**How Does Caffeine Affect Your Productivity Really?**

A huge proportion of the modern world relies almost fully on caffeine just to function. Millions of office workers start their day with a cup of coffee and without it they claim they would never be able to get any work done.

But when you work for yourself, it's no longer enough to just do what everyone else does, or to do what *feels* efficient. Instead, you should focus on looking at the hard data to see which trends and habits result in the best output.

When you do that, how does caffeine really hold up?

**How Caffeine Works**

First, it would be helpful to look at how caffeine actually works. Specifically then, caffeine works by blocking the brain's adenosine receptors. Adenosine is a neurotransmitter that makes us feel sleepy and when the brain blocks the receptors, this prevents it from taking action on our brain. As a result, we don't feel as worn out and our brain feels more alert and aware. What's interesting, is that the response to this is for our brains to produce *even more* neurochemicals to help us feel even *more* alert. Thus we release dopamine and adrenaline and become increasingly more switched on and focused.

**The Effects of Caffeine**

In the short term, caffeine positively impacts on focus and on memory and helps to make us more productive as a result. Unfortunately though, it also has a number of unwanted side effects. For starters, it causes the brain to produce *more* adenosine receptors over time. The more caffeine we consume, the more receptors we grow and the more caffeine we *need* to get the same buzz.

Eventually, we become so sensitive to adenosine that we need caffeine just to feel 'normal'. In fact, it has been suggested that often when we wake up with sleep inertia, we are in fact not overly tired but instead feeling the effects of caffeine withdrawal from not having had any coffee during our sleep!

Caffeine also negatively affects our sleep, it creates something of a 'crash' when it wears off and the adenosine build up comes flooding in and it can hamper our creativity (because focus is actually antithetical to creativity in many ways).

So what's the solution? To stop drinking caffeine?

Actually no – not if it is working for you. However, what you do need to consider is cutting back and you should make sure you never find yourself in a position where it becomes a crutch.