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The Developer's Code

What Real Programmers Do

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The Pragmatic Bookshelf

Dallas, Texas • Raleigh, North Carolina

The
Pragmatic
Programmers

The Developer's Code

What Real
Programmers Do

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Printed in the United States of America.
ISBN-13: 978-1-934356-79-1
Printed on acid-free paper.
Book version: P1.0—February 2012

Stop Programming

You probably program too much.

Just when you've really gotten into your work, when your brain is entirely wrapped around your code, when your hands, eyes, and thoughts are working in harmony, stop. Look up. Think about when you're going to finish for the day. Look forward to shutting off your computer. Get outside a little.



Programming, for all its mental exercise, is a very comfortable physical activity. We usually program while sitting, and as the hours waste away, we slouch lower in our chairs. Some of us even eat and drink at our desks while we code away. We can tell just by examining our keyboards—the somewhat slick ones with a pound of crumbs under the keys.

This comfort is dangerous. It means we can do this for hours and hours and hours without realizing just how much we've exhausted our own resources.

When you hit that point where your code starts to get a bit sloppy—or, better yet, just before it—stop. Great programming is about maximizing the time you're working at your best, not the cumulative hours you spend in front of a screen.

Two hours of quality programming time is better than eight hours of struggle. We're far more susceptible to taking shortcuts or breaking standard conventions when we're coding tired. Those extra hours are spent creating bad code—code that we might regret the next day. So, cut all that programming time down, get outside, and live a little.