



CHAPTER EXTRACT: THE ONE HOUR AUTHOR SUCCESS SYSTEM

HOW TO USE TIMED WRITING SESSIONS

This simple six-step process will transform your productivity. All you need is one hour a day to create brilliant results.

THE 1-HOUR AUTHOR SUCCESS SYSTEM

Step #1: CENTERING

This step only takes a few minutes to complete but it can make a world of difference to your results.

For the next hour you are going off grid.

This is your time.

Shut out the external pressure and negativity. One by one, cast off all the negative thoughts and chatter and doubts and past mistakes and anything else that “the lizard brain” is chattering into your ear whenever you even think about starting something exciting and exhilarating.

Reach down inside, into the calm centre of who you are, and **trust** your instincts and your amazing natural ability.

You already know what you have to do. And you know how to do it.

You learnt the ropes and worked your apprenticeship and are ready to do the best work of your life.

Stop thinking. The planning and dreaming time is over. You've done that bit. You don't need to think about it any longer.

The Centering Process

Get comfortable with your back straight and both feet solid on the floor.

Close your eyes and visualise a swimming pool under a bright hot sun and a warm breeze.

It is all yours.

You get up from your lounge - looking good by the way!

Slowly climb the few steps up the ladder to the diving board and stroll casually forward to the very edge.

Up here the world looks so different. The cobalt blue of the sky is reflected in the rippling warm water of the pool just a few feet below you, and you can smell flowers on the warm breeze, which caresses your face and arms and legs. It is magical up here. It feels as though this is a new world which you have only discovered for the first time.

It's time to jump off the diving board and show the world what you can do. Come on in, the water's lovely.

The sky truly is the limit.

Step #2: CLARITY.

The worst mistake you can make is to start your writing session without a precise list of things to do in that session.

Take a maximum of five minutes before any writing session to write down on paper what you plan to accomplish and why.

Reconnect with your deep personal motivation, then be very specific about the strategic writing task that you are going to work on in this session.

Example. I want to plan out the character arc for my heroine

Example. I want to work out how the art thieves could steal the Picasso and get away with it.

Step #3: TIMED WRITING

This technique has saved me more than once, especially on rush jobs where I have to turn around more than one project in a short time period.

If you take nothing else from this chapter, please try this technique as soon as you can.

The goal is to dive into 20 mins of focused work where your total attention is on the work.

You must use some kind of kitchen or screen timer but be strict and only work for 20 minutes. Total attention and focus. Nothing else.

If someone comes in and interrupts you, you have to start again.

A kitchen timer, or the one on your phone, tablet or pc, will do just fine, but there is a psychological benefit in using a mechanical timer that you have to set to 20 minutes.

AND HERE IS THE KEY. Be ready to write very rough pages.

Nobody is going to read this apart from you. Nobody is judging you or watching you. Write what you want to write. Don't worry about your conservative relatives being scandalised by the bondage threesome you have visualised.

No editing or spell checking or reading through and putting things right – just head down continuous writing in one complete session.

I know this is hard for perfectionists but it has to be done.

If you have a problem and need some research, leave a marker and come back to it when your session is finished, and you can find the info you need on the internet – just don't interrupt the writing flow to go and look it up.

This draft is for you.

Put everything you want into that piece of writing.

No inhibition. Just full on enjoyment and delight with words.

And write as fast as you can. You should feel the words are flowing out of your fingertips onto the page/keyboard.

Many writers use pencil or pen and paper since they somehow feel less inhibited than typing into a computer system, and the second shaping draft will then become the typed version.

Try it: pen and paper might work for you.

You can set any time you want.

My attention span is so short I know that 20 minutes works. You can use 30 minutes if you like, but after that, you would need a longer break which cuts the focus.

If you do have a distracting thought, or good idea about another project, take a few seconds to jot it down in the margin and capture it before it has time to kick off a trip down a side road, and then get back to the project task that you are working on.

Step #4: STOP WRITING AND GIVE YOUR CREATIVE MIND SPACE

When the timer or buzzer sounds, quickly finish what you were doing then save the file or close your writing pad and get up and walk around.

Take 5 mins to stretch and let your brain play and freewheel on what you have just been doing.

Let your mind work out what to do next all on its own.

You can make tea, load laundry and do non-thinking tasks. Stroll around the garden.

But there are two rules you cannot break.

NO TALKING. AND ABSOLUTELY NO SCREENS!

You have to protect your writing and make your creativity welcome.

Step #5: GO BACK TO THE SECOND TIMED WRITING SESSION

Go back to your workspace/sofa/bedroom and take a few minutes to reconnect with the work, reading through and thinking - but not editing or revising, just thinking.

Then dive in again for another 20 minutes of complete focused work giving it your full attention. When the timer beeps, finish what you are doing. Then stop.

Step #6: WRAP UP AND MAKE NOTES FOR THE NEXT SESSION

For the last 5 minutes save the file and back it up, or put your writing pad or journal in a safe place. If you want to, make a note of the computer word count or number of pages.

Then step away from the work and leave it for the day, or until you can spend another hour repeating the process.

Allow your brain to think through the work in the subconscious for the rest of the day so that when you come back to it tomorrow, problems will seem clearer to resolve and you will be buzzing with new ideas.

THE ONE HOUR AUTHOR

60 Minute Sequence

- **5 Minutes: Centering into your writing headspace**
- **5 Minutes: What do you want to accomplish in this session**
- **20 Minutes: Timed writing**
- **5 Minutes break: No screens**
- **Back to work for a second 20 minutes**
- **5 Minutes: Stop writing and make notes for the next session.**



It has been my experience that combining two 20 minute timed writing sessions, in a one hour sequence, has the greatest impact on both productivity and a sense of momentum. It is long enough for you to create high quality, in depth work, but short enough to fit into a busy schedule.

Each of the six steps in the One Hour Author sequence is fundamental to making the timed writing technique a success, and I would encourage you not to skip a step to save time, especially the centering and planning steps at the start.



I love to hear from my readers, so if you have any questions or suggestions, feel free to get in touch at: Nina@ninaharrington.com and visit my website for the latest posts and news: <http://ninaharrington.com/>