



Scheduling for Success

In this guide, you will find a logistics checklist, a scheduling worksheet and an overview of points to consider about scheduling.

You'll maximize success in your writing project by honoring your commitment to write just as you do other commitments. Work, doctors' appointments, meetings, social occasions — all require you to be in place, on time. Create and follow a writing schedule that you can honor in the same way.

For some writers, the early stages are a breeze. Projects often hold our interest in the beginning before blocks, or complications set in. If you can make your writing time a habit during this first flush of enthusiasm, you'll find that dealing with the more challenging stages will be easier.

Other writers struggle to break through the invisible boundary between *thinking about writing* and *actually writing*. It's so much easier to clean out the closet or tidy up your desk than to put those words (thoughts, feelings, experiences) on paper! If this describes you, ask your writing coach for the pre-writing exercises that will take you step by step through this stage. Many of us have a monkey of self-criticism on our shoulders whose job is to hold us back. There are simple techniques for silencing that beast so you can find your writing voice.

Few writers can completely clear their personal and work schedules to focus entirely on their creative project. How then can you formalize your intent to write so that your commitment to writing is more than a good intention? Here are some guidelines:

1. Be realistic.

Assess your current activity level. What claims on your time and energy will continue? Which can be put off or completed to make time available? Do you have the luxury of prioritizing this project? or just a window of opportunity? or a particular block of time each week to devote to writing?

2. Commit to regularity over frequency or duration.

In the rush of enthusiasm you may have at the beginning, you may be tempted to think you will write every day or that you can write all day. The reality for most writers is quite different. Writing is a discipline as well as a pleasure and a satisfaction. The most sustainable work schedule is often the one that designates a block of one to three hours at regular intervals. You will find that writing regularly allows you to see your progress. Writing regularly will keep you feeling positive about your effort because no one mega-work session has to do it all and your day-to-day life doesn't have to stop. (Your life is unlikely to stop, so don't set yourself up for failure!)

3. Go public.

Time devoted to a creative project often seems to others in your life like time taken away from them. So it's a good idea to enlist their interest and support. Another benefit of going public with your writing schedule is that it will make your expectations, as well as theirs, official.

4. Be forgiving — and keep track.

Try not to associate feelings of inadequacy or failure with your writing effort. Feeling bad about not writing or not writing enough can keep you from writing! If you miss a session or don't produce the pages you meant to, be a forgiving taskmaster for yourself. Deal positively with the human side of scheduling by establishing an honor system you will keep to: if you fall short, make up the time or page quota as soon as possible. Don't let lack of accomplishment become your habit.

5. Take a moment — regularly — to congratulate yourself on

- undertaking such a meaningful project
- your progress to date
- your plans and expectations to fulfill your writing dream by completing your project as *scheduled for success!*

Logistics Checklist for Writers

Things to do before you begin

Resources

Don't waste precious writing time hunting for your favorite pen or the notes you made at the beach. Take the time to organize your resources ahead of time and to keep them in order as you work.

- dictionary
- thesaurus
- Turning Memories Into Memoirs*
- functioning computer / word processor / typewriter
- computer disks
- scratch paper
- pencil / pen
- legal pad
- pocket-size memo notebooks
- file folders
- 3-ring binder
- personal archives: photos, letters, journal, news clippings, etc.

Setting

Hemingway wrote in Parisian cafés, Jane Austen in her drawing room. And then there was Emily Dickinson.... No one setting suits every writer. But it's up to you to create the conditions most conducive for you to write.

Maybe you work best in public—find a corner of your public library, local coffee shop or city park. Assemble all the props you need in a "portable office"—brief case, plastic file box, etc. If you will work at home, portability may still be useful if you must share your work space with others or with other activities.

Whether public or private¹, establish a dedicated space to keep your writing resources readily available and in order.

Work ahead of time to control these features of a successful work space—

- acoustics
- light
- privacy
- atmosphere (music, decor, *feng shui*...)

Assemble the props you need to be comfortable and productive.

- coffee or tea
- desk lamp
- comfy or ergonomic chair
- CD player

Cooperation

Most of us have full lives with many daily demands. If you wear more than one hat during any given day or week, you can make the transition between roles smoother for yourself and the people in your life by communicating your needs clearly.

- Put your writing schedule on the calendar(s).
- Talk with family and friends about your commitment to this project.
- Alert your colleagues as appropriate.

¹ Either permanent (a quiet study or office) or temporary (a corner of the dining room). If temporary, be sure your set up / clean up time isn't so lengthy that you lose interest and energy for writing!

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6. Trial writing project schedule for the next two weeks:

Week One

<i>Date</i>	<i>Day of week</i>	<i>AM</i>	<i>PM</i>	<i>EVE</i>
_____	Monday	_____	_____	_____
_____	Tuesday	_____	_____	_____
_____	Wednesday	_____	_____	_____
_____	Thursday	_____	_____	_____
_____	Friday	_____	_____	_____
_____	Saturday	_____	_____	_____
_____	Sunday	_____	_____	_____

Week Two

<i>Date</i>	<i>Day of week</i>	<i>AM</i>	<i>PM</i>	<i>EVE</i>
_____	Monday	_____	_____	_____
_____	Tuesday	_____	_____	_____
_____	Wednesday	_____	_____	_____
_____	Thursday	_____	_____	_____
_____	Friday	_____	_____	_____
_____	Saturday	_____	_____	_____
_____	Sunday	_____	_____	_____

7. Now transfer this schedule to the calendar(s) and date books you, your family, and/or colleagues refer to regularly.

8. Review the schedule after trying it out. Make adjustments as necessary to make it a workable, sustainable work plan for the future.

Notes:

Soleil Lifestory Network

RESOURCES FOR LIFEWriters

- Turning Memories Into Memoirs, A Handbook for Writing Lifestories**\$24.95
by Denis Ledoux
- Lifewriter's Memory Binder**\$21.95
Turning Memories companion, customized 3 ring binder
- Turning Memories Into Memoirs, An Audio Guide to Writing Lifestories**\$16.95
120 minute, 2 tape set; excerpts from the Handbook read by the author
- The Photo Scribe: A Writing Guide**\$19.95
How to Write the Stories Behind Your Photographs
by Denis Ledoux. A guide to turning ordinary photo albums, family scrapbooks
and heritage albums into written treasures of family and personal history.
- The Photo Scribe's Memory Binder**.....\$21.95
A customized 3-ring binder with forms to carry out The Photo Scribe's
exercises. Pockets and sections to help you organize your photojournaling.
- The Genealogist's Memory Binder**\$21.95
Customized 3 ring binder for genealogists to go beyond
the names and dates

SOLEIL LIFESTORY NETWORK OFFERS:

- Turning Memories® Workshop** This tele-class workshop held several times a year,
is led by Denis Ledoux. Lifewriters receive the experience and guidance of a master teacher.
- Coaching** A writing coach will guide your writing project past difficulties and help you to
bring your project to a successful completion. This service is effective for undisciplined
writers who experience blocks or lack of focus.
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TRAINING PROGRAMS

Turning Memories® Workshop

Led by Denis Ledoux, this workshop allows teachers to experience the workshop they will lead. It also provides an opportunity for teachers to renew their own writing lives.

Business Supports Seminars

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Networking Opportunities

By Tele-Conference—Monthly Open Forum sessions where participants can meet with fellow personal historians to celebrate, trouble-shoot and share. Facilitated by director Denis Ledoux.

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The intensive program thoroughly trains personal history service providers. Includes 1) Turning Memories® Workshop with Denis Ledoux to learn to be the best teacher they can be; 2) Business Development Seminar teaches providers to design and develop working 12-month business plans, and 3) Follow-up Tele-Class series to guide providers to implement their plans by group discussion and consultation with Denis Ledoux.

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