

MASTER YOUR MINDSET AUDIO SERIES 2  
TRANSCRIPTIONS

MP3 AUDIO #4

# Energy Management

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Audio Series by Yaro Starak

## Energy Management, The Ultradian Rhythm, And Recovery

Hello, this is Yaro, and welcome to a Master Your Mindset audio. Today's topic is energy management, one of my favorite mindset subjects because it gave me justification for the kind of lifestyle I like to lead in two ways. It showed me, like the 80/20 rule did, that it's important to focus on small bursts of concentrated effort on what you're good at and, importantly, it reinforces the importance of changing tasks on a regular basis throughout the day. I'll tell you more about why that is throughout this audio.

My introduction to the energy management concept really came through two people. It was Eben Pagan, but Eben was actually drawing upon his training from Tony Schwartz, who is really the energy management guru, especially when it comes to applying energy management to the workforce, what companies can apply to their employees to get better productivity and overall have happier employees.

We can take the concepts that Tony has surfaced and researched and apply it to what we do as entrepreneurs. In fact, as entrepreneurs, bloggers, and lifestyle designers we have one of the best opportunities to leverage what Tony's talking about with energy management, because we have the flexibility to apply it thoroughly to our lives.

So what did Tony do? Obviously, Tony has a huge body of work about energy management, but what I want to point out to you is probably the two subjects that he talked about that really resonated with me, and it all began with his research into professional tennis.

If you know me, I'm a super tennis fan, so this was the perfect combination of two subjects I love – business and tennis – and then Tony just happened to combine them and do his research with professional tennis players.

What Tony was trying to do was determine why it is that certain players were significantly better than other players. We're talking the top five players versus the top 100. When you look at the mechanics behind a tennis player, and the skills and the dedication, the difference between a 100<sup>th</sup>-ranked player and the top 5-ranked player is actually quite marginal. On the surface they're just as fit as each other. They seem to be able to hit the ball just as well. Sure, each player has strengths and weaknesses, but on average and on surface appearance they seem to be relatively the same, so what gave the top 5 players that extra edge?

Tony's research concluded that the best players were really adept at disengaging from the activity they were doing. In this case, obviously they were having an intense rally in a game of tennis, and it was their ability to disengage between points that gave them the extra edge. Why did it do that? It gave them the ability to recuperate just a little bit better than other players did.

They were doing things like monitoring heart rate, muscle response rates, and things like that, and the conclusion was that recovery is as important as performance. So when it comes to tennis, those little periods of micro-recovery between points were what made the difference between the very best players and the top 100 and back players.

I found this very interesting because I started to think about when I play tennis and whether I would disengage between points, and how I would feel emotionally. One of the things Tony pointed out is often the best players will deliberately do things that take them away from the point they just played to remove any sort of emotional connection to what just happened in that point. They might turn away from the net. They might fiddle around with their racquet. They might look at something else.

It's a complete disengagement from the intensity of what just happened in the performance time, and that's really subtle if you think about it. It's not something that you're ever going to see obviously on a tennis court when you watch a game. I actually started looking for it. I started watching professional tennis players to see if I could see if Rafael Nadal would disengage more than someone else he was playing, and it wasn't really obvious to me watching tennis, but I really love the principle and the importance of recovery.

So that's the first point that Tony really surfaced. It's the ability to disengage from whatever activity you're doing, in particular a performance activity, and give your body and your mind the chance to recover. The point is that recovery is just as important as performance. Without good recovery, you don't get good performance. That's the first point to take away from this energy management audio.

One of the other aspects of Tony's teaching was this thing called the ultradian rhythm. You can look this up. I'm not going to go into too much detail with it, but just like you have a sleep rhythm, often called the circadian rhythm, which is your body's natural 24-hour sleep cycle, the ultradian rhythm is a 2-hour rhythm that your body goes through as well.

It's like a performance rhythm, so it's again talking about your ability to perform at a peak level and then the natural drop-off you have as your energy and concentration depletes, which is when recovery becomes necessary.

What I learned initially from Eben Pagan, taking the ultradian concept, was that he had a system for doing work in two-hour chunks. He suggested that you need to put in one hour of focused work, then have a 10- to 15-minute break, and then you can do another one hour of work. That's when you should your peak performance. Anything more than that is a degradation to the quality of your work. You're going to go down significantly from that. That's basically having your performance link into your body's natural ultradian rhythms.

That made a lot of sense to me and it was quite interesting once I studied Tony Schwartz's work and Eben Pagan's work on productivity. I learned about ultradian rhythms and started to look

back at my life as a blogger and the way I created blog content and the way I created teaching products, even the way I lived my entire life, structuring work with different things I do with my life. I started to notice it really is true. Not only do I get the best performance and notice a degradation in performance after two hours, I also noticed I just got bored. I wanted to move on to other tasks after two hours.

Something around two to three hours seemed to be my maximum amount of interest in a subject area. I didn't matter what it was. I might enjoy three hours socializing with friends, and then get the urge to go do some productive creative work. I might spend two or three hours writing in a café, but after that I'm like, "I don't want to do this anymore. I want to get out there and maybe do some exercise." And if you exercise for two hours, you're pretty tired after two hours of pretty consistent exercise, and that's usually more than enough to get performance from your body, build strength, and build a healthy body.

I noticed that I'd spent my life to that point – because I'd never had a full-time job – in two- to three-hour bursts, whether it was cooking food and a meal, doing exercise, doing work, socializing, or even just watching TV or a movie or a television series. I'd often watch two episodes, so that would be two hours.

It was really interesting to notice my own ability to basically react to how I was feeling. I was falling into this sort of ultradian rhythm, so that to me really hit home the importance of it and validated it for me from a practical point of view, so I encourage you to look at your own life now and see how you do performance. Do you find yourself struggling after two hours to remain productive if you stay on the same task? I bet you do.

I haven't met many people who can spend a proper 8-hour day, which is what you're supposed to put in at work, actually focused on productive tasks the entire time. No one does that. We all know that at work generally you might get one, two, or three hours of actual work done, and everything around that is a lot of procrastination, a lot of talking to workmates, a lot of eating food, making tea, having coffee, and attending meetings. All these things are around that small amount of time you spend during the day actually producing.

In an ideal world we would all be allowed to work with our ultradian rhythms. We might go into a job place and spend two hours focusing on the task at hand, and then be allowed to go and do something else because we know that actually would encourage better performance during those two hours we put into work, but it's not for me to talk about the weaknesses of the 9-5 typical working schedule. What we're trying to do here is get you out of that and be in a situation where your blogging business can actually support you.

What I want you to take away now with the energy management issue is how to actually apply this to your life. The ultradian rhythm tells us that you've got about two hours of productive work before you start to degrade in the quality of your output; hence, try not to spend more

than two hours on a single task at a time.

It also teaches the importance of recovery. It's vital that we learn how to take a step away from activities in order to give our body a chance to recover so that we can return back to those peak performance activities in our peak state.

The key with this – and this is the part that people don't necessarily understand straightaway – is that you need to switch off whatever part of your body you were using when you were in that peak performance mode. The reason why the tennis players were able to get recovery was because they disengaged from not only the act of performing in tennis, but also disengaged from the act of using their mind in that rally or in that game of tennis. They're taking everything that was happening with their mind and their body to perform during the rally and switching it off, thinking about something completely different from tennis.

Most likely with a tennis player they're playing around with their strings, or I actually have never stepped into the mind of a professional tennis player to know what they think about between points, but I suspect in training they're taught to obviously live every point as if it's the only point that matter. Don't think about the future, don't think about the past. A lot of it's about disengaging and only playing one point at a time, and that really is a powerful idea to apply to what you're doing. You need to focus during those periods of peak production, but then completely disengage.

This is actually quite hard to do as an entrepreneur. I remember when I was starting, I would love the time when I did my work, but I'd have trouble not working, particularly in the mind. Sure, I could step away from the computer, but I couldn't stop thinking about the work. I couldn't stop going over in my head about the things I needed to do, the steps I had to take in the future. It wasn't a true disengagement from the process. My mind was still there and, because of that, my recovery wasn't as good.

This is a really important point. This is why when you disengage and you go into recovery mode, you need to make sure whatever you're actively doing at that time is completely different from whatever it is you were doing prior to that.

By that I mean if you're a blogger, you write blog posts. You might spend two hours writing one or two articles for your blog, doing a bit of marketing, leaving some comments, sending some emails to connect with other people, interacting on Facebook – all the different activities that are part of your blogging business that essentially really see you only do one thing. You're sitting in front of your computer. You're typing on the keyboard and doing things related to your business.

It uses your body in a specific way and uses your mind in a specific way. You're thinking about certain things and using your arms and your eyes and your head in a certain way. Once you've

done that, you then need to disengage at about the two-hour mark. I don't like to push it more than three hours. I notice the degradation at two hours already.

I agree with Eben that having a 10-minute break in-between hours helps. I find it doesn't have to be a full-on break. It could just be sitting down and reading a book for 10 minutes or cooking a meal for 10 minutes and eating it for half an hour between things. That's what I often do.

For example, I'm recording this audio today. It'll take me half an hour to record it. Then I'm going to go and make lunch, which will take me about half an hour to prepare and cook, then half an hour to eat it. So I'll have an hour, then I'll come back and record another audio. I'll be doing two hours of work, with an hour gap in-between.

The important point, though, is the activity that I switch to uses a completely different set of skills. Cooking is obviously not a lot like writing a blog. I'm moving around the kitchen, I'm opening the fridge, I'm preparing something and putting it on the stove, I'm cutting up vegetables, and I'm thinking about different things like maybe what I'm doing tonight.

Sometimes I am always thinking about business. You can't always disengage, but ideally if you're going to get the most out of your recovery period, you do need to disconnect. That's why I think it's really great when you can do things like exercise, because if you've ever gone to a yoga class or you've ever done rock climbing or you've ever done a martial art or played a competitive sport, it's very hard when you're in the middle of the intensity of that physical work to think about other things.

It's a perfect type of recovery for your mind to go back again afterwards and do work again, because you're engaging your mind in the control of your body to performing that sporting activity. It's a completely different way of thinking that uses your mind in a different way and uses your body in a different way – not to mention the benefits of endorphins and all that.

What I notice as well about switching from a work task to an exercise task is it increases your energy levels. Then it gives you a natural physical recovery where you relax after the exercise. The endorphins make you relax. You feel good. Then you seem to get to a place where you have energy again – in fact, often more energy. You need to recover from the physical exertion of the sport, but once that's done you really are back at your peak level again, and that's a great time to go and do work.

I love the splitting up from work to exercise to work to cooking to socializing to work, and breaking up my day into those little two-hour things like that, even two hours of transportation. It might be catching a plane to another city. That's a disengaging of what you're doing. You're maybe reading a book during that time or listening to an audio like this. Those are also breaks from activity.

Of course, you have to be careful because an audio like this is probably going to make you think about your blog and your business and get you excited about that, so it's not a pure mental disengagement from doing work, but it is quite separate from the act of producing content and being creative, rather than listening to what I'm saying and learning. There's a difference there.

To recap, the most important parts of energy management are understanding your body's own natural ultradian rhythm, which you can look up if you want a much more detailed description of how it works. Essentially it means your body functions in two-hour cycles.

If you look it up you'll notice there's a lot of parts of your body that actually work in two-hour cycles – the way you break down food, the way your body regenerates cells, and all these different things take two hours to do. It's just the natural way we're built. By using that natural rhythm as a way to get peak performance, it just makes sense. It works. Try it out and you'll notice a difference.

The other thing, and why it works, is the importance of recovery. That's what energy management is all about. Recovery occurs when you change activities, and they have to be significant changes.

If we take this, you need to try to apply it to your life that you're building now as a professional blogger or online entrepreneur and internet marketer. You need to think about how you can structure your life so that you are in a peak performance energy level when it comes to work time, and this needs to be something that is sustainable for long periods of time.

If we're putting all the dots together here, you know that you're doing an 80/20 rule analysis of your life and your work to find the highest-value activities. You're then going to take those activities and apply them to how you build your business. To build your business you're going to use the theory of constraints to look at processes and find where the constraints are in those processes, in order for you to eliminate them or open them up so you can get a result and create things and get good efficiency from your performance.

You're then going to use the sprint technique so that you have concentrated effort without distractions when you go about removing those constraints, so we've combined those three techniques.

The tool you use in all of this is your body, and your body is fueled primarily by energy that you obviously create when you consume food, but also, as you now know, the importance of recovery. It's not just about that 8 hours of sleep. Sure, I can tell you to go get a good night's sleep. That's an obvious piece of productivity advice, but there's more to it when it comes to recovery. It's also about the switching of tasks, the disengaging and re-engaging in different ways.

What you need to do is look at your day, and in particular your working day, whatever it is, if you do work five days a week. Or, as you'll probably find, you'll end up working seven days a week, but it's not going to be 9-5. It's going to be a different sort of schedule. You'll need to kind of look at how you can insert the different types of activities, so that when you get to the point where you do need to perform the work activities or the parts that make money when you build this internet business of yours, you're in a good condition to do so.

I can't tell you when that is. Some people are morning people, some people are night people, and some people have different commitments to others. What's important, though, is that you slot in those two to three hours.

I recommend creating two timeframes in your day where you have two two-hour slots, so four hours per day especially at this starting point, because it's good to have two sessions of work a day to really get the momentum going if you are starting out. You can maybe pull the throttle off a bit as you get some momentum and the business starts to grow without you, but certainly during the early days, if you can, find four hours – two hours in the morning, two hours at night, or two hours wherever it is, two slots of two – but make sure that they appear at the right times.

You don't want to try to put two hours in after maybe 3:00 when your circadian rhythm is telling you to go to sleep and you want to have an afternoon nap. If you eat right and you've got good sleep you may not need an afternoon nap, but I'm assuming there's some restrictions you've got in your life because of other responsibilities with work or family or so on.

I recommend after you listen to this audio that you take out your planner and you look at what your regular commitments are and how you're currently inserting things like exercise, where you're inserting things like education, where you're inserting things like let's call it rest, where you might be watching TV or reading a book or even having that afternoon nap. It's just something that's more passive. It's not active exercise or active creativity. It's sitting down and relaxing.

Look at those things and see how you distribute them across your day, and then see where the best parts of your day would be to insert those two hours of work. In particular it's great if you can insert them when you know your body and your mind are in a peak condition.

This is a little bit of a secret that most people don't really do. A lot of people just sort of force themselves to work all the time and hope they get something out of that. This is how you get a true two-hour work day. You work with your body's natural energy rhythms, combining it with whatever schedule limitations you have, so you can get the variety and get the timing right for placing that work.

I personally tend to do work in two time periods. I'm a late riser, so I'm definitely not a morning person. You're not going to get me up at 7 am doing work. I'm more of a nighttime person. I'll

usually do two bursts – usually a late morning/over lunch period and just after lunch period, so I'll do some work straight after breakfast for one or two hours. I'll then have lunch and do maybe another hour after that, and then I'll head out. That's when I'll change my rhythm completely. I'll go to the city or go to another place.

Bear in mind, I might go to this other place to do some writing. I might actually take my laptop – and this is quite common – and head to a café or head to a library and produce some content, which is work. But what happens is there's a period of time of transportation to get to wherever it is I'm going. I might walk there, so there's often a 45-minute to an hour exercise break, which is obviously completely disengaging from work and activating my body instead in a different way. I'll often listen to music or audiobooks during that transportation time, too, so my mind switches from creating to engaging or even just relaxing if it's music, or getting excited from energetic music.

Then I'll sit down for an hour or two at a café and produce again in the afternoon. Then often I'll be out somewhere for dinner with friends, and maybe socializing the rest of the evening and not really doing any work that night. Or if it's one of those days where I am spending more time by myself, I will go home, potentially cook myself dinner or have dinner out, and then go home and do work. I can do a 10 pm to midnight sort of session and do two hours then. There are things like interviews that require my commitment.

The interesting thing about being an entrepreneur and being a blogger is the types of work you do are quite varied, too. If you're going to be like me where you do interviews and you do videos and you do writing and you've got your podcast and your written blog and your videos – I'm not saying you have to do that, but the benefit of being a multimedia blogger is the production of these different types of content engage your body in different ways.

It's actually an interesting experience to have when you look at your energy levels, because you can switch from writing to recording a video or doing an interview, and it's actually quite a separate engagement of the way you use your body and your mind. It's different.

The way I write is quite different to the way I sit down and do an interview, or even record an audio like this. It's a different way of thinking, it's a different way of using my body, and it's my voice and not my hands. It's more on the fly, like I'm not sitting down and editing what I'm saying here. I'm just saying it. I've got some dot points to work with, but mostly it's me talking about my experiences and sharing with you what I do.

If I wrote this in an article it would be a lot shorter, it would use a lot fewer words, and I'd edit it – a big difference – so it's a different way of producing content, but it also means it's an energy change.

That's what I love about going down this path of being a multimedia blogger, is you do get to play with different materials and different tools that allow you to refresh your body each time

you switch tasks. Creating videos with friends and doing podcast interviews on Skype with people overseas is very different from sitting down and writing a blog post.

If you structure your day where you might do some product creation in the morning, and you might do some content creation for marketing, like doing an interview or writing a blog post in the afternoon, and then you might do a video just out and about, and then you go home and maybe have an interview scheduled in the evening, or just publish the blog post you wrote during the day – that's kind of what happens with me.

Because of the variety there, there's never a period of time where I'm spending two hours, or more than two hours, straight on the one task, so I don't really get that degradation of the quality of my work because I'm only ever doing two hours of focused effort on that task. Everything changes quite quickly, deliberately so. It's the way I function best, and what makes me happy as well.

You've probably come from a background of being an employee, so this is an adjustment to make to even start thinking like this and start acting like this. You're probably used to having a big task list that you have to work through in a given day or in a given week or month, and each day you try and use as much of that 8 hours of work time or 7 hours of work time that's allotted to you to get it done, but you've got all kinds of distractions and things that come at you during the day at work that stop you from getting that work done. It's a highly disruptive kind of way of working, and it doesn't work very well with your body's natural rhythm because there's no real focused recovery period.

You're not allowed to get up and exercise for an hour in the middle of your work shift, unless you work for a very progressive company. You can't curl up and have a nap at 4:00 in the afternoon as a recovery method, either, because most people work for companies that would really not appreciate that.

So I encourage you as you start switching over from the employee mindset to the entrepreneur mindset that you start playing with the idea of a more flexible daily schedule, work schedule, or even a life schedule. Also be conscious of the variety required in order to get the recovery out of your body so that when it is performance time you're in a peak state to do so.

I think we've covered energy management enough in this audio. The key points to take away are, of course, the ultradian rhythm, which is the two-hour cycles your body goes through, and working with them, not against them. Don't force yourself to work long periods of time, because it's actually inefficient. It doesn't even make sense to do so because you're going to produce less quality of work.

In order to make your body perform with peak performance, recovery is vital. That's why you change activities every two hours, because it allows your body to switch off what it was doing,

whatever it was doing with your physical body, as well as your mental part of the process. It will change that and allow that part to recover while you focus on other things.

That gives you the ability to perform at a peak level in all aspects of your life – physical, mental, work, and social. You'll have energy, you'll be excited, you'll be engaged, and you'll be performing at the best level you can at every activity you do, which is something highly desirable and it makes life better. That's probably the best reason you could ever have for trying to adhere to this.

The challenge you face is that our society is not built to function like this. It doesn't work with our body's natural rhythms. It's all about working a 9-5 day, getting very, very tired, and trying to squeeze in everything else in your life after that.

That's not what I think life should be about, so I really encourage you, and I hope through what you learn from me and what you go and do and take action on, that you allow yourself to come up with an internet business that then gives you the freedom to work through energy management and actually have a lifestyle and daily structure that encourages your body to be in its peak performance level at all times.

That's one of the best benefits of having a successful internet business, so I really, really hope that is something you can build as a result of going through my training programs. And of course you've got all the productivity advice now ready to go, so you can get out there and do some amazing work online.

That's it from me. I hope you enjoyed this energy management mindset audio. I will talk to you in the next Master Your Mindset audio. This is Yaro and I'll talk to you again very soon. Bye bye.