

When Do You Do Your Best Thinking?

How six innovators work through their work problems

[More stories by Arianne Cohen](#) May 14, 2015, 11:10 AM EDT

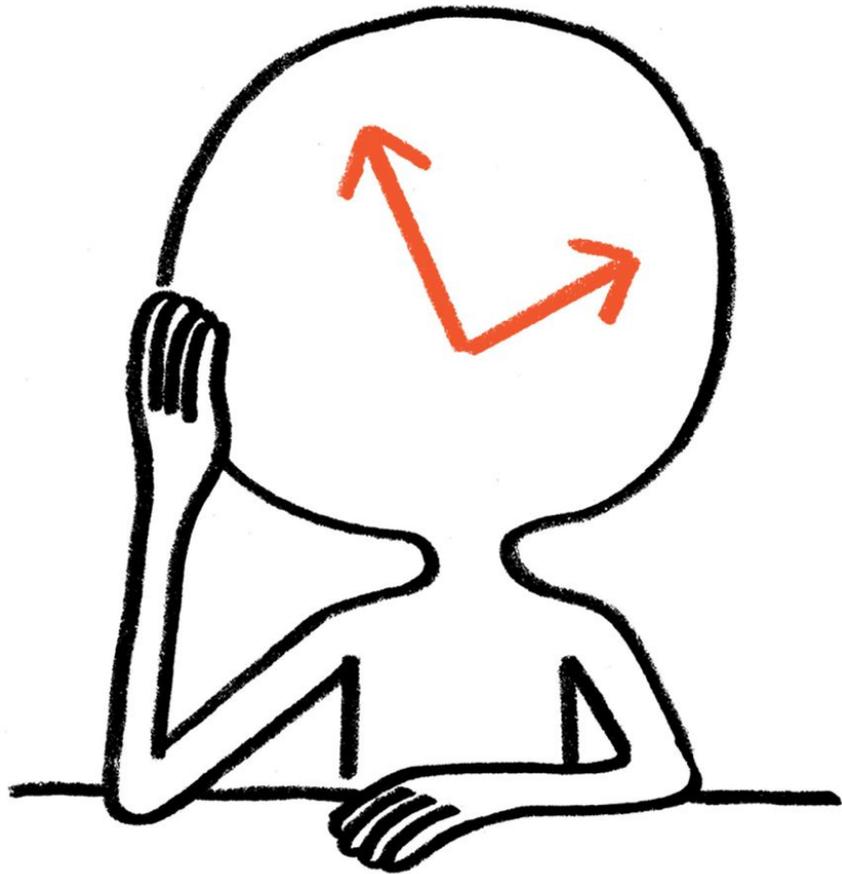


Illustration: Tim Lahan

“In the morning around 7, after sorting through various issues via e-mail, I often opt for a hot aromatherapy shower. It helps relax my mind, and I’ve had some of my greatest epiphanies during this time.” —**Mark Rosenzweig**, *chief executive officer, Euro-Pro*

“My strongest ideas come when I’m in my house late at night, between 11 and 1. I always have jazz or country music playing in the background, and I

often find myself at my stand-up desk or sketching on a large whiteboard, developing ideas I can flesh out with my team the next day.” —**Kevin Reddy**, *chairman and CEO, Noodles & Co.*

“Every morning I tell myself to just start writing, and the rest is automatic. I wear noise-canceling headphones, mostly to block the sound of my own talking. I use an app called Freedom to shut off the Internet. But I’ll sometimes do an hour of work, after my son goes to bed, with a glass of wine, no earplugs, and my husband nearby. Often that is when it goes best.” —**Miranda July**, *author*



Illustration: Tim Lahan

“I do best in the midafternoon after meetings, phone calls, and e-mails. This takes one to two hours. My desk is like mission control, with a folder for each of my direct reports, and I review each folder to make sure the team is executing the strategy we agreed upon. Over 20 years, I’ve tripled businesses using this approach.” —**Michael Buckley**, *CEO, Robert Graham*

“I’ve been tinkering since I was a child, taking apart all of my toys. I still make time to tinker every day. I spend one to two hours working on our innovations, usually in the morning to start the day or late at night.” —**Mir Imran**, *chairman and CEO, InCube Labs*

“I only have a certain amount of patience for my to-do list, so I do two to three things at home by midday, and then there’s a time in the afternoon when my internal sense just insists that I shift gears to working.” —**Elisabeth Condon**, *painter*