Twitter Thread by Steve Magness



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THREAD

The world is littered with hacks and quick fixes.

Magic routines, butter in our coffee, special supplements, exotic foods. All promising to transform our lives.

Nearly all of it is BS. Here are 12 science-backed "hacks" that actually work.

Read a Book.

An expert in their field has taken their vast knowledge and distilled it to what's most important. Writing forces you to make difficult decisions on what's important and what's not. Writing demands clarity. You're getting an expert's lifetime of work for $15.

Talk to people who know more.

The best way to "hack" knowledge? Have a conversation with those who are informed. They've done the hard part of figuring out of sorting through the mess of information AND making sense of it. Having a conversation brings clarity for application.

Show up, no matter what.

Day after day. Sit down to write. Get out to exercise. Whatever the task you're trying to master, just keep showing up.

If you show up enough, you'll get better.

Sleep.

Just getting your 8+ hours has enormous benefits from the psychological to physical. Sleep is when your body restores & grows with its highest output of growth hormones, & when your mind processes and coalesces information. Translating knowledge from superficial to deep

Move. Often easy. Occasionally with ferocious intensity.

Get out and move. Most should be easy to moderate so you can keep coming back day after day. Some should be moderate/hard. And very occasionally you should "go see god" to remind yourself what going to the well is like.

Find Nature.

Being outside can increase creativity, mood, and well-being. Just being near nature, according to one study, was equivalent health-wise to being 7 years younger. Even just looking at pictures of nature can do the trick, improving mood and performance.

Form Lasting Relationships.

One of our fundamental needs as a person is to belong. If we satisfy this need, our health and motivation improve We're more likely to persist, and tackle difficult challenges.

One study found that being with a friend or loved one made challenging tasks appear to be a bit more manageable. Another found that being around a loved one, decreased our stress response to frightening things.

Feeling like we belong allows us to feel secure in who we are.

Surround Yourself Wisely

Moods and behaviors are contagious. Research from the Framingham study found that sadness and happiness rippled through the town. Living nearby a friend who becomes happy increases your probability of becoming happy by 25%

Research has found that sitting close to a high performer improved performance by 15%.

Sitting close to a low performer decreased performance by 30%.

Surround yourself with people who lift you up. https://t.co/KTms7fVddp

Challenge Yourself Ever So Slightly

When life is too easy, we get bored and unmotivated. When we don't have a shot at winning, our motivation wanes and we give up.

Find challenges that are in the sweet spot of just beyond your current capabilities. A slight stretch.

For most, don't diet.

Find something that is sustainable. Dieting is akin to going all-in on the latest exercise fad, lasting for 3 weeks and giving up exercising for 6 months…It's much better to find something that is sustainable for you.

What you find sustainable will be different from me and friends and family. That's fine. Eat real foods and limit heavily processed ones. Your diet isn't your religion or who you are.

Behave like a Kindergartner...(on some things!)

Follow your interests. Go deep when something catches your eye. But don't be afraid to ditch it and move on to the next thing if it no longer meets your needs. Don't tie your identity too closely to what you do. Explore the world.

Have a purpose that's greater than yourself.

A self-transcending purpose allows us to persist a bit longer, perform a bit better. In physical pursuits, our brain loosens the reigns allowing us to dig a bit deeper.

In life, according to a Harvard study, those who had meaning and purpose in their life lived longer and healthier lives. https://t.co/NWSXGyOziZ

None of these things are real "hacks." In fact, they are all pretty boring and straightforward.

Move. Sleep. Belong.

But that's the point. We spend so much time looking for shortcuts when the boring stuff right in front of us has a much bigger effect.

Choose the boring stuff!

Most of us need to focus on the 99%, not the 1%.

We are seeking the silver bullet, when the reality is we need to zoom back out and nail the basics before we even consider the final 1 percent.

If you enjoyed this thread, I tweet threads about the science of performance 2x per week, so follow along!

If you like deep dives on topics, consider checking out my free weekly newsletter.

Thanks for taking the time to read my work! https://t.co/Esomf74PKg