



Watercooler rules
To amp up productivity,
save powwows with your
office pal for the afternoon.

Get more done on Mondays

How to whip your work ethic into shape after a lazy weekend **By Cristina Tudino**

I move in slow motion on Mondays, especially in summer. By day's end, my slackened speed has cost me—I've barely put a dent in my to do list. "The stark contrast between your pace on the weekend versus the week makes it tough to switch gears," says Laura Stack, author of *Find More Time* (Broadway Books). "Adapting your habits can save you stress as the week unfolds." Try these tips to hit the ground running.

Alter your a.m. routine. Going through the motions in the morning makes you sluggish; it wires your brain into rut mode, says Ellen Weber, Ph.D., director of the MITA International Brain-Based Renewal Center in Rochester, New York. Ditch your ritual and try something new: Listen to classical music instead of jazz on your commute. You may think faster on your feet.

Jump in the deep end. Once you get to the office, Stack suggests, tackle a tough task first thing, instead of gradually settling in. "Pick a project that requires analytical thinking but that will take no more than an hour," she says. Forcing yourself to bang out a memo sets a productive tone. Plus, the brain is often better suited to cognitive tasks before noon, Stack notes.

Inject some fun into your Monday. "Unstructured time on Saturday and Sunday can cause a surprising amount of stress," Weber says. By Monday, the residual anxiety can elevate cortisol levels, making it difficult to buckle down. Lower your stress level by treating yourself to one small luxury—such as meeting a friend at a favorite lunch spot. It should help you relax, focus and get down to business afterward.