

Eight Tips for Writer's Block

1. Give it a break

Writer's block is inevitable, but it doesn't have to be insufferable. Hear me out; try to ruminate in the block for a little while before immediately trying to force sentences onto the page. It's like tossing and turning in bed; you will quickly become restless. It is better to get up, distract yourself, become tired, and try to sleep again. Unlike sleep, however, there's no melatonin supplement you can take to spontaneously overcome a creative block. Let your brain rest.

2. Use Force

If it's been an extended writer's block, the opposite could be helpful – force yourself to write anything at all. Use prompts, use deadlines, use word count goals. Focus on short stories/individual scenes/chapters to build momentum up. It doesn't have to be good. Whatever you do – Do. Not. Delete. Do. Not. Edit.

3. Compartmentalize

You are just one human in one millisecond in the tradition of storytelling. There are no new stories to tell – just different ways to tell old stories. You don't have to consciously reinvent the wheel, or stun the world. Storytelling within itself is a valuable practice and staple of the human experience. Your work keeps this tradition going, and that is all you have to aspire to do.

4. Fuel for Artistic Flames

I am a firm believer that in order to write well, you must read. Sometimes, writers forget that there are billions and billions of ideas floating around, waiting for you to notice them. Pick up a book on your TBR list, and enjoy it. Allow yourself to connect to those ideas, and release the pressure on yourself to be the artist. Let someone else be the writer for once. You could even watch a movie if reading isn't in your schedule. Plenty of writers get inspired by visual media as well. Whatever it might be, don't starve your brain of artistic fuel!

5. Write Something New

Now that you've taken a few days, at least, don't immediately return to the same project that had you stumped, unless you've been struck by furious inspiration during your break. Whether you have an ongoing project or not, try writing something new. Short exercises should suffice. Change up the genre, the tone, the themes, the characters, the setting, or all of the above. Allow yourself to explore different ideas than the ones you are used to. It doesn't matter how much experience you have writing these particular topics – no one has to see it but you.

6. Allow the illogical to become logical

When writing first drafts, ignore all logic. Just do it. Don't sit there thinking about the nitty gritty details of worldbuilding and logistics – focus on taking the story forward. You can and you will fix any plot holes and logical errors in the editing phases. You need a draft to edit in the first place.

7. Exchange Ideas

Have a trusted peer/mentor look over a work that is stumping you, and be open to prescriptive advice. You can always go back and change it later. If you don't have an ongoing project, have them look over past pieces and offer insight on your weaknesses/strengths.

If these tips didn't work, don't blame me! Seriously, there could be a root cause and deeper issue that I, connected to you, the reader, solely through a screen, cannot address. Perhaps there are health, mental or physical, issues that have to be acknowledged. Perhaps there are economic barriers, due to the unfortunate capitalist system we find ourselves in. Whatever it may be, be kind and be easy on yourself. A writing journey is a marathon, not a sprint.