

The S.T.A.R.T. Cheat Sheet



NEUROGENETICS INSTITUTE

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Stage

Prep the space before you sit down.

- ▶ Phone lives in **another room** — distance beats discipline, every time
- ▶ 60-second desk reset: surface clear, water poured, materials out
- ▶ Laptop staged: blocker on, one tab per task, notifications off

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Trigger

A fixed 2-minute ritual that always precedes work.

- ▶ Same 3 steps, same order, every session — e.g. water → phone home → write today's one goal
- ▶ The ritual decides, so you don't have to: starting stops being a choice
- ▶ Run it *especially* on days you don't feel like it

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Activate

The first task is deliberately too small to fail.

- ▶ 2 minutes, one obvious "done" — 3 flashcards, 2 questions, title + 2 bullets
- ▶ Small enough that resistance can't argue with it
- ▶ Momentum finishes what motivation couldn't start

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Repeat

Short work blocks with real breaks.

- ▶ Pick your shape — 25/5 or 50/10 — and keep it fixed
- ▶ Breaks contain **no feeds**: stretch, water, window, walk
- ▶ "Study for 3 hours" is a wish. Blocks are a system

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Track

A visible log, so momentum is seen instead of felt.

- ▶ One tick per completed block — on paper, on a wall, somewhere you'll see daily
- ▶ Count blocks, not hours: blocks are honest
- ▶ Don't break the chain — and if you do, never miss twice

THE 2-MINUTE RULE

If it takes under 2 minutes and it's blocking you — do it now. If it's your opening task — shrink it until it fits in 2.

THE PHONE RULE

Out of the room, not face-down. Presence alone taxes working memory — even face-down, even off.

THE SWITCH COST

One interruption ≈ minutes of working-memory tax, ~23 min to fully refocus. "Just one check" is never one.

THE TAB RULE

One tab per task. New task opens = old tab closes. Your laptop runs one mode at a time.

☒ The Reset (when a block goes wrong)

1. Don't negotiate: A blown block is data, not a verdict on your character
2. Re-run the Trigger — the full 2-minute ritual, no shortcuts
3. Shrink the next task until it's too small to fail, and tick it when done

☒ Music: the quick guide

Lyrics: compete with reading and writing — fine for maths drills or tidying notes, costly for anything verbal.

Instrumental: is the sweet spot: new tracks invite listening; known tracks fade into background. Silence is never a downgrade.