

# 4 hacks for reaching peak performance

If you're looking to reach your full potential and striving for peak performance, here four top hacks from Jim Steele, author of *Unashamedly Superhuman*.

---

## Make realistic but challenging goals

When we witness an exceptional performance, one word often used to describe it is, *Inspired*. But what does that mean and how does it connect to the achievement of our goals. Well, a useful question to consider is this. Does the probability of achieving your goal go up or down if the goal is easy, moderate, or impossible? When people set goals, whether fitness, learning, or business-related, if it's too *in reach* it doesn't recruit enough of the autonomic nervous system to make relentless pursuit likely. In other words, if it's too easy, we can lose interest. If however, it's too lofty and too intangible, the dopamine that drives us forward doesn't kick in either. It turns out that the likelihood of being engaged doubles if our goals are realistic but truly challenging.

## Be committed

However, for our goals to really work their magic, there is one ingredient that needs to be in place and that's total commitment. The point here is that when we choose a goal, even if it means wilfully accepting a target given to us by our manager or responding to a change in direction provoked by unforeseen global circumstances, we have to commit to the goal as if we'd chosen it.

When we *frame our thinking* in such a way whereby, we decide what the desired outcome is, our sense of purpose kicks up a gear, driving more attention and more focus on achieving the result.

## Re-frame for peak performance

I read recently that the fastest-growing sports over the last 10 years are action-adventure sports. Perhaps you have heard of events like Tough Mudder, Spartans or The Wolf Run. They're called adventure challenges for a reason. What comes to mind when you think of the word adventure? The unknown. Risk. Excitement. Fun. Fear.

Some of these words are positive words, others less so. Point being an adventure isn't dependent on success or failure. This may just be a play on words; however, it turns out, the choice of words we use to describe the situation we're facing can significantly impact how we experience it. Is it a problem or a challenge? Is it a challenge or is it an adventure?

## Tune in for peak performance

What price for your attention?

That was the heading in an article which stated how senior Google, Twitter, and Facebook programmers, those who helped make their technology so addictive, are disconnecting themselves from the very social media platforms they created.

In the article, Justin Rosenstein talks about how he'd tweaked his laptop's operating system to ban himself from Snapchat, which by the way he compared to a class A drug. He described Facebook "likes," as "bright dings of pseudo-pleasure." And he should know, he created the "like" button which was originally called the "awesome" button.

Research shows that people spend, on average, three hours a day on social media. Touching, swiping, or tapping their phone 2,600 times a day. The fact is that our attention is a valued commodity, and everyone wants a piece of it! The problem is distractions fracture our ability to focus and they keep us locked out of that high performance state often called, the zone or flow.

So, how can we stay tuned in, in a world of noise. Well flow follows focus. Therefore, we must protect our attention by proactively resisting the urge to indulge in spontaneous behaviours. Checking a random text message, flicking through Instagram, snacking when we're not even hungry. All spontaneous reactions that don't contribute to our predetermined bout of work. When you

resist these impulses the end product, pure and simple is focus.

So, here's a quick performance hack for how to tune in and tune up our performance.

It's called a focus sprint. Focus sprints make use of intense energy bursts to help you overcome procrastination, channel your concentration and get stuff done.

Research shows that the human brain works best by focusing on a task in intervals of between forty-five and ninety minutes, followed by a ten-to-fifteen-minute recovery break. Pushing past this 90-minute mark can often result in decreased focus. That's why focus sprinting is so effective. It takes advantage of your brain's natural rhythms to capitalise on the times you are at your peak performance.

Before you start, take two minutes to set a specific goal for what you want to achieve during this chunk of time, and then set your timer. Next, turn off all outside distractions. No social media and no multitasking. Just 100 percent pure focus on the task at hand. On your marks, get set, go!

Jim Steele is a business speaker, leadership facilitator, executive coach and author of new book *Unashamedly Superhuman: Harness Your Inner Power and Achieve Your Greatest Professional and Personal Goals*, published by Capstone.

*[Buy Unashamedly Superhuman](#)*

---

Article by JIM STEELE