

## How to get over writer's block

*By David Woods*

"When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully" - Samuel Johnson

Well, that's it: the surest way to get rid of writer's block is to work under an immutable deadline. But if you don't have such an incentive hanging over you, there are other ways to unblock:

- Sketch a preliminary outline of your work, using key words and phrases
- Try writing a draft in longhand before you get to the computer
- Be self critical: eliminate sections of your work that may be obstacles
- Take a break: go and do something unrelated to the task at hand
- Find out what sort of routine helps your writing flow more easily - and follow it
- Re-read sections of your draft: this can help you regroup your thoughts
- Relax. It's not the end of the world (unless you have a deadline!)

The writer, wit, and member of the Algonquin Round Table, Dorothy Parker was asked if she liked writing. "No," she said. "I like having written."

Writing can be painful both for the experienced and for the novice ... but 'having written' is a great reward.