

Top tips for being creative
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Although being creative is not necessarily part of day-to-day academic life, it can be helpful in the teaching or research process as a way of developing new ideas. Here are my top ten tips for stimulating creativity in the workplace.

Change the perspective: Key to the creative approach is look at a topic or problem from a different angle or standpoint. By shifting perspective when looking at a problem, novel and innovative thinking can be stimulated.

Develop your divergent thinking skills: Learning to think in different ways can also aid divergent thinking skills that in turn can aid creativity.

Take risks and make mistakes: Things are never meant to be perfect. If you're not taking risks and making mistakes you aren't being creative.

Break your routine: On a practical level, if you've been at your desk for a few hours, take a short walk to give

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yourself a break from thinking. This may help the 'creative juices' to start flowing.

Keep an “idea” book handy: Good ideas often come when we are in a state of light trance (commuting back from work, relaxing in the bath, sitting on the toilet, etc). Always have a notebook or something to hand to record your thoughts (e.g., a voice recording device).

Regularly review your ideas: By keeping notes of all your ideas you can review them regularly. Creativity can be enhanced by trying to force connections between your ideas.

Be intuitive: To be creative you need to develop your intuition. Other abstract skills like using visualisation may also help in the creative process.

Force change in your environment: Simple things like making your work space more visually stimulating or taking a different route to work can trigger new ways of thinking about something.

Test boundaries: Exceed your job description and “think outside the box.” Although taking risks will not always work, the long-term benefits will usually outweigh the short-term disadvantages.

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Interact with others: 'Brainstorming' ideas with other people will nearly always be more productive than trying to come up with something on your own.