

Ask the Expert Slow Productivity

In the UK, 79% of workers have experienced burnout. Author Cal Newport argues that this could be because of an overwhelming 'activity-based' type of productivity that is not sustainable in the long term.

Moving to 'outcome-based' slow productivity can help. This approach values slowness and quality, allowing you to produce meaningful work you can be proud of.

"The goal of slow productivity is to free people from the dehumanising grip of pseudo-productivity"

[Cal Newport, Author of Slow Productivity](#)

Coach yourself questions

How is your workload making you feel?



What is your motivation for experimenting with slow productivity?



Ideas for action



1. Do fewer things

Having a big to-do list results in admin overload which can get in the way of original thinking. Doing fewer things at once means you'll accomplish more over time.

Split up your to-do list

- Split your to-do list into two by creating a list of what you're 'actively working on' and a list of what you're 'waiting to work on'
- Once you've finished a task on your 'actively working on' list, move on to a task from the other list
- Sharing your lists with others on your team helps you to stay accountable and increases transparency.

2. Work at a natural pace

This looks like not rushing but letting your most important work unfold. Having a realistic and sustainable timeline for tasks is 'conducive to brilliance'.

One for you, one for me

- Every time a meeting goes into your diary, have a meeting with yourself straight afterwards to reduce the admin overload accumulating.
- Vary your pace**
- Redesign your work week or work year by varying the intensity of your effort. This may look like having Freedom Fridays or Slow Septembers.

3. Obsess over quality

Obsess over the quality of your work, even if this means missing out on new opportunities. More successful outcomes increases your career freedom.

Challenge and build

- Have a small community of people around you who can challenge and build on your work. This helps you to do the things you do best, better.

Invest in a quality notebook

- Taking pride in your tools, helps you to adopt a 'quality mindset'. This can encourage you to care about standards and take your work seriously.

Slow productivity for teams

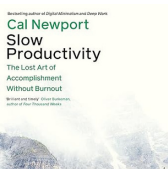
Manage workplace expectations around slow productivity by asking:

- How do we measure success?
- How do we manage team workload day-to-day?

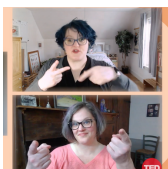
Team workload management such as regularly updating a collaborative 'stuff-to-sort' list can help teams be efficient. Look forward and ask your teams:

- What will we be proud of at the end of the quarter?
- What do we need to produce to achieve that?

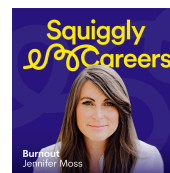
Recommended resources



**Slow Productivity:
The Lost Art of
Accomplishment
Without Burnout**
by Cal Newport



**The cure for burnout
(hint: it isn't self-care)**
A relatable Ted Talk
conversation with Emily
and Amelia Nagoski



Sarah talks about how to move beyond burnout with author of **The Burnout Epidemic**, Jennifer Moss on **#288** of Squiggly Careers