# Action Stacks - An ADHD Approach to Productivity

Decision fatigue. It's a very real phenomenon that psychologists have researched for quite a while. You know how you are tired at the end of a period of making a lot of decisions, so you start making worse and worse decisions by the time it's all over? That is exactly what decision fatigue is. It's when your brain takes energy to make decisions, The first few roll by easily, but after a while your brain is just a tad fed up with the exercise, and you start to get sloppy.

We all do.

So, I adopted the idea of action stacks, a quick reference for tedious, repetitive things I do regularly. Action stacks are also a way to write down your system so you don't have to constantly think, "Did I do all the things I needed to do..." They are there for you to follow so you can just check it off, clearing up your brain for other creative work.

## Action Stack Guidelines

As you go through the days, weeks, and months, note how many tasks you do that are repetitive. These are the things you find yourself doing all the time. It could be:

- **Prep work** for a class, presentation, etc.
- **Clean up tasks** closing procedures for the lab/office
- **Specific tasks** like entering receipts into accounting software
- **Processes** such as how you look for and apply to a grant or clean a specific piece of equipment

If you're like most people, there are a lot of things in your life that can fit into these categories. Let me give you a scenario that we worked through recently with one of the students.

> Jace is training to become a lab manager. So, I had him walk around the lab to do a "closing." This means he walks around the lab, puts things in their place, makes sure nothing dangerous is out, and any equipment that needs to be watched isn't turned on.

> I had him put together a check list of what he should look for as he goes through, getting pretty specific. It's all the way down to naming the individual machines he has to check and even turning on the alarm as he leaves.

This scenario fits into the clean up tasks.

## Take Action

I'm sure by now you can think of more than one thing that you could use this on. So, take notes.

Grab a pen and paper or open up your digital app of choice, then write down what you do, and the order you do it in.

The next time you go through the process, check your notes. Refine them until they are so exact you could hand them to a new assistant, and they could follow them to your satisfaction.

**Bonus: Eventually you could outsource yourself, thus giving you more free time.**

## Some tips on making successful action stacks

- Use bullet points.

- Use short phrases to describe every step.

- Group similar tasks together, i.e. things you normally do on a day of the week or things that you do to have a successful meeting.

- Reiterate the process and tweak your lists often.

- Make stacks for daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonal tasks.

- Put them in a place that is easy to refer to.

Need some examples? The next two pages are exactly what *I* used for my weekly stacks as a sole proprietor, then passed on to any assistants that I hired as a base to work on. They, in turn, would put their own together after they tweaked my systems to work for them while achieving the same goals.

# Systems for Day to Day Processes

## Accounting (Monday)

### Basic (10 – 20 minutes)

- Add receipts to Expensify
- Gather paper trail from printer, board
    - File receipts for utilities, pay cheques, etc.
- Check Expensify's mileage log
- Double check bank activities
- Add data to Annual Budget .ods sheet
- Make sure items paid for are being used.

### Grants (40 – 50 minutes)

- Internet/Library search for recent grants
- Glance through for eligible grants.
- Add eligible grants to Asana with due dates.
- Research company giving grant.
- Write essays/scripts for video to the company.
- Submit.

## Payroll (Tuesday)

### Payouts (15 – 20 minutes)

- Check email for invoices.
- Download invoices, look for duplicates.
- Cross reference posts to make sure published
- Check in the bill pay section and make sure not already paid.
- Pay using online bill pay
- Make sure to include invoice in notes, but leave a friendly memo to freelancers.
- Upload invoices to Expensify.

### Cash Flow (15 – 20 minutes)

- Check balance in bank
- Check expected new posts to payout.
- Make sure the money will be there.

## Blog Post Processing (Friday)

### Editing (5 – 20 minutes/post)

- Read, editing the article for obvious "oops"
    - Citations
    - Spelling/Grammar
    - Justified paragraph format
- Double check the citations to make sure they aren't shit science.
    - If PDF, download it to upload directly into media and link to it.
- Check category and tags
- Check SEO section for keywords and snippet preview.
- Add alt text to images
    - Double check license uses.

### Marketing (30 – 50 min/post)

- Adjust URL to make SEO friendly
- Create multiple social posts to share using these prompts
    - Pull quotes from post
    - Ask a relevant question?
    - Create mystery
    - Use passion
    - Issue a challenge - find alternative view for same topic
    - Summarise the science
    - Summarise the science and point out how it impacts society.
- Create images for each post using both images on post and new images to sprinkle in for the content types.
- Brainstorm content upgrade for the topic, spin one out if possible.
    - Add content upgrade as necessary
- Schedule as per editorial calendar

## Notes

# Systems for Day to Day Processes

## Socials

### Weekly (Tuesday)

- Schedule posts from previous week with the extra post prompts. (See blog processing.)
- Add landing pages to scheduler for jobs and freebies.
- Look for revelvant posts on others sites to surround the previous posts with. Summarise and schedule.

### Monthly (Last Thursday)

- Make and share inspirational quotes.
- Make and share science jokes/memes
- Questions and surveys.

## Site Admin

- Update plugins weekly
- Check Asana, pick one thing. Write it in the notes below.
- Teach self how to do it
- Work on it.
- Update one thing in store.
- Review systems and update iterations as necessary.
- Review reports and note changes.
- Create benchmarks and goals.

## Grace's Writing Process

### Pre-Writing (Quarterly)

- Look at products decide what will be the main focus to sell this quarter
- Use staircase and <that one sheet> to come up with post ideas
- Fill out blog post planner sheets for each post.
- Create content upgrades for each post or tie to previously made content upgrade.

### Writing (Weekly)

- Find 10 articles that I like the concept of and would like to research further. Save in Evernote with annotations.
- Research one concept further, finding 3 - 5 other sources to support it, 3 - 5 to refute it.
- Write outline and thesis.
- Flush out and cite properly.
- Submit for processing.

## Marketing Funnel

### Content Creation

- Choose big product or service to sell.
- Create bite size services for it (rate card)
- Create DIY version (ie interactive journal instead of teaching)
- Create freebie to use as a content upgrade.
- Create campaign to offer the DIY and hook them.
- Create 4 (2 blog, 2 videos) pieces of content to introduce them to the concept and offer the freebie.

### Promotion

- See blog processing.
- Videos are embedded in post, but wouldn't hurt to share the videos separately with the thumb, still, and promo image in separate posts.
- Share once the week published
- Share with surrounding "confirmations" on socials later.
- Write guest blog post for either Kipper, Soar, or other linking to post.

## Notes