



Walt Hampton, J.D. is a law practice management consultant and executive coach. He is the best-selling author of *Journeys on the Edge: Living a Life That Matters*, and *The Power Principles of Time Mastery: Do Less, Make More, Have Fun*.

I didn't run at all that last week. Well, that's not exactly true: I ran an ultra-marathon; 36 miles. But the week leading up to the race: I didn't run. (It's what runners call the taper.) It made me pretty crazy.

Not running screws with my mind: Who am I if I am not running? Runners run. Doers do.

But maybe that's not exactly true either. Because success—real success, sustainable success—requires both doing *and* not doing. And often, *it's the not doing that actually empowers us to do*.

It's incontrovertible that rest and recovery are essential components of peak performance in athletics. Not doing is critically important in the repair of muscle; in the recovery of tendons, ligaments and bones; in the re-balancing of hormones and body chemistry; in the recovery of our nervous system and mental state.

But rarely do we apply these principles to our businesses and our careers. (Or our lives for that matter!) We lawyers, in particular, like to think (pretend) that they don't apply to us; that we're different; that we're macho; that we can muscle through. We keep going like hamsters on a wheel; 24/7/365. Always on; always connected. We don't stop; we don't rest and recover.

7 Ways to Do Less to Succeed More

By Walt Hampton

We never taper. And then, of course,

- Productivity drops
- Stress soars
- Decision fatigue creeps in
- Mistakes multiply
- Morale plummets

(Oh, and relationships get damaged and marriages unravel and our children grow distant and our health deteriorates and we forget why we were on the wheel to start with. Or why this great work that we get to do really matters.)

But just a few tweaks can change up the entire game for you:

- 1. Work Less.** When we work more than 50 hours per week, our productivity drops dramatically. In fact, a Stanford University study demonstrated that folks who worked 70 hours a week accomplished no more than those who worked 55.
- 2. Sleep more.** There is no more powerful tool for rest, recovery and peak performance than sleep; and most of us aren't getting nearly enough. Sleep deprivation is cited often as a contributing cause in significant accidents. With optimal sleep, our acuity increases and our error rate (you might read this as malpractice) decreases.
- 3. Create some white space** on your calendar. Back to back appointments all day long are exhausting. They're unrealistic, too, because things often run over. Build in buffers for yourself. Create time between obligations and commitments that you can use to get a breath of fresh air, take a short walk, drink some water, listen to a bit of relaxing music, read a chapter in a book.
- 4. Hydrate.** Drink water. Often. Throughout the day. Most of us spend our days in a relative state of dehydration that

dulls our minds and compromises our focus. To stay sharp, keep a bottle of water close at hand. (Oh, and when you're feeling hungry? It's often because you're thirsty. Hydrating will help keep you away from the junk food trough too.)

5. Get off the grid. The technology that was meant to serve us has enslaved us. We are inundated with demands and assaulted with information. It never stops. But you can stop. Try a smartphone free lunch or dinner (or entire evening).

6. Take a mental health day (or half) day on a regular basis. Step away from the work; connect with your loved ones; pursue your passions.

7. Take your vacations. All of them. And make them real vacations. (A working vacation is not a vacation.) Last year in the U.S. there were 658 unused vacation days. (If you don't want yours, you can give them to me. I promise they won't be wasted.)

When you embrace the science; when you take the time to nurture yourself; when you allow yourself to rest and recover; when you give yourself permission *not* to do; when you can see—and believe—that not doing is doing; then...you re-create yourself; you come back stronger; you get to perform and serve at an even higher level; and make an even greater impact in the world.

I showed up at the starting line of my race (battling my demons of depravity); and ran the 36 miles; and *crushed* my previous times. Sure, I trained. But training (and living) means doing... *and* not doing. **CL**



See Walt Hampton speak on mindfulness on November 10. Sign up at ctbar.org/calendar.