

Marketing, Money & Motivation

by MV Ellis

With a twenty-year career spanning advertising, marketing, social media, and life coaching, MV brings a unique skillset to the business of being an author.

Writing is a sprint not a marathon – aka: how I write a book a month.

While I agree that in the long-term, my writing career is a marathon, having set myself some hefty publishing goals this year, in the short-term, it's way more of a sprint. In fact, sprinting has been the key to turbo-charging my productivity levels this year. As an example, I wrote over 65,000 words over three weeks in May, mostly thanks to writing sprints.

In case you missed it, sprinting is a short and focused period of time spent writing against the clock. The idea is to write as much as possible, as quickly as possible. The science behind sprints is that our brains are hard-wired to concentrate only for a fairly short time—the length of which differs from person-to-person—after which, our attention wanes, and our productivity levels drop.

Most people's optimum sprinting time sits between fifteen and twenty-five minutes. Less, and we might not hit our stride. More, and our energy/productivity might flag before the end. The key is to play around with sprints and break lengths to find our sweet spot.

Fifteen minutes works well for me. At my best, I can write over one thousand words in that time. Yes, you read that right,

over one thousand words in fifteen minutes! If I'm tired or fatigued, this can drop to around five hundred words. Still not too shabby considering that with a five-minute break between sprints, that's 1500 words per hour.

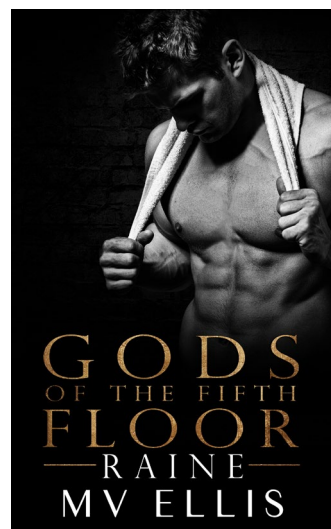
Given that sprinting is about concentration, here are nine ways to help focus:

- ♥ Timing is everything. If you're more productive in the morning, get those words in early. If you're a night owl, burn the midnight oil.
- ♥ Reduce distractions. Do what you can to switch off, or tune out extraneous time suckers. **Hint, shut down your social media apps while sprinting.
- ♥ Plan. Even as a pantsler, for sprinting purposes, I ensure I know what I want to write in the fifteen minute session, in order to avoid wasting time thinking, when I should be writing.
- ♥ Zone out. I'm more productive when I have white noise to help me tune out distractions, and focus only on the words. At the moment I play one song on repeat at a very low volume, and somehow this helps my fingers fly! Weird, I know!
- ♥ Incentivise. Reward yourself when you hit key milestones. Whether it's chocolate or retail therapy, have that carrot waiting for when you make it over the finish line. It really helps!
- ♥ Track. This works best for people who are goal-oriented, but seeing evidence of productivity and progress in pure numeric terms (and competing against

ourselves) can be incredibly motivating.

- ♥ Phone a friend. Sprinting can be even more fun (and productive) when done with others. So much so, that there are online communities devoted to allowing people to sprint with, and against each other. This works especially well for those with a strong competitive streak.
- ♥ Use technology. There are myriad tools we can employ to help improve our sprinting game. Again, trial and error will help hone the process that works best.
- ♥ Sprint now, edit later. Editing on the fly slows us down. Get the words down quickly, and save editing for another day.

Good luck with your word-count goals.



MV Ellis doesn't just write romance, she lives it. She followed her heart halfway around the world to be with a man she sat next to on a wild 36-hour bus journey across sultry Brazil.

Visit MVEllis.com to learn more. ♥