

Upgrade Program Productivity Plan

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Introduction

This document is part of a series of upgrade plans for every [area](#) of your life. It's broadly designed for a single, middle-class, 30-something living in a major city in a developed country.

Please go to "File" > "Make a copy" and make a copy of it for yourself. Then fill it out section by section according to your particular needs and circumstances. Perhaps add sections or items, delete them, change the order, and so on.

Your aim should be to make the plan as applicable and useful to you as possible. You should not follow the plan blindly—think it through for yourself.

Note that this process might be challenging. You might need to teach yourself things you aren't very knowledgeable about yet. You might feel like you need to do preliminary work in a different life area first. That's okay. Figure out broadly what makes sense for you, operationalize that understanding as specific actions in the [Actions](#) section, and then do them.

If it feels overwhelming, just start with the parts you find most valuable and do what you can. Tackle the rest over time. It may also help to set aside a dedicated [day](#) to work exclusively on this by yourself or with friends. Or you may choose to enlist an [UP Coach](#) to co-design and execute this plan alongside you.

Epistemic Status

This is an overview of how confident the principal [author](#) is in this plan.

- Generally very high confidence in plan
- Based on 20+ years of personal experimentation around productivity, coaching 100+ others on productivity, 20+ years of daily tracking of either time or goals, 8 years of tracking every task down to the 5-15 minute interval, extensive experience modeling out productivity optimizations for self and dozens of coaching clients, developing [UP Focus Day \(outcome data\)](#), developing [UP Focus Week](#), and developing UP itself ([outcome data](#))

Objectives

Decide what objectives you have with this plan and rank them in order of importance. Below are some sample objectives.

1. Efficiently accomplish everything that needs to get done
 - a. Minimize time and money inputs for each task or project
 - b. Maximize outcomes for each task or project
2. Build optimal productivity system

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- a. Ensure optimal aided personal performance (e.g., with external tools)
 - i. Ensure optimal unaided personal performance (e.g., without external tools)

Metrics

Decide what metrics you will use to evaluate the effectiveness of this plan. Also include the frequency in which you'll evaluate those metrics. For example, ad hoc, once, hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually or per decade. Below are some sample metrics.

- Productivity Rating: How would you rate your productivity, on a 1-10 scale?
- Number of Completed Projects
- Number of Completed Tasks
- [RescueTime Productivity Pulse](#)
- Average Hours of Logged Work
- Average Hours of Highest Value Work
- Average Hours of Lower Value Work
- Average Hours of Wasted Time
- Average Weekly Hours of Free Time

Values

List all of your relevant values and rank them in order of importance. Below are some sample values.

1. Effectiveness
2. Efficiency
3. Accomplishment
4. Time
5. Focus
6. Discipline
7. Balance

Value Analysis

List and then analyze all of the costs and benefits of this plan. Potentially also estimate expected value, cost-benefit, return on investment, and/or net present value.

- Time costs: 1 - 5,000 hours
- Financial costs: \$0 - \$100,000,000 dollars (e.g., all environmental costs like homes and offices, all transportation costs like cars and planes, all personal team costs, computers, phones, white boards, apps, books, courses, performance coaches, productivity coaches, time tracking software, focusing software, nootropics, etc.)

- Benefits: \$X in potentially extremely large objective and subjective benefits (e.g., compensation, status, emotional well-being, etc.)

Strategies

Decide on your high-level strategies for achieving your objectives. Below are some sample strategies.

Key People

- Do the work on your own
- Outsource some or most of the work to experts (e.g., performance coaches, productivity coaches, etc.)
- Outsource some or most of the work to assistants

Key Timings

- Make incremental changes every day until you reach your objectives
- Make as many changes as you can over a set period (e.g., one month, six months or one year)
- Make changes as intensively as you can until you've reached your objectives

Actions

List the specific actions you will take to achieve your objectives. You should add these tasks to your project management system unless you are choosing to do them now. Below is an example sequence of actions you might take.

1. Describe your [mental model](#) of personal productivity
 - a. Create a visual representation from memory without referencing this plan or outside sources of information
 - b. Create a new visual representation after thoroughly studying this plan and any relevant sources of information
 - c. Pay special attention to the improvements in the second version as incorporating those new insights may be crucial to the success of your plan
2. Finish every section of this plan, including the [assessments](#), [tools](#), and [resources](#) below
3. Do an [UP Day](#) and track all of your inputs (i.e., hours in) and outputs (i.e., tasks done) to get a baseline level of your productivity
 - a. Compare your [RescueTime](#) or similar score on that day to your average
4. Analyze your workflow for a set amount of time (e.g., one normal week), identify where productivity could be improved, and begin implementing changes as appropriate
5. Develop your [exocortex](#)

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- a. Load every project and task you have into your trusted [project management system](#)
- b. Delegate all projects and tasks to your team or future self as desired
- c. Ensure you have the best possible productivity tools you can afford (e.g., best in class computer, single or multiple monitors, ergonomic mouse, phone, internet, etc.)
 - i. Ensure you keep them well updated with anti-virus software, VPNs, etc.
 - ii. Ensure you clean their caches and empty their trash bins on a regular basis
 - i. Ensure you back up your computer and phone monthly or quarterly (e.g., [Google Takeout](#), [iCloud](#), etc.)
6. Develop your [personal team](#)
 - a. Ensure your team is capable of cost-effectively handling every planned and unplanned project and task you have
7. Improve your [behavioral mastery](#) (e.g., habits, rituals, and routines)
 - a. Set your optimal schedule by experimenting with multiple [UP Days](#) and seeing what's optimal for you (e.g., work cycle lengths, break lengths, etc.)
 - i. Begin living by your optimal schedule
 - b. Generally speaking, tackle your most important thing (MIT) first thing in the morning
 - c. Practice single-handling most of the the time
 - d. Master keyboard and voice command shortcuts
 - e. Clean your computer, phone, tablet, physical, and other desktops at the end of each working day
 - f. Clean your inboxes at the end of each working day to “inbox zen” (i.e., completely empty email, Slack, WhatsApp, etc.)
 - i. Snooze the incomplete items to a future date
8. Improve your [time management](#)
9. Improve your [personal environments](#), especially your office(s)
10. Improve your [sleep](#)
11. Improve your [health](#)
12. Improve your [fitness](#)
13. Improve your [nutrition](#)
14. Improve your [communication skills](#)
15. Improve your [life work](#)

Schedule

Decide on which days you will take which actions. You should add these dates to your calendar now.

- [Date]: Finalize plan
- [Dates]: Execute plan
- [Dates]: Review plan's outcomes

Predictions

Predict how well you will do in achieving your objectives.

- [Name]: I predict with [X]% confidence that I will [Y] by [Z].
- [Team Member's Name]: I predict with [X]% confidence that [Name] will [Y] by [Z].
- [Team Member's Name]: I predict with [X]% confidence that [Name] will [Y] by [Z].

- Combined: We predict with an average [X]% confidence that [Name] will [Y] by [Z].

Outcomes

Objectively record how well you achieved your objectives.

- [Date #1]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #2]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #3]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #4]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #5]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #6]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #7]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #8]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #9]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #10]: [Outcomes]

Assessments

List all of the assessments you might take to understand how you're doing compared to your objectives. Below are some sample assessments.

- [Epstein Motivation Competencies Inventory for Individuals \(EMCI-i\)](#): an inventory of eight types of skills and knowledge areas that help people boost their motivation or stay motivated

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- [Locus of Control Scale](#): a test of the degree to which you believe that you have control over the outcome of events in your life, as opposed to external forces beyond your control
- [RescueTime Productivity Pulse](#): a score that helps you understand where your time is spent while working on your computer or mobile device (requires app download) (UP Top Pick)
- [Team Development Behaviors Assessment](#): an assessment to help discover your level of competency in empowering and delegating so you can tailor your learning to your specific needs
- [Team Effectiveness Assessment](#): an assessment to help uncover common teamwork problems that your team may be experiencing

Tools

List all of the tools you might use to achieve your objectives. Below are some sample tools.

- [4K Download](#)
- [8,760 Hours](#)
- [Accountable2You](#)
- [ActiveInbox](#)
- [Adblock Browser](#)
- [AdBlock Plus](#)
- [Adobe Acrobat](#)
- [Amazing Marvin](#)
- [Anker](#)
- [Any.do](#)
- [Asana](#)
- [Astrid](#)
- [ATracker](#)
- [Aukey](#)
- [Autofocus Time Management System](#)
- [AutoHotKey](#)
- [Avg](#)
- [Avira](#)
- [Basecamp](#)
- [Better Accountability](#)
- [Boomerang](#)
- [Box](#)
- [Bragi](#)
- [Calendly](#)
- [Carrot](#)
- [Caveday](#)
- [CCleaner](#)

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- [Clear Todos](#)
- [ClickUp](#)
- [Clockify](#)
- [Coach](#)
- [Coffitivity](#)
- [Cold Turkey](#)
- [Computer Hard Disk Drive](#)
- [Commit Action](#)
- [Craft](#)
- [Dan](#)
- [Descript](#)
- [Discord](#)
- [Distraction Free for YouTube](#)
- [Dropbox](#)
- [Due](#)
- [Dynalist](#)
- [Easier Way \(Focus\)](#)
- [Easier Way \(Performance\)](#)
- [Email Meter](#)
- [EndNote Click](#)
- [Epic Win](#)
- [External Hard Disk Drive](#)
- [External Solid State Drive](#)
- [FB Purity](#)
- [Finilize](#)
- [Fireflies](#)
- [Foci](#)
- [Focus Booster](#)
- [Focused Space](#)
- [Focusmate](#)
- [FocusMe](#)
- [Folder](#)
- [Followup](#)
- [FollowUpThen](#)
- [Forest](#)
- [Freedom](#)
- [Freewrite](#)
- [Gather](#)
- [Gmail](#)
- [Gmail Zero](#)
- [Goalify](#)
- [GoalsWon](#)
- [GoodNotes](#)

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- [Google Calendar](#)
- [Google Docs](#)
- [Google Drive](#)
- [Google Recorder](#)
- [Google Sheets](#)
- [Google Slides](#)
- [Google Suite](#)
- [Guesstimate](#)
- [Habit List](#)
- [Habitica](#)
- [Happy Scribe](#)
- [Hey](#)
- [Hubstaff](#)
- [I Done This](#)
- [Imperative](#)
- [Inbox When Ready for Gmail](#)
- [Intend](#)
- [Jira](#)
- [Kanban board](#)
- [Kanban Flow](#)
- [Kaspersky](#)
- [Krisp](#)
- [Lantern](#)
- [Launchy](#)
- [LeechBlock](#)
- [Legend](#)
- [Leverage](#)
- [Lifetick](#)
- [Logseq](#)
- [Loop Habit Tracker](#)
- [Magic](#)
- [Mailstrom](#)
- [ManicTime](#)
- [Marker](#)
- [Mem](#)
- [Moleskine](#)
- [Momentum Dash](#)
- [Motion](#)
- [News Feed Eradicator for Facebook](#)
- [Nifty](#)
- [Nirvana](#)
- [Notifications Off](#)
- [Notion](#)

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- [Nudgemail](#)
- [Obsidian](#)
- [Office Lens](#)
- [Omnifocus](#)
- [OneDrive](#)
- [OneTab](#)
- [Optimized](#)
- [Otter](#)
- [Outlook](#)
- [Org Mode](#)
- [Paper](#)
- [Pocket](#)
- [Podio](#)
- [Polar](#)
- [Polymail](#)
- [Postlight Reader](#)
- [Project Management Tools](#)
- [RavPower](#)
- [Rebump](#)
- [RescueTime](#)
- [Rev](#)
- [Roam](#)
- [Rofocus](#)
- [SaneBox](#)
- [SavvyCal](#)
- [Schedule](#)
- [ScheduleOnce](#)
- [Screen Time](#)
- [Screen Time Genie](#)
- [SkedPal](#)
- [Smartsheet](#)
- [Sonix](#)
- [Standard Notes](#)
- [StayFocusd](#)
- [StickK](#)
- [Streaks](#)
- [Supernotes](#)
- [TabSnooze \(latest\)](#)
- [Tana](#)
- [Tempo](#)
- [The Done App](#)
- [The Easier Way \(Focus\)](#)
- [The Productivity Owl](#)

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- [Thrive Away](#)
- [Timeboxing](#)
- [Time Doctor](#)
- [Timely](#)
- [Todoist](#)
- [Toodledo](#)
- [Trello](#)
- [Tresorit](#)
- [UnDistracted](#)
- [Unibox](#)
- [Unroll.Me](#)
- [UP Annual Goals Dashboard](#)
- [UP Annual Plan](#)
- [UP Assessments](#)
- [UP Behavioral Plan](#)
- [UP Cognitive Plan](#)
- [UP Curriculum](#)
- [UP Day \(Personal Hackathon\)](#)
- [UP Focus Week](#)
- [UP Sleep Plan](#)
- [UP Team Plan](#)
- [UP Tools](#)
- [Verbit](#)
- [Video Speed Controller for YouTube](#)
- [Vigo](#)
- [Virtual assistant](#)
- [Vitamin-R](#)
- [WeWork](#)
- [Whiteboard](#)
- [Workflowy](#)
- [Workfrom](#)
- [Wrike](#)
- [XMind](#)
- [YearCompass](#)
- [Zapier](#)

List all of the accountability specific tools you might use to achieve your objectives. Note these are duplicates from above.

- [Accountable2You](#)
- [Better Accountability](#)
- [Coach](#)
- [Coach.me](#)

- [Commit Action](#)
- [Discord](#)
 - [Effective Altruism Co-Working Discord server](#)
- [Gather](#)
 - [Effective Altruism Gather lounge](#)
- [Finalize](#)
- [FocusMate](#)
 - [Effective Altruism FocusMate community group](#)
- [GoalsWon](#)
- [RescueTime](#)
- [Virtual assistant](#)

Resources

List all of the resources you might use to achieve your objectives. Below are some sample resources.

- [Productivity Techniques Infographic](#)
- [Single Tasking](#)
- [Zettelkasten method](#)

Notes

Add any random thoughts, questions, uncertainties, etc.

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