



Day #1

Get Ready

Welcome to the first day of The 5 AM Blueprint 30-Day Action Plan! I'm excited to hear all about your amazing progress over these next few weeks.

I am always available to answer any of your questions, so feel free to reply to any of these daily emails and chat with me.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Read "The 5 A.M. Miracle"

I know I said that you don't have to read my book to complete this 30-Day Action Plan, and that's true, but it will help.

All of the action items over the next 30 days are based on the 7-step system, called *The 5 AM Blueprint*, that is outlined in the book.

If you have not read the book, or finished reading it, have no fear. The action items are all easy to follow and include helpful resources to learn more.

If you would like to buy a copy of the book, you can do so at [Amazon](#) or [Barnes & Noble](#).

Action #2: Clear a Little Time on Your Calendar

As with any commitment or important project, if you don't prioritize it, the odds of finishing it are slim.

Get out your calendar, task manager, or day planner and schedule 30 minutes per day for the next 30 days.

The amount of time for each action item in this 30-day plan varies considerably, but it's helpful to block off enough time to review the daily email, research the topic, and make a plan for how you will complete the action.

Many of the action items are not designed to be completed in a single sitting, but rather they are important projects to be tackled at the right time for you.

By scheduling 30 minutes each day, you can assure that you have given yourself enough mental space to think about the task and how you can best see it through.

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Day #2

Get Connected

Welcome to the second day of The 5 AM Blueprint 30-Day Action Plan! Since you have made it this far I will assume you're in it for the long haul.

Believe me, most people give up on their plans faster than you can imagine. Distractions, Facebook, new ideas . . . all of it throws us off track and it's so easy to push off the work until another day.

Just to reiterate the second action step from yesterday, **the only goal each day is to spend 30 minutes reviewing the daily email, researching the action steps, and making a plan for when you can tackle them.**

Ready to go again?

Okay, let's get started!

Action #1: Find a Group Near You

One of the absolute best ways to improve yourself is to surround yourself with other ambitious people who are pursuing the same goals as you.

Your mission today is to find a local group that is already doing what you want to do. (It also doesn't hurt if they meet early in the morning.)

This could be a local running club, business breakfast, Bible study, or some other group that gets you connected to like-minded people. Spend a few minutes today researching online to find a group like this and reach out to them. All it takes is one short email . . .

Action #2: Get Connected Online

Meeting in person is ideal, but sometimes connecting online can be the best first step.

There are many online groups that attract ambitious, goal-oriented people. I have joined many Facebook groups and I love interacting with people there.

If you're an early riser, or that's one of your goals, consider joining a group that already listens to my podcast and has probably read my book:

[Join The 5 AM Miracle Community on Facebook](#)

Of course, there are many other groups to choose from, so get online and start connecting!

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Day #3

Begin Your 5 AM Miracle

Welcome to Day 3! This is where the early morning extravaganza begins.

Well . . . it may not be an extravaganza just yet, but it will certainly begin to transform your daily productivity.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Begin Your Transition to Wake Up Earlier

As I explain in the book, you have two choices here: (1) go all in, or (2) take it slow.

If you opt for the masochistic approach and want to wake up bright and early at sunrise tomorrow, go for it. Just be prepared to be exhausted for a few days until your brain catches up with you.

If you opt for a slower transition, which I recommend, then set your alarm clock for 15 minutes earlier than normal. Tonight, try to get to bed just 15 minutes earlier as well.

Over the next few weeks you can slowly adjust the alarm a little earlier each day until you reach your goal time.

You can learn more about early mornings by [joining The 5 AM Club](#) and downloading my free eBook on how to wake up earlier.

Action #2: Begin Thinking About Your Ideal Morning

We aren't going to create your official ideal morning routine for a few days, but today is a great day to begin planning how you would like your morning to go.

What kinds of healthy habits do you want to implement?

What would you like to eat for breakfast?

What kind of exercise could you squeeze into your routine?

You don't have to commit to anything yet. Just make a short list of what your ideal morning might look like.

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Day #4

Create Your POP

Are you feeling the burn this morning? If you followed through on yesterday's action items you may be a little groggy today.

That's okay. It will pass. Now, let's get started on creating your POP.

Action #1: Design Your Personal Optimization Plan (POP)

Your Personal Optimization Plan (POP) is a set of circumstances when your life is working like a well-oiled machine.

Your mission today is to clarify what your ideal life looks like.

What does the highest and best version of yourself look like?

What are you doing when is everything is working as it should be?

Who are you with?

How do you feel?

Get out a notebook (physical or digital) and record what your life is like when everything is grand and you can't imagine anything better.

Action #2: Study Your POP

Now that you know what your ideal life looks like, how could you begin to live a small part of it today?

When I imagine my own ideal life, one aspect that comes to mind is my own incredible athletic abilities, especially running trails. So, I know that if I can schedule more time running in the forest I will be living out my POP.

Now, how can you do the same?

What aspects of your POP can you put into action right now, today? Pick one or two items and get them started.

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Day #5

Blueprint Step 1

For the next few days we are going to be working through the early stages of The 5 AM Blueprint 7-step, goal-achieving system that I outline in the book.

Today we are diving into the first step and tackling a grand topic, your life's biggest goals.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Brainstorm Your Life's Grandest Goals

In the past you may have been asked to create bucket lists consisting of big, hairy, and audacious goals. These goals may have been so big you didn't actually believe they would ever happen.

In this context, your life's grandest goals are not bucket list items because these are ambitious, yet real. Think about what you are willing to commit to, what you dream about, and what you honestly believe is possible, even if it feels out of reach today.

We will start there and you can always up to ante later on.

You can learn more about setting big goals and life planning in my article:

[7 Life Planning Strategies That Really Work](#)

Action #2: Pare Down the List

Hopefully, you have a list of 20, 30, or even 100 grand goals you would love to achieve in your lifetime.

Now, knock down that list to only a handful. These are the ones you will be working on very soon.

Think about what is realistic to achieve in the next few months and do your best to pick just your top 2-3 goals.

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Day #6

Blueprint Step 2

Choosing your life's grandest goals is not easy, but it has to be done in order to provide the clarity we all need to know how to spend our time each and every day.

Today we are going to begin converting those grand goals into tangible projects in the second step of The 5 AM Blueprint.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Create Your Quarter System

The Quarter System is a calendaring method that focuses all of your life and business goals into a 90-day window.

Your mission today is to choose the dates for your quarters. Most people will choose traditional quarters (e.g. January to March).

Knowing the dates of your quarters will provide the context you need to know what to pursue now and what to postpone.

You can learn more about the Quarter System in this episode of my podcast: [Fewer Goals and Better Results with a 12-Week Year](#)

Action #2: Schedule Your Top Goals This Quarter

Based on where you are today, decide what is reasonable to pursue between now and the end of your current quarter.

Using the short list of your top grand goals from yesterday, schedule the most important one first on your calendar. **The goal here is to completely finish this goal before the end of the quarter.**

That's right. You must plan to finish this goal all the way through, 100%. Sound tough? Yeah, it is, and that's the point.

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Day #7

Blueprint Step 3

As you can probably tell, each of the daily action steps are building on one another.

This won't be the case throughout the full 30 days, but it is important now to ensure you complete the appropriate step before moving on to the next one.

Feel free to slow the process if you need to and play catch up later. Now, if you're ready, let's get started with the third step in The 5 AM Blueprint.

Action #1: Clarify Your Daily Anchor Habits

Anchor habits are the the big rocks in your day. They are the habits that everything else is based around.

The most common daily anchor habits include waking up early, working out, and beginning your day's work.

Decide today what your daily anchor habits are and what you are willing to commit to going forward.

You can always change these later, but for most people it's unlikely that will happen. You can learn more about anchor habits in my podcast episode:

[The Fascinating Power of Anchor Habits](#)

Action #2: Plan Your Respective Complimentary Habits

If working out early in the morning is one of your anchor habits, a complimentary habit may be eating a healthy breakfast.

Make a list of the complimentary habits that work well with your current anchor habits. The goal is to make it easy to accomplish small and important habits by attaching them to habits you already have secured in your lifestyle.

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Day #8

Blueprint Step 4

Congratulations! You've made it a week into the action plan and you're still here making progress.

That really is awesome. It's the small, daily commitments that lead to long-term success and it's surprisingly helpful when you celebrate the small wins.

Even if you aren't celebrating, I'll go ahead and do it for you. Now, let's get started with the fourth step in The 5 AM Blueprint!

Action #1: Create Your Ideal Week Template

Planning an ideal week on paper provides a great visual of how your schedule could flow when everything is working well.

Everyone who bought my book was given access to **The 5 AM Studio**, which includes a workbook and downloadable templates. Even if you haven't bought the book, access [The 5 AM Studio](#) and **download the Ideal Week Template**.

This should help you get the ball rolling without having to create your own template to get started.

Action #2: Plan Now to Update This Later

Ideal weeks tend to change with each season of life. So, don't expect your ideal week to stay the same for too long.

Plan now to update your Ideal Week Template once a week, or at least once a month. I know that I need to revisit my own templates on a weekly basis just to make sure everything is working smoothly.

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Day #9

Ideal Morning

Now that you have an ideal week put in place, it's time to dig into the details and beginning planning your ideal morning.

This is the centerpiece of achieving your own 5 AM Miracle.

Let's dive in!

Action #1: Design Your Ideal Morning Routine

To effectively design your own ideal morning routine, begin by backwards planning from the time you begin work for the day to the time you wake up.

The goal is to know how much time you're working with. Then, based on the time you have allotted, plan out which priorities and healthy habits you would like to include.

I highly recommend you focus on energy production in order to improve your productivity throughout the day. I also recommend you structure your ideal morning with a lot of detail.

After you get good at your routine you will find that the detail is no longer necessary. But, in the beginning it's very helpful to stick to a tight schedule to keep yourself on track and find out what works best.

You can learn more in my article:

[Mornings 101: How to Create Your Ideal Morning Routine](#)

Action #2: Create Different Routines for Different Days

Not every day is the same. Weekdays are different from weekends and your schedule may even fluctuate on a daily basis.

In this case, I recommend you create multiple morning routines based on the typical days on your calendar.

You could create an ideal routine for a workday and a different one for Saturday morning. You could have one for days when you travel and one for days when you're on vacation.

Create as many as you need, but no more than you can handle.

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Day #10

Ideal Evening

The best morning routines begin the night before. Today we are going to focus on your evening routine in order to set you up for success the following morning.

Even if you're a night owl, effectively planning your evening is critical to your daily success, regardless of what time you choose to go to bed.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Design Your Ideal Evening Routine

The best evening routines are based on one goal: getting you asleep on time so that you can get plenty of rest for the next day.

With that in mind, create your ideal evening routine that will allow you to wrap up your work for the day, plan your schedule for the next day, and actually be in bed ready for sleep when the time is right.

You can learn more about evening routines in my article:

[Mornings 101: How to Create Your Ideal Evening Routine](#)

Action #2: Create a Solid Evening Boundary

If there is one strategy that will help the most with your evening routine it is this: create a solid evening boundary to end your work for the day.

On a typical evening, I work from a boundary time of 8:00 pm. At that time I will turn off all of my electronics (phone, TV, computer, tablet, etc.) and prepare for sleep.

The evening boundary is my signal that the day's work is over and I need to get to bed if I want my next day to be successful.

Decide upon your boundary time and plan your evening routine between that boundary and bedtime.

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Day #11

Blueprint Step 5

Now that you have an ideal week, ideal morning, and ideal evening in place, you are graduating to the fifth step in The 5 AM Blueprint: productivity strategies.

This is where technology enters the scene and you will have some choices to make. I have tested many systems over the years and I know what works for me, but everyone has their own preferences on what works best for them.

If you want to make things easy and use my recommendations, that could work. If you want to dig in and try out your own systems, just make sure you schedule time for research and experimentation.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Find a Dedicated Task Manager

If I could only give you one piece of advice for being more productive, I would tell you to focus on energy. If I could give you a second piece of advice, I would recommend you consolidate your entire life into as few systems as possible.

Using a dedicated task manager is like dumping your entire life of tasks, projects, and events into Microsoft Outlook, only with a much more beefed up to-do list.

I use a program called Nozbe, which works really well at managing tasks, projects, and to-do lists. There are many programs to choose from, but the goal is the same: **use one system to manage your personal and professional life so you can make better decisions with amazing clarity on your highest priorities.**

To learn more about Nozbe, my dedicated task manager, read my article:

[Why You Should Be Using Nozbe for Task Management](#)

Action #2: Block Off a Day or Two on Your Calendar

After you choose a dedicated task manager, it's best to schedule a day or two on your calendar to consolidate your entire life into the system.

This process takes time because you likely have a lot going on. Your task manager is going to house all of your projects, tasks, to-do lists, grocery lists, post-it notes, random ideas, future goals, and everything in between.

The best part of this process is the moment you finish, because that's when you will see the beauty of having your whole life in one location.

The clarity is just amazing.

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Day #12

Go Paperless

As you probably could have guessed, I'm a big fan of using technology and letting go of paper. Today, we are going to let go of paper in a big way.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Find a Digital Filing Service

Companies like Dropbox, Google Drive, and Microsoft OneDrive are all great examples of digital filing services.

These companies provide the ability to store all of your files, folders, and digital content online at no cost to you, or very low cost considering the amount of data involved.

Choose one company or service that you believe will work best for you. I use Google Drive for all of my online files and folders and it works beautifully.

You can learn more about my organizational system in my podcast episode:
[The Unparalleled Triple Threat of Getting Things Done](#)

Action #2: Organize Your Files, Folders, and Documents

Once you have chosen your digital filing service, it's time to organize all of your files and folders in that system.

I can't stress enough how important it is to organize your folders effectively. Yes, you could just rely on the built-in search features, but that's a losing battle in the long run.

Organizing everything takes some real effort up front, but it pays off big time.

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Day #13

Get Evernote

With a task manager and digital filing service in place, there is one more online system that I believe you will find very handy.

Let's dive into Evernote!

Action #1: Find a Note-Taking Application

I'm a huge fan of Evernote. Yes, there are other services you could use (Microsoft OneNote, Simplenote, or even Google Docs), but I believe Evernote is the best out there.

What Evernote provides is a blank slate for taking notes, recording ideas, storing digital articles to read later, and many other online storage possibilities.

Today, [download Evernote with a free account](#). If you fall in love with it like I did, upgrade to their premium version for \$45 per year.

To learn more about Evernote and what to include, read my article:

[7 Must-Have Notebooks in Evernote](#)

Action #2: Consolidate Your Notes

Yesterday we discussed using a digital filing service to store your digital documents, files, and folders. Evernote offers you the ability to store that same content in a different way.

I find Evernote to be best for notes, ideas, and future goal planning. Using the content you already have, begin storing information in Evernote that you believe makes the most sense for that platform.

There is no right or wrong way to do this, so let your personal preference guide your choices here.

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Day #14

Get Focused

With all of the digital tools at your disposal, and a few great ideal routines in place, it's time to block off some time for your most important work.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Schedule Uninterrupted, Focused Blocks of Time

This is clutch. This strategy could be the ONE strategy that improves your productivity more than any other. In fact, I am in a focused block of time as I am typing this email.

An uninterrupted, focused block of time is exactly that: it is time you schedule on your calendar when you cannot be distracted by anyone or anything.

It is time you set aside for your most important work. This could be a 90-minute block of time early in the morning during your 5 AM Miracle, or a 30-minute block just before your lunch break.

Today, schedule 2-3 blocks of time for your current, most important project.

You can learn more about focused blocks of time in my article:

[The Best Productivity Strategy I Have Learned This Year](#)

Action #2: Find the Right Environment

The key to a focused block of time is location. Where you are determines more about how much you will get done than anything else.

Working at a library is more effective than working at a movie theatre. Choose a location where other people cannot distract you, and where you can detach yourself from technology, cell phones, Facebook, and anything else that pulls you away from your work.

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Day #15

Inbox Zero

The most common questions I receive in regards to productivity are all about email.

- What should you do with an inbox filled with hundreds or thousands of messages
- When should you respond?
- What are you going to do with all of these emails I'm sending you throughout these 30 days?

These are great questions, and Inbox Zero answers all of them. Also, Inbox Zero is the first in the series about Equilibrium Zero, a term I coined to house a variety of daily disciplines.

You can learn more about Equilibrium Zero in my podcast episode:

[Equilibrium Zero: Cut the Clutter in Every Area of Life](#)

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Clean Up Your Inbox and Get All the Way to Zero

The key to email is prioritizing it. You have to care if you want the result. I say this because many people are so overwhelmed with email they lose their drive to clean up the mess.

Today, make a plan to process ALL of your email. This means deleting messages that are no longer relevant, filing spam into the junk folder, and filing emails you need for later in another folder.

You can also add a task to your dedicated task manager that reminds you to respond to messages that will take more energy. Remember, your inbox is NOT your task list. Tasks belong in your task manager. Emails (after being processed) belong in the trash, or filed away if needed later.

You can learn more about inbox zero in my podcast episode:

[The Definitive Guide to Inbox Zero](#)

Action #2: Schedule Time Every Day to Get Back to Zero

After you reach inbox zero for the first time, throw a party! Then, schedule time on your calendar to get back to zero every single day.

That means you will be responding to, filing away, and/or deleting **EVERY SINGLE EMAIL EVERY 24 HOURS**. Yes, I wrote that in call caps because it matters.

Every email, every day.

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Day #16

Project Management Zero

Welcome to the second step in the Equilibrium Zero series. Today we are going to clean up your projects and get you focused on the next most important action.

Now, let's jump in!

Action #1: Complete Your Unfinished Tasks

Project Management Zero is a term used to describe the process of completing unfinished tasks and clarifying next actions.

Many projects are in the middle of chaos, which is normal and not necessarily a bad thing. What's bad is not knowing what to do next and/or feeling the stress of unfinished work that is behind schedule and keeping you up at night.

Today, clean up your projects and determine where you stand.

- What have you completed?
- What are you going to do next?
- What can wait until later?

You can learn more about this topic in my article:

[Project Management Zero: Finish What You've Started](#)

Action #2: Schedule a Weekly Catch-Up Session

As with most complex problems, it's best to have time set aside to take a step back and look at the big picture.

At least once a week, schedule time to review your ongoing projects and ensure you are still on top of your next actions.

- What have you accomplished in the last week?
- What are you going to work on next week?
- How can you clean up your actions list to be more efficient?

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Day #17

Desktop Zero

Welcome to the third step in the Equilibrium Zero series. Today, we are focusing on cleaning up your physical desktop.

Let's begin!

Action #1: Clear Your Desk of Every Unneeded Item

The term equilibrium means balance, or a state of equality. The goal with your physical desktop is to reach a state of equality, which doesn't necessarily mean there is nothing on it.

Desktop Zero is a term that describes your desk being cleared of every unneeded item. For example, you may have a computer, keyboard, and mouse on your desk. But, ideally you would not have any loose papers, office supplies, or other clutter that could be stored somewhere else.

The key is simplicity. Decide today what your desk should look like when no project is active on it. Clear everything away and only leave the items that you must have all the time.

You can learn more about Desktop Zero in my article:

[How to Master Desktop Zero and Home Base Zero](#)

Action #2: Schedule a Reminder at the End of the Day

At the end of each workday, return your desk to Desktop Zero. This is a simple practice, like making your bed in the morning, that can have a profound effect on you.

When you leave the office with a clear desk it brings about a real sense of accomplishment. Now, this is not a false or misplaced feeling because you really did do something meaningful.

Putting things away matters. Cleanliness, organization, and simplicity is incredibly important, especially when you have a lot going on.

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Day #18

Home Base Zero

Welcome to the fourth and final step in the Equilibrium Zero series. Today, we are going to wrap up this segment by organizing the rest of your physical stuff, both at home and at the office.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Decide Where Everything Goes and Put it There

Everything has a place where it belongs. Trash belongs in the trash can. Books belong on a bookshelf. Coffee belongs in your belly. That's just how it goes.

So, everything in your home and office has a place too. At the end of the day, everything should be where it belongs.

Today, decide where everything should go and put it there.

To learn see all of the articles about Equilibrium Zero, check out this page:
[Equilibrium Zero](#)

Action #2: Get Others on Board with You

As much as I'd like to believe that other people value organization as much as me, I know that's not always the case.

The same is likely true for you.

When you begin organizing your home and office, get your family, roommates, and co-workers involved. They may not love the process right away, but everyone appreciates cleanliness when they see it.

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Day #19

Blueprint Step 6

Welcome to the sixth step in The 5 AM Blueprint, which focuses on tracking your incredible progress.

This step is amazingly helpful because it provides so much clarity around what you have accomplished and what the most obvious next steps are in the process.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Setup Your Daily Rituals and Habits Tracker

If you are a member of my [5 AM Club](#) or you joined [The 5 AM Studio](#), you likely already have a copy of my **Daily Rituals and Habits Tracker Template**.

If not, be sure to join one or both of those and get your copy.

This template provides structure around the habits you have committed to each day and throughout each week.

Tracking your healthy habits is one of the best ways to see your progress over time and decide what can change so you can improve in the future.

Action #2: Review Your Habits Each Week

The best practices to adopt with this tracker would include establishing a time each day to record what you did and a time each week to reflect on your overall progress.

Schedule a time on your calendar each week to review your habits and determine what you can do differently or better during the following week.

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Day #20

Weekly Review

Wild energy, a dedicated task manager, and a weekly review. That's it.

Combine those together and you've got an amazing plan to tackle just about anything.

Now, let's get started with your review!

Action #1: Setup Your Weekly Review Process

A formal weekly review process is the glue that holds everything together.

When I first began reviewing all of my tasks, projects, commitments, events, and activities, I realized that there was so much potential in the review process.

Today, your mission is to setup your weekly review process, complete with a review of your habits, accomplishments, missteps, and progress on your current projects.

You can learn much more about weekly review in my podcast episode:

[The Weekly Review Checklist: Never Forget Anything Again](#)

Action #2: Block Off 1-2 Hours Per Week

I complete my weekly review process every Sunday evening and it normally takes about one hour.

Schedule a block of time each week where you can review your progress and prepare for the upcoming week.

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Day #21

Accountability Partner

Weekly reviews are great for personal productivity, but it gets even better when you add in a little accountability.

Now, let's dive in!

Action #1: Find an Accountability Partner

I have been meeting every week with my friend Matt Frazier from NoMeatAthlete.com for the last couple of years.

We discuss our wins, losses, and the changes we will be making in the upcoming week.

Discussing my weekly review with someone else who is in a similar place in their life and business makes a lot of sense and works really well.

Today, identify 2-3 people who could potentially be your accountability partner and reach out to them.

They don't have to live near you. Matt lives in North Carolina and I live in Tennessee. We meet over a Skype video chat for just 30 minutes each week and the process is very effective.

You can learn more about accountability partners in my article:

[Best Topics for a Weekly Accountability Partner Meeting](#)

Action #2: Schedule Your Meeting

Matt and I meet over Skype early on Monday mornings.

In this way, both of us can complete our individual weekly reviews on Sunday evening and then discuss our process Monday morning before the week really takes off.

Be sure to schedule your meeting at a time that works well with your weekly review and your overall weekly flow.

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Day #22

Monthly Review

After completing 4 weeks worth of weekly reviews and meeting with your accountability partner, it's a great idea to cap off each month with a more holistic review process.

Now, let's see what that looks like.

Action #1: Setup Your Monthly Review Process

The monthly review is very similar to the weekly review in that you will be analyzing the same information, but looking at it through a wider lens.

The key with the monthly review is to determine your overall progress in the current quarter.

- Are you on track to finish your quarterly goals?
- Are there trends you are seeing from week-to-week that need to be addressed?
- How can next month be more effective than the last?

As with the other templates in this process, you can download free templates for each of the review periods in [The 5 AM Studio](#).

Action #2: Schedule a Monthly Meeting

It's common for my accountability partner, Matt Frazier, and I to replace our last weekly review meeting with a monthly review meeting.

During this meeting we discuss the progress from the previous four weeks and look forward to the next four.

You may need to schedule a longer meeting for the monthly reviews as these tend to cover more ground than a typical weekly call.

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Day #23

Quarterly Review

If you embraced the Quarter System that we discussed on Day #6, then you are likely primed for this review process.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Setup Your Quarterly Review System

The Quarterly Review is mission critical for your long-term success. Assuming that you are on board with planning your life in quarters instead of 12-month years, then you realize everything rises and falls with this review.

The end of a quarter is the end of a major time period and, hopefully, you can look back at some great accomplishments.

Today, setup your quarterly review so that you can properly analyze what went well and what can improve for next quarter.

You can learn more about the quarterly review in this podcast episode:

[Forget Annual Goal Setting and Do This Instead](#)

Action #2: Schedule a Longer Quarterly Meeting

Seeing as how this review process is the most comprehensive, be sure to schedule plenty of time for your own review, as well as for your meeting with your accountability partner.

Plan to discuss the details of each project, what went well, what did not, and what you will be focusing on in the next 12 weeks.

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Day #24

Annual Review

Despite the fact that I'm not a big fan of planning my life in 12-month chunks, there is something attractive about looking back at the last year.

For that reason, let's dive into an annual review process.

Action #1: Setup Your Annual Review Process

Just like the weekly, monthly, and quarterly reviews, the annual review process will analyze very similar aspects of your productive life.

The biggest difference with the annual review is that you can see the larger pieces of your life fusing together, evolving, and growing.

For this reason, I find that during the annual review process it's best to be more reflective and less analytical. Spend some time writing down how you felt, what you experienced, what you loved, and what you may have regretted.

In other words, think of this process more like a journal entry and less like an annual report to a board of directors.

Today, setup your annual review and be sure to ask yourself tough and yet thoughtful questions about your last 12 months on earth.

Action #2: Schedule the Review During Down Time

Many people try to schedule annual reviews during the holiday season when they are busy traveling, visiting family and friends, and holding down a job.

In other words, they aren't allowing enough breathing room for proper reflection.

I recommend you schedule a little personal time for the annual review. This could simply be one long afternoon or a 3-day weekend in a cabin in the woods. Just make sure you have enough mental space to think fluidly.

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Day #25

Blueprint Step 7

Welcome to the seventh and final step of The 5 AM Blueprint! Today we are going to begin focusing on advanced productivity strategies.

These strategies are all effective, and yet, not technically necessary. I find all of these strategies to be helpful, but don't feel pressured to do them all.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Schedule Time Just for Thinking

As bizarre as it may sound, scheduling time just for thinking can be one of the most effective uses of your time.

I began scheduling time for thinking a few years ago and during these 30 to 60-minute chunks I will ask myself one important life question.

The goal is to answer that tough question by brainstorming as many creative answers as possible and writing them all down.

Today, schedule just one block of time for thinking. Also, note which question you want to ask yourself and make sure it pertains to a current major goal in your life.

You can learn more about this strategy, and more, in my article:

[How to Live an Intentional Day, Part 2](#)

Action #2: Make a List of Tough Questions

Before your first thinking session, make a quick list of tough questions you want answers to.

Here are a few good questions to begin with, though these are a bit generic. Be as specific as possible and align your questions to your own personal goals.

1. What is the most important thing I could do to advance my career?
2. What am I doing on a daily basis that I could give up?
3. If I could start a healthy habit today, what would I absolutely love to do?

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Day #26

Listen Up

If you have spent any time listening to my podcast, you have likely heard me mention how much I love to listen to the right music when I'm working.

I mention it all the time because music matters.

Action #1: Find Your Favorite Productivity Music

Aside from scheduling a focused, uninterrupted block of time to write this email, I am also listening to my favorite productivity music, [Focus@Will](#).

I listen to this music service for multiple hours every day because it works. The music tracks are based on neuroscience and they really do help me tune out distractions and focus on my work.

Today, find your most effective music for getting your work accomplished.

This could be anything, but it's best if the music is not fun to listen to. Why? Because fun music is distracting.

You can learn more about why I love Focus@Will in my interview with the founder: [Productivity Music with Will Henshall, Founder of Focus@Will](#)

Action #2: Experiment with Different Types of Music

I mentioned that fun music is distracting because I know this from personal experience.

I have listened to a variety of music tracks, genres, and songs in an attempt to find what works.

Trance music, house, techno, and other similar electronica sounds are the most popular for productivity because they don't include the sound of the human voice (which is incredibly distracting).

Classical music also works well, as do nature sounds, ambient music, and other auditory stimuli that enhance your brain's ability to focus while tuning out the environment around you.

Try out a bunch and see what works for you.

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Day #27

Stand Up

In the last few days I have mentioned how I create focused blocks of time with the right environment and the right music.

I also use the right desk.

Action #1: Build or Buy Your Own Standing Desk

I began using a standing desk years ago after I heard that sitting was a dangerous activity. It's true. Look it up.

In response to this new information, I decided to try a standing desk and I haven't looked back.

Aside from being a healthier way to work every day, standing desks also give you more energy because standing doesn't restrict blood flow like sitting does.

Today, research standing desks and figure out if you can build one yourself with a few resources at your disposal, or if buying one makes more sense.

You can learn more about the benefits of standing desks in my article:

[7 Amazing Benefits of a Standing Desk](#)

Action #2: Take it Slow

The transition from a sitting desk to a standing one takes time. It took me about a week before standing felt natural all day long.

You will likely have slight pain in your shoulders, lower back, legs, and/or feet while your muscles adjust.

I highly recommend you wear comfortable shoes and buying a standing mat to help support you.

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Day #28

New Vision Board

Vision boards have a mixed reputation. Some people love them and swear by them, while others think they are nothing more than new age nonsense.

I have been on both sides of the fence, but now I'm a convert and I'll tell you why.

Action #1: Create a Smart Vision Board at Home and the Office

Traditional vision boards consist of things we think we want (big houses, fancy cars, the perfect person to marry, etc.).

However, it's rare that staring at the picture of an expensive car will result in actually owning one.

The *new* vision board is based on the process, not the end result. In other words, I have a vision board with images, text, and quotes that remind me what I need to be *DOING* each and every day in order to get the results I'm after.

Today, create your own vision board with reminders of what the process looks like for you on the way to achieve your grand goals.

You can learn more about the new vision board in my podcast episode:

[The NEW Vision Board: It's Not About Goals](#)

Action #2: Expect This to Take Time

I was very skeptical with the idea of having a vision board, but after giving it a few weeks, and then a few months, I really began to see the benefits.

Also, knowing what to put on your vision board is more of an art than a science. You will have to experiment and try different things to see what prompts you into action.

I tend to use motivational quotes to reshape my thinking more than inspiring images, but your experience may be different.

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Day #29

Hang Upside Down

I know what you may be thinking, "*Does Jeff really want me to hang upside down to be more productive? Is this for real?*"

Yes, that is exactly what I mean.

Here's why.

Action #1: Find the Right Method of Inversion For You

I discovered inversion a few years ago as a means to help my back recover during marathon training.

However, I also discovered that hanging upside down can make me more productive as well.

Today, research inversion and the different methods for hanging upside down. There are few to choose from and I have my own opinion on what works best.

You can learn more about inversion in my podcast episode:

[Inversion: Improve Your Health and Productivity by Hanging Upside Down](#)

Action #2: Schedule Time to Invert

One of the best things about inversion is that it doesn't take long to see great results.

In just 10 minutes a day you can dramatically improve the flexibility in your back and feel the results in your brain.

I find it best to invert just after my workout as a cool down strategy. Schedule a time that works best for you and, if you can, tack it on to the end of an exercise routine.

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Day #30

Mastermind Group

You made it! Welcome to the 30th and final day of The 5 AM Blueprint 30-Day Action Plan!

Today's action steps are aligned to you getting the most out of your own productivity by tapping into the genius of others around you.

Now, let's get started!

Action #1: Find a Local Mastermind Group to Join

Mastermind groups are very trendy, and for good reason, they work! A mastermind group is simply a gathering of like-minded people who help each other out, usually around the topics of business or personal growth.

Today, find a local mastermind group or start one yourself. It doesn't take much to get a group like this going.

Just find a few friends, colleagues, or even ambitious strangers who you have always wanted to hang out with anyway.

[Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) is a great place to start to find people in your area.

Action #2: Come Prepared

I have been a part of few masterminds in the past and the best ones are structured.

In other words, this is not a social get-together where everyone grabs a beer and talks about their favorite cat videos.

This is intended to be a fairly serious gathering of ambitious and driven people who are there to make the most of their time.

Structure your sessions, ask tough questions, and challenge each other to be the best you can be.

That's all for today, but I do have one final message for you.

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Day #31

It's Over, Now What?

That's it! You made it through 30 days of listening to me and you didn't give up.

Honestly, that's impressive.

Now, what should you do next?

The simple answer is whatever is most important to you. I know I threw a lot at you in the last 30 days and I really don't expect you to have tried everything, at least not all at once.

Being productive is an ongoing battle and achieving your life's grandest goals takes, well, a lifetime.

The next step is truly to focus your life around what is most important each and every day.

With the strategies that I outlined in my book and in The 5 AM Blueprint system, you have enough to keep you busy for quite a while.

As you work through the material I would love to hear about your progress.

I will be checking-in with you in a couple of week to see how things are going, but don't be shy, I'd love to answer any questions you have anytime.