

## Tips for Planned Incremental Approaches to Projects

Definitions:

Project session – A single time block that serves as an increment.

Project segment – A part of the project that serves as an increment.

**Time-guided Model.** Works well when the project has more clearly defined components to complete for project success.

1. Create project *sessions* of 25-45 minutes each in your calendar. You decide whether 25, 45, or something between will work best for you. Avoid stacking the sessions in a back-to-back fashion, especially if they are related to the same project. You could do as many as two sessions per day per project. You could have more sessions in a day if their projects are unrelated.
2. Divide the project work into *segments*. List these segments in sequence in which you need to do them. Size each *segment* so you can complete it in a single *session*.
3. As you end a session,
  - a. Celebrate what you achieved in the session.
  - b. If you did not complete the segment, make notes to bookmark your next starting point and look ahead to your next project session. This evaluation and bookmarking will help you maintain a sense of progress and avoid the feeling that every session starts "flat footed."
4. You will tend to overestimate what you can accomplish in the time allowed. As a result, you may not finish a segment in one session and will need to push some work to the next session. You will need to adjust your previously established segments as a part of the process. Your bookmark notes will help here.

**Quantity-Guided Model** – Works well with more creative projects that require consistent work, but the segments are not as clearly defined.

1. Session times are still held to less than 45 minutes to manage fatigue. You may feel like you can go longer in a single session, but the long-term effects on your energy and project quality will not be as desirable.
2. Quantities in a session.
  - a. Complete as much as possible in a session. Use a single project session to do as much of the project work as you can in the time allowed. Then stop, assess, bookmark for the next session, and walk away from the project until the next scheduled session.
  - b. OR commit to goals like "write 300 words" to complete in a single session.
3. In the next scheduled session, use your bookmarks to help you efficiently pick up where you left off in the previous session.

You can combine the two approaches. The keys to using the incremental approach effectively are planning, patience, and discipline.

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