

How to motivate yourself and finish the year strong

2018 is almost over, and with cold weather setting in, holiday fun distracting you, and the physical and mental exhaustion that comes after long sprints of high performance, you may feel anything but motivated to work.

Still, there's enough time left this year to knock out a few more goals and ramp yourself up for a successful 2019. Follow these tips to keep yourself motivated through the New Year and beyond:

Pinpoint the cause of your low motivation. Are you overwhelmed? Sad? Restless? Or just plain tired? Once you recognize what is bringing you down you can take specific steps to help. If you are tired, sleep. If you are restless, start a new, exciting project. If you are overwhelmed, prioritize; and if you are sad, make sure you are finding time for fun.

Figure out why you are procrastinating. Don't let projects or tasks linger into next year. Assess the to-dos you've been putting off. Are they no longer important? Or do you just hate doing them? For tasks that no longer matter, go ahead and eliminate them. For tasks you need to complete, knock them out.

Just start. Adopt the personal mantra "Do it now." Spend five focused minutes on a task—even the ones you dread—and you will likely keep going. Or figure out the next step you need to take on a task, preferably a small one you can execute fast, and do it.

Don't sweat the small things. When you are stressed out, even small issues can seem monstrous. Enough problems and you may want to just throw your hands up and check out. Keep some perspective, address the issues and then put them out of mind.

Start a new healthy habit. Start exercising or doing a new kind of exercise. Adopt a new healthy diet—now, not after the holiday bingeing. Read a new book every week, start a new hobby or join a new social group. You'll step out of your comfort zone, which can reinvigorate you. Plus, you'll start the New Year with good habits already in place.

— Adapted from "How to Motivate Yourself: 13 Simple Ways You Can Try Right Now," Scott Young, Lifehack, www.lifehack.org.