

How to get to your Flow State

Getting into the Flow state is the crucial step you need to achieve a state of peak performance. The Flow state means reaching a higher level of consciousness, leading you to the zone where you can achieve anything without fear of failure.

When you are in your zone, time flies by without you noticing. Nothing distracts you from the task you are performing. For example, this task could be writing an article, creating music or playing your best round of golf. This state of consciousness is the Flow state and is very addictive because it is pleasurable to be in it.

So, why can't we get into our Flow state when we want to. So often, when you start a task, you find yourself distracted and make no progress which leaves you feeling dissatisfied and frustrated. So why does this happen, and what can you do to fix this? The two main reasons that stop you from getting into the flow state are:

- You have a wandering mind as you haven't settled on a single chain of thought that you can use to execute the task in mind, which happens when you have no clear plan and direction for the task at hand.
- You have a clear plan but are unsure if you can complete the task to the standard you have set yourself, so your mind keeps flitting around for possible fixes and workarounds that match your perceived self-inability.

You can solve the first reason by visualising the intent and the goal of the task you have in mind. First, make the vision of your goal attractive to you to develop the motivation to execute it. Next, vocalise the intent and the goal to yourself with clarity so that your conscious mind hears it as a positive self-affirmation. Positive self-affirmations gradually feed through to the subconscious mind, which, as I will explain shortly, is the key to solving the second reason.

Solving reason two is more complicated.

The main culprit for Reason two is the part of your brain called the frontal lobe. The frontal lobe is the part of the brain responsible for, amongst other things, how you behave and the way you interact socially with others. It has memory functions that retain all your good experiences and not-so-good experiences. It uses this memory to serve and protect you by providing you with the power of cognitive thinking. I call it the governor lobe as it thinks it always makes the correct calls on your behalf. But, as with any governor, it sometimes becomes overprotective through excessive cognitive thinking, which prevents you from freestyling and constrains creativity in your abilities. The fear of failure results from this excessive cognitive thinking in all of us.

The governor lobe likes rules and a framework to operate within. To break out of the control of the governor lobe, you must free yourself from its framework. You do this by setting in motion actions and thoughts with a rhythm. For example, if your task is a physical task such as a golf swing, swing the club back and forth like a pendulum, away from the ball, without regard to the swing constraints that your frontal lobe imposes on you to prevent past failures. You will soon notice how much your body relaxes when your excessive cognitive thinking quiets down. Keep this quiet state when you perform the actual swing and see the difference.

If your task is writing an article, start jotting down thoughts as they come into your mind without constraining yourself with the nuances of structure, grammar, or specific relevance.

Developing such behaviours creates a habit and takes control away from the frontal lobe. Habits happen at the subconscious level and are a way to stay clear of the excessive cognitive thinking that allows the frontal lobe to control you. Habits are the key to taking yourself to the zone where you create extraordinary output. The frontal lobe is very good at taking back control, so you must develop routines that trigger a habit that passes control over to the subconscious mind.

Trigger routines should be a sequence of physical and mental actions such as switching off the phone, vocalising a self-affirmation and sitting at your favourite place to write an article. For some, the sequence could be making a cup of coffee, turning on music and slipping on a pair of comfortable slippers.

Getting to your flow state means less cognitive control and giving control to your subconscious mind. Once you get to the flow state, you will be amazed by your creativity and achievements.