

How To Read a Book a Week

<http://www.inoveryourhead.net/2009/12/31/how-to-read-a-book-a-week-in-2010/>



Yep, I finally did it. I read over a book a week all of the past year.

More than that– I never fell behind or stopped. I was always ahead of schedule for the entire year. So now, this coming year, guess what? I'd like you to do the same. Here's how.

Why Would Want To Do This

It feels awesome. It gives you an amazing amount of ideas. It helps you think more thoroughly. It's better than TV and even the internet. It makes you understand the world more. It is a building block towards a habit of completion. Did I mention it feels awesome?

... whatever, just do it already.

Why One a Week?

First of all, why so many, why not just "read more books?" I'd argue that setting a massive goal, something crazy like one a week, actually helps. To make a comparison, the body reacts strongly to large wounds, expending significant energy to heal them. Small wounds, it doesn't think much of, which

means they can sometimes take longer to heal. So setting a massive goal will make you take it seriously.

So, that's first. Make your goal massive and unreasonable so that you freak out a little. :)

One Day at a Time

The average book I read was maybe 250-300 pages. Some were larger, some were smaller. I broke this down to 40 pages a day, which I read early on so I can get it over with. It's an easy, manageable goal, which doesn't seem nearly so daunting as 52 books in a year. This is critical to managing your emotional state, making it feel like it's totally reasonable.

Make It a Routine and Stack It

I have a habit right now of getting up, showering, etc., and then going out for breakfast every morning, sitting at counter at the same restaurant, and drinking coffee until I've read my 40 pages.

Why do I do it like this? Because I know that I'm kind of weak-willed. I'm betting you can admit this about yourself too, and doing so will help you set everything into its proper place.

Oh, and a protip: Set it up early in the day, as early as possible. Like the Artist's Way's morning pages and Twyla Tharp's exercise regimen (discussed here), it must occur early or we will put it off. This is the same with every habit— you must chain them together for them to work.

Use Every Moment

If you have a commute, use it. If you have a lunch break, use that. This is something I'm just figuring out, but the ability to whip out your book quickly and read 2 pages will help you out significantly, especially in getting ahead, which will be your biggest asset and give you a rewarding feeling. Further, getting ahead will help you take your time with the hard books that are really dense and worth taking time on.

It's Ok To Give Up... Kind Of

If something sucks (or feels tough), it's ok give up on it— for now. You can do this when you're ahead of schedule and it won't screw with you too badly, and then you can go back to that book every little while until you finish it.

I did this a number of times this year, which means the number of books I started was probably in the 60-65 range (I finished 54.)

It's Ok To Cheat

Is your deadline closing on you, and you feel you may fall behind? Holy crap! Ok, it's time to cheat. Choose a quick book and read it, something you may have read before, enjoy a lot, and can breeze through.

“This is cheating,” you may say. I would agree. But the short term cheating to help yourself succeed in the long run on this goal is more important than hard-headed idea that every book you read has to be frikkin War and Peace. It doesn't. This is to enrich your life, not to make you feel like crap.

By the way, even small books can be incredible. This year, I read the following books that were small but awesome: *The Dip*, *The Little Red Book of Selling*, *The Five Secrets You Must Discover Before You Die*, *Man's Search For Meaning*, *Vagabonding*, and *Of the Dawn of Freedom*.

Never Fall Behind

Never “owe yourself one” or deduct from the bank account, saying you’ll get back to it later. Your weekly deadline (the first is on January 7th) will help you stay on track, but falling behind may make you feel helpless and make you consider giving up. You have to control your emotional state from dropping to this level, where you feel it’s hopeless, etc., and you do that by always being ahead of schedule.

In Conclusion

Reading has made me a much better, more complete, and happier person. All the world’s wisdom is contained in books— most of it is not on the internet or known by people in your social group, so this can really help you expand, if you let it. So start today.