

BEAT WRITER'S BLOCK

"I think the greatest barrier I've always faced as a writer is just starting. Like all of us, I can just procrastinate and find some excuse for not actually getting started."

JOHN AUGUST

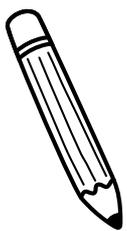
Try something new to shake yourself out of getting stuck!

Write badly: Toss out the rules, write something absurd. Go write something short, silly, inappropriate, undramatic, illogical, etc. and you'll be able to see just how good your 'regular' writing really is.



Create a writing playlist: Use Spotify, YouTube, an iPod, or cassette to make a musical mix that's going to put you in a writing mood. Take inspiration from movies in the same genre that you're writing in, find an instrumental piece that helps clear your mind and enhance your ability to focus, or create a soundtrack to your movie that you imagine playing as your story unfolds on screen.

Write an Oscar award acceptance speech: "And the winner goes to..." You of course! This is a reminder of who you owe on your journey to success. Who's on your team? Who encouraged you to write? What kept you going? And what message can you give to other aspiring screenwriters? Use this as inspiration to continue.



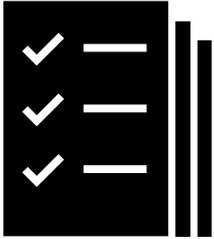
Try a new format: Take a break from screenwriting and go write something completely different. Start a blog. Commit to writing one tweet a day. Journal. Write an instructional guide on how to do your job or a hobby that you love. Get out of your comfort zone and write to a new readership. Develop a daily writing habit here if you can.

THE SCRIPT READER

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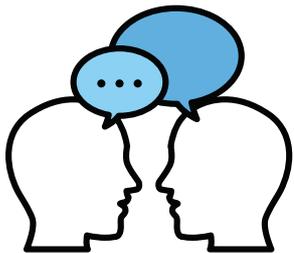
"That's my advice with dealing with writer's block. Follow the fun. If you aren't having fun, you are doing it wrong."

JORDAN PEELE



Set a goal: Having a deadline to work to not only reflects the real working life of a screenwriter, it's a fantastic motivator. Find a contest deadline you want to make. Use the limited amount of free time you have to work within. Get creative. Set an alarm clock, download a free pomodoro app, or commit to writing continuously in the time it takes for the pizza to cook! Start small, make it a habit, and go from there.

Join a writer's group: Find (or start) a local or online community of likeminded individuals who know exactly what you're going through. Don't be shy. Everyone there will have been the new member at one point too. This is a great way to find support, build a network of connections, find inspiration, collaboration, and accountability too.



Eavesdrop: Obviously not in a malicious manner, but start paying attention to what's going on around you. Listening into conversations, subtly of course, is a great way to learn dialogue. What's being said, but not said out loud. How do people express emotion? Imagine what ulterior motive each person has. Listen, learn, and let your imagination run wild.

Tidy your work area: Yeah, yeah, you've probably heard this one before, but less clutter, less stress, right? What's better than a good old clear out to get rid of the cobwebs (and distractions)? Make the place that you write in comfortable. Have everything you need at hand. Delete old files and organize your folders, notes, and files. Turn this into a weekly or monthly habit to stop things from becoming overwhelming.



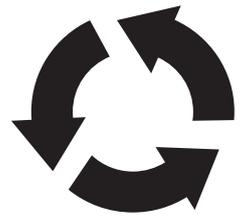
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"You don't start out writing good stuff. You start out writing crap and thinking it's good stuff, and then gradually you get better at it. That's why I say one of the most valuable traits is persistence."

OCTAVIA BUTLER

Serialize your story: Take whatever story you're working on and convert it into serialized fiction to help you break out of writer's block. There are several online platforms for writers to engage with readers who want to follow and comment on new work. You don't have to make your work public, but this is a great way to create a sense of accountability, encouraging you to write and publish regularly.



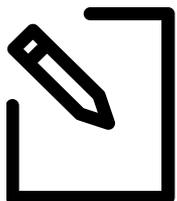
Wear a writing hat: If it worked for Dr. Seuss, it can work for you. Go get yourself a hat, some headwear, or any piece of clothing you will only ever wear when writing. Think of this as your uniform – the clothing that you wear when going to work as a writer. When you don your writing hat, you'll be in the zone and anyone around you will know not to disturb you too, plus it keeps the ideas from escaping apparently.



Take care of yourself: You're not going to write your best if you're not feeling your best. Your physical and mental health comes first. Sleep well, eat well, exercise, reconnect with nature, take a relaxing bath, even step away from writing altogether for a short break if it helps to take the stress off. Also please ignore that 'writer's need to drink or be high to be creative' stuff. It won't help you be on your A-game.



Give yourself a remit: Writing with restrictions forces you to be even more inventive and often with surprising results. It can definitely be a chore thinking up brilliant new ideas all the time, so take the strain off without losing any of the creativity by writing to a daily or weekly writing prompt. There are several great sites online that can dish out random prompts. Maybe you might even discover your million-dollar screenplay idea this way.



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"Don't waste time waiting for inspiration. Begin, and inspiration will find you."

H. JACKSON BROWN JR.



Change where you write: Okay, not everyone has the luxury of being able to do this, but a change of scene can go a long way to help break old destructive habits, create new ones, and inspire. A coffee shop, a library, the park, the commute to and from work where you'd normally tune out and listen to music, etc. Break the mould and try writing elsewhere to discover if it helps you to focus.

Reward yourself: Writing a spec script can be a thankless task for a really long time until you whip it into shape and it becomes industry-ready. You don't need to wait that long – give yourself a treat for completing a writing session, a small task, or manageable goal. Not only will this motivate you to keep going, it'll give you the sense that you've worked hard enough to earn that reward too.



Use a typewriter: This is more about changing your writing habits, so pen on paper or even turning off the computer monitor and writing blindly would work here. There's something a bit more permanent about physical writing. You can't easily rewrite or revise something on the page, forcing you to be more precise in your thinking and to just keep going. Try writing using a different medium to see if it changes your mental attitude.

Give yourself a pep talk: At the end of each writing session, write a note to yourself to be read the next time you sit down to write. This could be anything from a reminder to focus on a specific task, a 'job well done' note, an inspirational quote to put you into the right mindset, or even a silly doodle. You are your own champion. What would yesterday's you want to tell you today? .

**WELL
DONE**

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