVE: BEFORE STARTING, SPEND 30 SECONDS PICTURING THIS TASK DONE: WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE, HOW IT FEELS TO CROSS IT OFF. THEN TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD THAT PICTURE.

WHY IT SHIPS: ONCE YOU CAN SEE WHERE YOU'RE GOING, EVERY STEP GETS OBVIOUS.

31 THE MISE EN PLACE

THE MOVE: BEFORE STEP ONE, GATHER EVERYTHING THIS TASK NEEDS: TOOLS, INFO, SUPPLIES. SET IT ALL WITHIN ARM'S REACH. ONCE YOU START, NO GETTING UP TO FETCH ANYTHING.

WHY IT SHIPS: EVERY TRIP TO FETCH SOMETHING IS A CHANCE TO WANDER OFF.

32 THE FIFTY-WORD CAP

THE MOVE: BEFORE STARTING, SET A HARD CAP ON HOW YOU'LL DO IT: 50 WORDS, 5 MOVES, 3 TRIPS, ONE PASS. PICK THE NUMBER NOW, THEN SHIP THE WHOLE TASK INSIDE IT.

WHY IT SHIPS: A TIGHT LIMIT FORCES THE SIMPLEST VERSION, FAST.

33 THE 11-STAR SCALE

THE MOVE: SPEND 30 SECONDS PICTURING THE 1-STAR, 5-STAR, AND ABSURD 11-STAR VERSIONS OF THIS TASK. THEN DO THE 6-STAR VERSION: ONE NOTCH ABOVE ADEQUATE, NO MORE.

WHY IT SHIPS: SEEING THE WHOLE RANGE MAKES "GOOD ENOUGH" EASY TO PICK, AND EASY TO STOP AT.

34 THE TIDY FIRST

THE MOVE: SPEND UP TO 2 MINUTES ON ONE CHANGE THAT MAKES THIS TASK EASIER: CLEAR THE SPACE, OPEN WHAT YOU NEED, SORT THE PILE. THEN DO THE TASK, WHICH IS NOW THE EASY VERSION.

WHY IT SHIPS: MAKE THE CHANGE EASY, THEN MAKE THE EASY CHANGE.

35 THE PAPER CLIP PILE

THE MOVE: SET OUT ONE OBJECT (A CLIP, A COIN, A STICKY NOTE) FOR EVERY STEP THIS TASK TAKES. MOVE ONE TO A SECOND PILE AS YOU FINISH EACH STEP. DONE WHEN THE FIRST PILE IS EMPTY.

WHY IT SHIPS: PROGRESS YOU CAN SEE AND TOUCH KEEPS YOU MOVING TO THE END.