

7 Ways to Grow the Action Habit



People at the top of every profession share one quality — *they get things done*. This ability supercedes intelligence, talent, and connections in determining the size of your salary and the speed of your advancement.

Despite the simplicity of this concept there is a perpetual shortage of people who excel at getting results. The action habit — **the habit of putting ideas into action now** — is essential to getting things done. Here are 7 ways you can grow the action habit:

1. Don't wait until conditions are perfect – If you're waiting to start until conditions are perfect, you probably never will. There will always be something that isn't quite right. Either the timing is off, the market is down, or there's too much competition. In the real world there is no perfect time to start. You have to take action and deal with problems as they arise. [The best time to start was last year. The second best time is right now.](#)

2. Be a doer - Practice doing things rather than thinking about them. Do you want to start exercising? Do you have a great idea to pitch your boss? Do it today. The longer an idea sits in your head without being acted on, the weaker it becomes. After a few days the details gets hazy. After a week it's forgotten completely. By becoming a doer you'll get more done and stimulate new ideas in the process.

3. Remember that ideas alone don't bring success – Ideas are important, but they're only valuable after they've been implemented. One average idea that's been put into action is more valuable than a dozen brilliant ideas that you're saving for "some other day" or the "right opportunity". If you have an idea the you really believe in, do something about it. Unless you take action it will never go anywhere.

4. Use action to cure fear – Have you ever noticed that the most difficult part of public speaking is waiting for your turn to speak? Even professional speakers and actors experience pre-performance anxiety. Once they get started the fear disappears. Action is the best cure for fear. The most difficult time to take action is the very first time. After the ball is rolling, you'll build confidence and things will keep getting easier. Kill fear by taking action and build on that confidence.

5. Start your creative engine mechanically – One of the biggest misconceptions about creative work is that it can only be done when inspiration strikes. If you wait for inspiration to slap you in the face, your work sessions will be few and far between. Instead of waiting, start your creative motor mechanically. If you need to write something, force yourself to sit down and write. Put pen to paper. Brainstorm. Doodle. By moving your hands you'll stimulate the flow of ideas and inspire yourself.

6. Live in the present - Focus on what you can do in the present moment. Don't worry about what you should have done last week or what you might be able to do tomorrow. The only time you can affect is the present. If you speculate too much about the past or the future you won't get anything done. Tomorrow or next week frequently turns into never.

7. Get down to business immediately – It's common practice for people to socialize and make small talk at the beginning of meetings. The same is true for individual workers. How often do you check email or RSS feeds before doing any real work? These distractions will cost you serious time if you don't bypass them and get down to business immediately. By becoming someone who gets to the point you'll be more productive and people will look to you as a leader.

It takes courage to take action without instructions from the person in charge. Perhaps that's why initiative is a rare quality that's coveted by managers and executives everywhere. Seize the initiative. When you have a good idea, start implementing it without being told. Once people see you're serious about getting things done they'll want to join in. The people at the top don't have anyone telling them what to do. If you want to join them, you should get used to acting independently.