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4 Reasonable Ways to Achieve Overnight Success

Most of the time, I think our constant quest for overnight success is a trap.

We get so obsessed on the goal that we forget that the system is what matters (<https://jamesclear.com/goals-systems>). We get so obsessed with the outcome that we overlook the repetitions we need to do to get there (<https://jamesclear.com/repetitions>). We become so focused on the short-term results that we forget to build the long-term habits that make the real difference (<https://jamesclear.com/habit-guide>).

However, there are a few strategies—four of them at least—that will actually accelerate the results you enjoy without ignoring the importance of building better habits (<https://jamesclear.com/habits>). I call these strategies “Behavior Multipliers” because they multiply and enhance your ability to take the right action on a consistent basis.

Let's talk about these multipliers, how they work, and how they can get you closer to achieving overnight success.

The Behavior Multipliers

1. Rapid Feedback.

As Seth Godin says, “The best way to change long-term behavior is with short-term feedback.” The more immediate the feedback that you get, the quicker you can make adjustments to your behavior. (This is why it's important to measure backward (<https://jamesclear.com/measure-backward>).

My friend Ben Altman (<http://www.charismaoncommand.com/newsletter/>) shared a good example with me recently. He had a client who wanted to improve his posture. That's a hard thing to do because typically the only feedback you get on posture is if someone tells you that you are slouching or if you see yourself in the mirror. That's very slow and inconsistent feedback.

Instead, his client stood in an upright position with good posture and placed a piece of tape across his shoulder. When he slouched, the tape pulled just enough on his shirt so that he noticed the change. Suddenly, he had immediate feedback whenever his posture changed and it became much easier to maintain good posture throughout the day.

The most foundational aspect of a new habit (<https://jamesclear.com/habit-guide>) is awareness. If you're not aware of your habits, how can you expect to change them? This is why feedback is so important. Faster feedback leads to faster results.

2. Simplicity.

The best productivity strategy (<https://jamesclear.com/productivity-tip>) is to

eliminate the things that derail your productivity. If you live a life with fewer distractions, it becomes much easier to take effective action.

The Pareto Principle (<https://jamesclear.com/the-1-percent-rule>), often called the 80-20 rule, is a commonly shared idea that 80 percent of the results in a given endeavor come from 20 percent of the work. (i.e. 80 percent of your revenue comes from the best 20 percent of your clients.)

Most of the time, people bring this rule up as a way to point out that you should focus on that top 20 percent. “Put all of your energy into the things that provide the biggest benefit!” This is excellent advice, but what we often forget is that even if you know what the top 20 percent is, you still need to avoid the pitfall of wasting time on the remaining 80 percent of tasks.

In many cases, the danger isn't knowing what the most important task is for the day. The danger is doing the 7th-most important thing before you do the most important thing.

Don't just identify the 20 percent of strategies that are most effective, eliminate the 80 percent of strategies that are wasteful. When the distractions are taken away from you, it becomes much easier to stay focused (<https://jamesclear.com/stay-focused>).

3. Environment.

In my opinion, this is the greatest success “hack” there is. If you live in an environment that nudges you toward the right decision and if you surround yourself with people who make your new behavior seem normal, then you'll find

success is almost an afterthought.

The world around us shapes our behavior. Consider the home you live in, for example. There are many cues built into your home, probably hundreds or thousands, that shape your behavior in small ways.

- Is there food sitting on the counter? You're more likely to pick it up and eat it.
- Do your couches and chairs face the television? You're more likely to sit down and turn it on.

And it works the other way too...

- Are your running shoes and gym shorts laid out the night before? You'll be more likely to suit up and go for a run tomorrow.
- Do you work at an office with healthy and fit people? If so, you'll be more likely to see exercise and activity as a normal way of life.

Every environment promotes some behaviors and prevents others. The key is to be in an environment that supports the results you want to achieve (<https://jamesclear.com/power-of-environment>).

The people and places that surround us fill our days with little cues and triggers that can make our habits easier to follow or harder to build. Are you fighting your environment to make change happen? Or does your environment make your new behavior effortless?

4. Ability.

If your skills in a particular area are better, then making sustained progress will be

easier.

For example, if you can already do 100 pushups in a row, then developing a habit of doing 10 pushups per day seems relatively easy. If, however, your maximum is 10 pushups in a row, then doing 10 pushups per day is far more taxing.

This is also where talent and genetic potential come into the picture. It is far easier to become an overnight success in basketball if you are 7 feet tall rather than if you are 5 feet tall. Play a game that rewards your skill set and success will come faster.

Overnight Success

I still think overnight success is a myth. There's no way to avoid one simple fact: you have to put in the work.

That said, these four strategies make rapid success more reasonable:

1. Get short-term feedback.
 2. Simplify and eliminate distractions.
 3. Surround yourself with an environment that promotes your new behavior.
 4. Play a game that leverages your skill set.
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With each donation, AMF distributes nets to protect children, pregnant mothers, and families from mosquitos carrying malaria. It is one of the most cost-effective ways to extend life and fulfills my bigger mission to spread healthy habits and help others realize their full potential.

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