

# Building Writing Habits

So, you want to write more...

But it's hard to force yourself to sit down and write, especially when you may not be feeling all that creative. Just like exercise, developing your writing focus is a skill that takes daily work. You can't expect to always feel motivated, or that each writing session will result in an amazing word count. However, setting the groundwork to be consistent with your writing will produce a life-long habit for a deeper creative output.

Steps to create writing habits:

- **Know When You Think Best**

Life is busy, and we don't always get to write when we want, but try to evaluate when your optimal time to write would be. In the morning, in the evening, during lunch, whatever time your brain works best would be the best time to prioritize writing in your day.

- **Evaluate Your Time**

Now that you know when your ideal writing time would be, adjust your schedule around that time. It may not always be possible, but try as you can to organize the rest of your busy life to fit, and be willing to let go of other things to prioritize writing.

- **Set Appropriate Expectations**

As you evaluate your schedule, be realistic with your expectations. If you just want to write as a hobby, a weekend writing session may be sufficient. If you are trying to develop a writing career, a daily habit is preferable. If you're a slow editor, be willing to adjust your expectations of how much you can feasibly accomplish at any given writing session. Be honest with yourself, and with what you want to accomplish, and submit to your limitations.

- **Set a Schedule**

You don't have to write and edit every day, but you should be disciplined in doing something whenever you had identified as your writing time. Being disciplined creates a habit, and that habit will transcend and carry you through a writing slump or creative pause. In the beginning, it may be helpful to use physical reminders to write (like a checklist, an alarm, or a word count tracker) but as time goes on such things may be less necessary as you become used to writing at your set times.

- **Set Aside Electronics**

Focus. It's difficult, and writing is hard, and media is easier, but to create effective habits you need to focus and do them. The more you train your brain to focus, the easier it will become.

- **Create Writing Preparation Habits**

Know what helps you get into the writing mood. Perhaps for you, it's coffee and a snack, or a certain playlist, or a certain seat in your home. Whatever it is, try to do the same thing before each session to prepare yourself mentally for the task that you have at hand.

- **Experiment with How You Write**

Try dictation, a different plotting method, or a different editing technique. Keeping things fresh, and trying different methods, can help you learn how you write best.

Learn your processes, and embrace them. Take each day at a time, each week at a time, and each year at a time. Over time, your writing habits will help you move toward your writing goals, and you will be grateful that you started those habits today.

Happy writing!  
Lydia MacClaren