

TIME FOR INCUBATION



To generate ideas via incubation, you must have the knowledge available in your mind (people who are famous for their Eureka moments usually thought long and hard about the problem), but not focus consciously on it. To do so you need time where you slow down and are open for any insights you might have.



While this usually does not look like much (you are doing 'nothing'), these moments are scarce today. There is this need to use time efficiently (it *is* the most precious commodity), and that you *are* using your time (for incubation) is usually hard to convey.

However, there are some activities you can do that will give you this time — and which are either socially accepted or hard to notice.

walking	Go for a walk, e.g., after lunch, or walk to your workplace if you live close. It will also improve your health and give you time to wind down from work. Make sure you have something to write/record with you (see page 111f).
bathing	You are essentially sitting around, relaxing, letting your mind come up with ideas. Just make sure you have a ready infrastructure to capture ideas (see page 119f).
shower	Shorter than the bathtub, but also a good place for capturing ideas (see page 117f).
toilet	Strange as it may seem, for some people its the only time at work or at home they have when they can relax for a moment. Don't read a book or a magazine, be open to ideas (see page 122).
before falling asleep/standing up	Lying in bed (alone) is a great time for ideas, but you need to capture them, because you will likely forget them in the morning — and there are ways to do so (see page 115f).
meditation/Yoga	The socially accepted and healthy form of doing nothing and great for ideas.
midday sleep	Socially accepted in some contexts and very helpful to regain strength and process information.
presentations and meetings	Great time for ideas, you sit around, do nothing ¹ (much), and you usually have something to write (see page 121).
daydream	Relax your muscles, become calm and focus on yourself. Try to allow yourself all kinds of silly thoughts.

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classical concerts	While writing is a problem (use the program leaflet), it is a time when people sit around and do nothing besides listening — and a good place for ideas.
traveling alone/as passenger	You combine stimulating changes in scenery with time to focus on yourself and your projects. Travel by train is especially recommended (see page 113).
spending time alone	Social engagement is good and social ties necessary, but you need time alone to hear your own thoughts.
endurance solo sport (e.g., jogging)	If your body is busy with motions it could do while sleeping, your mind is free to get to ideas. Jogging and other forms of endurance sports (e.g., home trainer) are very good times to get ideas. Choose a suiting speed, which your body can keep without effort, and capture ideas while doing sports. Also see page 120.
driving the car	Not really recommended as you need your attention for the road, but possible if you usually drive the same route (don't hold me responsible if you cause a crash, and see page 112).



¹ The meetings of the "kill me now!" type, to quote Merlin Mann's presentation: <http://www.43folders.com/2010/10/06/broken-meetings>