

# ALWAYS CHASING DEADLINES?

Feel like you are perpetually starting projects too late?

Want to get more productive?

If you answered yes to any of these questions you are in good company with the majority of your colleagues in the legal profession.

I have some good news for you.

One simple practice habit can have a big impact on productivity. I call it the run a dash habit.

Here's how it works.

To run a dash, set a timer and work intensely for 15 to 30 minutes. Use this block of time to move a lot of small forward on your To Do list. Or you can get a larger project started by actioning one small next step.

Run a dash works for everything from filing, to phone calls, or even the next step on a complex project. It is also great for business development – connecting with contacts over email, scheduling lunches, or sending a client a useful article.

To run a dash break your projects down into the smallest actionable next steps and capture these on your To Do list.

Have lunch with the in-house counsel becomes send an email to schedule lunch with the in-house counsel.

Report back to the client on the result of the meeting and next steps becomes list key points to communicate to the client.

The pace of legal practice is such that we are all likely to always be handling full plates of work. Leaving our big projects for the perfect moment is an exercise in futility and just means we will find ourselves in fire-fighting mode – again – when the deadline approaches.

Waiting for the perfect moment to start is counterproductive. Instead, get started on big tasks early.

I frequently employ the run a dash strategy with positive results. I always have a number of large projects sitting in my work cue. I now try and take an initial start on each of them well in advance of the deadline. What I find is that by getting started early, when it comes time for the big push I am already well on my way.

What can you take a run at today?

