

10 Ways to Use the Post-Holiday Lull for Personal Growth

Welcome to the post-holiday lull, one of the few anomalous weeks in the year when even the United States slows down for a bit. The entire continents of South America and Europe are on holiday. Everyone in the office is still out on vacation, or they're working remotely. And you have the week off.

It can be easy to use this time to slack off and purely for consumption. But if you really want to finish your year and start the next one on a strong note, you can use this week to get a head start on all the other vacationers.

Here are 10 ways to do that:

1. Read a lot of books

The holidays are a great time to catch up on your reading list. Build uninterrupted reading time into a couple of your days. No one and nothing will be around to distract you – or at least, nothing with a better claim to your time.

2. Pick up a new habit

Don't wait until the new year. Start experimenting and picking up momentum now. If you want to start blogging every day, blog every day of the post-holiday lull. See if it works for you.

3. Take care of maintenance chores

Today I got a tire change and a wheel alignment. Odds are, you probably have a similar maintenance chore you've been putting off for an opportune time. This is a great week to get that chore off your plate.

4. Examine your financial life

You probably just spent a bunch of money for Christmas, and you probably have allowed the holiday work + family rush to keep you from auditing your financials closely. Use the post-holiday lull to check your expenses, replenish your accounts, close out liabilities, and plan new/improved income streams for the year ahead.

5. Learn a new skill

If your work requires you to move fast and shift focus regularly, you probably don't get much time to acquire new skills off the job. Take time in the post-holiday lull to self-teach or absorb an online course/videos on a skill like photography or videography. It might help

you in the year ahead.

6. Run followup

Do all the things you said you were going to do but didn't get around to. You don't want to carry your procrastinations, hesitations, and shame with you into the new year.

7. Clean up your junk

Clear up some space on your computer's hard drive. Box away all the crap you got for Christmas. Reduce the hold which possessions have on your mind and your space.

8. Clear your calendar

Alongside physical and digital junk, you probably have a good bit of schedule junk left over from the past year. I have a Google calendar full of now-defunct repeating events. Use this week to remove commitments (to yourself or other people) that no longer serve you. Conserve your energy and time so you can use it for something better in the year ahead.

9. Get to inbox zero

No one is expecting you to respond to email over the holidays, which makes this a perfect time for you to respond to your email. Odds are you've let the pressure of a mounting inbox keep you from keeping up. Now that the pressure is off for a few days, catch the hell up.

10. Map out the year ahead

Create a "product roadmap" for your own life in the year ahead. What trips will you take? What books will you read? What experiences will you have? What life milestones will you reach? What bad habits will you eliminate? Ask yourself these questions, answer them, and give yourself timelines in the next year.