

12. The daily grind

Never stop your day's writing at a point where you've run out of ideas – when you start again the next day, you are likely to be still in that negative frame of mind. It's far better to stop half way through a paragraph – half way through a sentence, even – and just jot down a few notes to remind yourself of where you are going. That way, you'll be all the more keen to start again and won't have that dreadful 'blank page, blank mind' feeling.

Alternatively...

When you run out of ideas, stop writing – and try not to fret about it. Better still, sleep on it. The chances are high that your unconscious will work on the problem and provide you with a solution the following day. If you are not going to start writing first thing next morning, then be particularly careful to carry a notebook wherever you go.

These two pieces of advice may seem contradictory, but they're not. Not all writers work the same way and each day is different – use the strategy which suits you best at the time.

Quality is far better than quantity, so don't be discouraged if you find you're only writing about 500 words a day. That works out at around 180,000 words a year – enough for about four Mills & Boon romances, two average-sized novels or one blockbuster.