

Brain Hacks: 5 Neuroscience strategies to boost your performance

The field of neuroscience has provided us with a wealth of knowledge about how the brain functions, and this knowledge can be applied not only to our everyday lives but to our personal and team performance. What makes this exciting is that now more than ever, we have access to easily applicable tools that can make an impact in our performance almost immediately.

Temps de lecture : minute

29 April 2023

Here are five neuroscience “hacks” that can help boost your performance and the performance of your team:

Attentional Narrowing

Attentional narrowing is a process where we focus our attention on a specific task or stimuli and block out distractions. Research has shown that elite athletes narrow their attention, focusing on the next immediate goal as they perform. This can be a useful tool when we need to concentrate on a task that requires a high level of attention. Some studies suggest that staring at an object for 30 seconds to a minute can help activate the brain's attentional system and enhance focus. Another tool is the use of visualization techniques. By visualizing the task at hand and mentally blocking out any distractions, we can enhance our focus and improve our performance.

Another way to achieve attentional narrowing is through meditation and

mindfulness. Meditation and mindfulness help us train our brains to focus on one thing and ignore distractions. This can be particularly helpful in high-stress situations where our attention tends to wander.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Diaphragmatic breathing is a technique that involves breathing deeply from the diaphragm rather than shallowly from the chest. This type of breathing has been shown to reduce the sympathetic nervous system response and activate our parasympathetic nervous system – reducing stress, improving concentration, and enhancing performance.

To practice diaphragmatic breathing, sit or stand up straight and take a deep breath in through your nose, filling your belly with air. Hold the breath for a few seconds and then slowly exhale through your mouth as slowly as you can without causing panic. Make sure your exhale is longer than your inhale or you will cause hyperventilation. Repeat this process several times, focusing on your breath and relaxing your body.

Setting Smaller Goals

Sometimes we set goals too grand and they can have a demotivating affect. Setting smaller goals can be an effective way to create mini-rewards that can help boost motivation and performance. Rather than focusing solely on the end goal, break it down into smaller, more manageable tasks. Each time you complete a task, you will get a sense of accomplishment, which releases dopamine, increases motivation and helps you stay on track.

For example, if your goal is to write a book, break it down into smaller tasks such as writing a certain number of pages each day or completing a chapter by a specific date. Each time you complete one of these tasks, celebrate it so you train your brain to feel successful. That feeling of

accomplishment helps you stay motivated and focused.

Powerful Posture to Change Brain Chemistry

The way we hold ourselves can have a significant impact on our brain chemistry and our overall performance. Power posing, for example, is a technique that involves holding a posture that conveys confidence and power, even if you don't feel it. Research has shown that holding a power pose for as little as two minutes can increase testosterone levels, reduce cortisol (the stress hormone), and improve performance.

Learn to pay attention and build self-awareness around your posture when you need to perform at a high level. To try “power posing”, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your hands on your hips, chest lifted, and chin up. This pose has also been known as the Superman or Superwoman post. Take several diaphragmatic breaths, hold the pose for a few minutes, and watch how everything changes.

Controlling the Narrative

Our brains are wired to tell stories, and the stories we tell ourselves construct our perception of reality which can have a powerful impact on our performance. Reframing negative experiences as positive ones can help us overcome self-limiting beliefs and achieve our goals. This technique involves changing the way we think about past experiences to create a more positive narrative.

For example, if you failed at a task, instead of thinking of it as a failure, reframe it as a learning experience. I also say, “failure is part of the equation for success. You can't succeed without it.” Ask yourself what you learned from the experience and how you can use that knowledge to improve in the future.

There are countless ways to leverage the power of our brains through neuroscience. Start with these five neuroscience hacks to help boost performance and productivity. Attentional narrowing, diaphragmatic breathing, setting smaller goals, powerful posture, and controlling the narrative can all help us achieve our goals and overcome obstacles. By incorporating these hacks into your daily routine, you can improve your performance and the performance of your team. Additionally, these hacks can help reduce stress and improve overall well-being, making them valuable tools for both personal and professional growth. I challenge you to master them for yourself and then teach them to your teams.

René Rodriguez is a TEDx and keynote speaker, leadership advisor and author of *Amplify Your Influence: Transform How You Communicate and Lead* (Wiley)

WALL STREET
JOURNAL
BESTSELLER

AMPLIFY YOUR INFLUENCE

TRANSFORM HOW YOU
COMMUNICATE AND LEAD

RENÉ RODRIGUEZ

WILEY

[Buy Amplify Your Influence](#)

Article by René Rodriguez