

CHAPTER 13 • MARGIN MOVE

The Input-Free Walk

Three walks a week. Twenty minutes. Nothing in your ears.

The simplest tool in this book and, for many readers, the hardest to actually do.

Three walks a week. Twenty minutes each. Nothing in your ears.

No phone, no podcast, no music, no call. Before each walk, *park a problem*: take thirty seconds to load the question you are stuck on, then let it go and start walking. Carry something to capture with, and when an idea arrives — on this walk or, as often, on a later one — write it down immediately, before it evaporates.

The log

DATE	THE PROBLEM I PARKED	WHAT ARRIVED (and when)	MINS

What you are actually buying

Margin makes insight *possible*. It does not make it *scheduled*. The creative dividend is probabilistic, and internalising that is what stops you quitting. On any given walk you are not purchasing an insight. You are purchasing the conditions in which an insight can afford to occur.

Count for one season, then stop

Track insights per *month*, not per walk — per walk is the probabilistic trap. Count for two or three months, before the practice and after, long enough to convince yourself the practice is real. Then stop counting, and let the walk go back to being a walk. A room under permanent surveillance is not a room either.

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3
Walks taken			
Insights that arrived			
Anything I acted on			

My expiration date for counting: _____

Focus loads; wandering connects. The two halves of one creative engine. First you load the pieces — deep, effortful, deliberate work on the problem. Then you step away and let them combine. Skip the loading and the walk has nothing to work with. Skip the walk and the pieces never meet.

The ideas were in you the whole time. You had just stopped building the rooms where they show up.

Photocopy-friendly. From Thought Margin: Reclaiming the Capacity to Think in the Age of AI by Rachael-Renée Rychling. Free to print for personal use.