

Getting to Done – Finishing Your First Draft

1. Manage expectations

- Write the most compelling story that only you can write.
- The first draft is just that – a draft. Write your story and focus on progress, not perfection.

2. Embrace the messiness and imperfect process of writing

- Expect to write sections that are fantastic and sections that are ...not so fantastic. This is part of the process – celebrate and embrace it.
- Keep an open mind and keep your expectations in check as you go. This is about getting words on the page.

3. Write regularly

- Writing regularly doesn't necessarily mean writing every day, but do try to establish a consistent writing habit.
- When you've finished your writing session, jot down some notes about what comes next in your story so you know where to start when you show up at the page again.

4. Know your writing style and if you need help

- Experiment with what time of day works best to write – in the morning / evening / at lunch.
- Write in 15-20 minute increments at a time if that works – there is no right or wrong way to write a book.
- Find a trusted friend or fellow writer to serve as an accountability partner if you need someone to hold you accountable for your writing time.

5. Get honest about road blocks to finishing

- Time is rarely the issue as a roadblock to writing, usually there's an underlying fear that stands in the way.
- Notice fear of judgment: Are you concerned that others may not like your book? Are you worried about being judged, about not being "perfect," or for not knowing "the next step" is in the writing process?
- Part of the writer's journey is being brave enough to push through the fear and get the draft finished.

6. Know when to call it good

- Knowing when a book is finished is an art and a science. You'll improve your ability to sense when a book is finished the more you write.
- Endless revising and tweaking can indicate a fear of what will happen "now that you're done." Finish your book where you think it needs to end, set it aside for a little while, and then find a trusted first reader to give you honest, constructive feedback with kindness and compassion.