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The First 20 Hours: How To Learn Anything... Fast!



Synopsis

"Learn anything... fast!" Take a moment to consider how many things you want to learn to do. What's on your list? What's holding you back from getting started? Are you worried about the time and effort it takes to acquire new skills - time you don't have and effort you can't spare? Research suggests it takes 10,000 hours to develop a new skill. In this nonstop world when will you ever find that much time and energy? To make matters worse, the early hours of practicing something new are always the most frustrating. That's why it's difficult to learn how to speak a new language, play an instrument, hit a golf ball, or shoot great photos. It's so much easier to watch TV or surf the web... In *The First 20 Hours*, Josh Kaufman offers a systematic approach to rapid skill acquisition: how to learn any new skill as quickly as possible. His method shows you how to deconstruct complex skills, maximize productive practice, and remove common learning barriers. By completing just 20 hours of focused, deliberate practice you'll go from knowing absolutely nothing to performing noticeably well. This method isn't theoretical: it's field-tested. Kaufman invites readers to join him as he field tests his approach by learning to program a Web application, play the ukulele, practice yoga, re-learn to touch type, get the hang of windsurfing, and study the world's oldest and most complex board game. What do you want to learn?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Very simple. DO NOT buy this book. Instead watch his FREE video on YouTube. Gives you the same ideas of this book and you only spend about 15 min watching that video. In this book, he goes

about describing how he learn 5 or 6 different things he was interested in. In the YouTube video, he tells you the tools you need to learn anything in 20hrs or less and again in about 15min of watching.

I've been working the system since I got and read the book. Simple easy stuff even I can do. Well written in a personal style that persuades you to take an honest assessment of whats holding you back, then you are ready to take up the individual steps and voila you begin to learn and gain confidence.

At first, I was captivated by the stories in the book. I couldn't put the book down. Then, I got difficulties to stay focused with the example. But I do think this book is worth reading and very interesting. You are avid to be knowledgeable but you don't have 10 000 hours at your disposal to be an outlier? The author has made the calculation. Ten thousand hours equals eight hours of deliberate practice every day for approximately three and a half years, with no breaks, no weekends, and no vacations. Assuming a standard 260 working days a year with no distractions, that's a full-time job for almost five years, assuming you spend 100 percent of that time exerting 100 percent of your energy and effort. It is pretty overwhelming. But What about 20 hours? Josh Kaufman explains what you can expect to achieve in 20 hours and how to organize yourself. Granted you will need a bit of practice and probably struggle by yourself as the author doesn't deconstruct his brain that much and clearly has experience in organising himself and finding his information. But with good will, it is doable for everyone. I think. Who can't spend 20 hours doing something? These 20 hours can change your life if you break the pattern of procrastination and just do it. Give you a chance. Give you 20 hours to try. I am giving it a try. It works.

Before you buy this book you have to ask yourself this basic question: do you want to be a Jack of all trades or the master of some? Then, you may ponder about the "self-help-ish" or "magic number-ish" 20 hours issue (you will learn that this is the personal experience of the author). But, the title sounds too good to ignore, too enticing to leave, so you still buy the book. You will be disappointed. You will find that the author wants to do soooooo many things, but there is never enough time to do them all. (Aren't we all staring at our bucket lists with the same quiet desperation?) But, here is a method that allows you to beat the confining principles of being realistic, prioritization AND focusing. It contains 10 principles of rapid skill acquisition (1, love the stuff; 2, focus on the stuff; 3, decide how good you really want to be; 4 through 9 are really no brainers and 10, emphasize quantity and speed) and 10 principles of effective learning (1, research

the stuff; 2, just do it; 3, identify mental models, etc.). The method is then demonstrated using the author's preferred random skills: yoga, programming, typing, go, ukulele, windsurfing. So, why will you be disappointed? Because most of us have only a few "dream skills", but would like to do them at a higher level than many disconnected things at an average/below average level. It may be the question of a high enough dose of Ritalin, but an average adult does not dream to do a periodization of 20 hour cycles of random skills. If one jumps from one skill to the next, what becomes of the necessary practice time of the earlier skill? I understand that the author simply wanted to demonstrate how well his method applies to unrelated "arts", but here is where the book falls short. Instead of demonstrating how generally applicable the method is, I would much rather get into the method itself through the acquisition of a single skill (not to forget the difference in between learning unicycling or playing the piano, doing karate or breeding Saint Bernards). Some demands extensive knowledge of theory, while others based on mostly practice. (There is also no breakdown of how the 20 hours was spent, say, while learning yoga. At one point a 90 minute instruction is mentioned, then a 3 hours instruction. How much time was spent with researching the basic theory?) Mental scaffolding or mental models/lattice work could have been used to demonstrate applicability of this single skill, instead of creating an easy target for criticism by rushing through eclectic ventures. I would have expected more learning about learning itself and how elements of knowledge/skill acquisition are similar (but not the same) in between widely varied topics. But it is questionable, if there is one general "learning DNA" that could generate both flea and elephant skills. Principle 3 of rapid skill acquisition "Define your target performance level" is why most of us will give up on this book. At the end it is not about frustration barriers, 20 hours, methods or skill acquisition, but dealing with plateaus. George Leonard in his excellent book "Mastery" describes exactly the type of path this author wanders upon. It is the "Dabbler", the eternal kid. The end of the first 20 hours may actually signify the first inevitable plateau, where admitting how demanding something can be and how much more effort and commitment it requires to move on to the next level is simply dismissed by moving on to a brand new project. I may be wrong, but the "target performance level" is much more of the journey itself than a destination.

I think the book is really good. There's no secret to learning new skills efficiently and Josh is very aware of that. He has a bunch of common sense tips that put together make up a great learning method and he shares his own experience in a way that will definitely motivate you to stop procrastinating. I hate self-help books and I'm glad to say that this is not one of them. This is not about the secret to happiness or the meaning of life and the book does not treat the reader as if he

or she were stupid or desperate. Josh is simply sharing an obvious but powerful idea: that if you approach learning from a strategic perspective you can be far more efficient than if you just jump into the water and learn to swim the hard way. It's worth mentioning that I happened to be a Go player (3d) and also someone who touch-types in a different keyboard layout. There's a chapter in the book devoted to how Josh learned each of these skills and I can vouch for the content about that. On a side note: I set up a new wiki so that we can collectively make the research part of the learning process easier by listing the set of sub-skills that are needed to learn something new: skildeconstruction.wikia.com. Check it out and please contribute.

The book can be accomplished in a 40 to 50 page e-book. You know the kind...large print to take up page space but without the illusion of white space. The rest is a case study on specific areas of interest he learned. Definitely more fluff than substance.

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