

DEEP WORK by Cal Newport

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- **DEEP WORK** is the ability to focus without distraction on a cognitively demanding task.
- It's a skill that allows you to **master** complicated information **and produce** better results in less time.
- **Formal definition of deep work:** professional activities performed in a state of distraction-free concentration that push your cognitive capabilities to their limit. These efforts create new value, improve your skill, and are hard to replicate.
- Most people feel busy because they are engaged in **SHALLOW WORK**.
- **Formal definition of shallow work:** non-cognitively demanding, logistical style tasks, often performed while distracted. These efforts tend to not create much new value in the work and are easy to replicate.
- To remain valuable in the economy, you just master the **art of quickly learning** complicated things - because things are changing so fast.
- If what you're producing or doing is mediocre, then you're in trouble, as it's too easy for your audience or customers to find a better **alternative elsewhere**.
- To succeed you have to **produce the absolute best** stuff you're capable of producing – this requires deep work.
- To learn requires **intense concentration**.
- Intense concentration leads to **increased myelination of neurons** in the brain (this means new neural circuits are formed and the speed of information transmission in the brain is enhanced).

- **The law of productivity:**
 - **High quality work produced = time spent x intensity of focus**
- There is “**attention residue**” of switching tasks. This makes multi-tasking extremely inefficient, avoid it if you want to produce your best work.
- By working on a single hard task for a long time without switching, you minimize the negative impact of attention residue from other obligations, allowing you to **maximize your performance** on one task.
- Working in a state of semi-distraction is potentially **devastating** to your performance.
- **Example:** checking social media or email without responding or being able to deal with something right away leaves attention residue and dampens your performance.
- **Main point:** to produce at your peak level you need to work for extended periods with full concentration on a single task free from distraction.
- **There is a scientific correlation between deep work and perceived happiness.**
- Deep work is an activity well suited to generate what some researchers call **flow state**.
- Building your working life around the experience of flow produced by deep work is a proven path to **deep satisfaction**.

Reference:

Newport, Cal. (2016). *Deep Work: Rules for Success in a Distracted World*. New York, NY: Grand Central Publishing.

For more information about the book:

<https://www.calnewport.com/books/deep-work/>

YouTube Videos that further discuss the concept and practical strategies:

Video Summary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTaJhjQHcf8>

TED Talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E7hkPZ-HTk>

Impact Theory: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0KQHRfh2mA>

Info College Geek: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZpczNS-ky0&t=115s>

Afford Anything podcast: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EwwjQ2Kld0>