Tips for Using Studio Time Productively:
Environment, Attitude, Motivation

- Clock in. Treat your studio time as a job. By putting on your apron or work clothes you'll send a signal to your brain that you're now in "work mode".

- Disconnect from the outside world. Turn off notifications on your phone. Or silence your phone and turn it over. Do not let the outside world intrude into your studio time.

- If your studio is not in a private space, set boundaries with the others so that you can create expansive mental space, uninterrupted.

- Listen to music. Pay attention to what kind of music is best for different parts of your creative process. For instance, does one kind of music get you motivated? Does another type keep you in a flow?

- Listen to podcasts. These are useful for substituting the voices you hear in your head (self talk) for voices of other people talking about interesting things. Or dumb things. Or funny things.

- "Motivation follows action." In other words, if you want to feel motivated, just start. The feeling of motivation will follow.

- It takes 20-30 minutes for your brain to become engaged in a project. When you don't feel motivated try committing to just 30 minutes. If after 30 minutes you still don't feel connected to the activity, maybe you need a day off from your studio work.

- Try this focus booster: the Pomodoro Technique: set a timer and work intensely for 25 minutes, then take a 5 minute break. During the 25 minutes do not look at your phone, talk to anyone, stare out the window, etc. Do nothing but the task at hand. During the break do whatever you like but don't work. Here is a good short introduction:http://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/the-pomodoro-technique-is-it-right-for-you.html

- The next time you tell yourself "I don't have time", say this to yourself instead: "it's not a priority." And, then, think about the implications of that statement.

- Attitude adjustment: The next time you find yourself saying "I have to", substitute "I *get* to".

- "Nothing is more exhausting than the task that is never started"—Gretchen Rubin, author of The Happiness Project

- Lifehacker.com is a good source for information on getting things done (GTD) and more.

Being alone in the studio is a time to learn about your self and your creative process. For example, sometimes you don't feel like working at all. How do you know you're not just being lazy? Maybe what you really need is to stare out the window for a while. Through experience and self awareness you can come to trust your process. Sometimes you will find that the most productive thing you can do is to do nothing.

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