

Sharpen the Axe

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While busy with several urgent projects, I spent most of yesterday improving my tool set. This might seem like a bad time, but I think it will pay off well.

I found that I was performing several tasks several times. My general rule is that on the third time I perform the same task, I try to automate it. I found that I had several tasks that I had performed more than three times and that I would need to perform more times very soon for my urgent problems.

Abraham Lincoln said "Give me eight hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first six sharpening the axe." I think this is a valuable (which has been discussed as [Sharpening the Saw](#)).

I think that time spent improving your tool set is time well spent. Be careful, however, not to try to wait until your tool set is perfect before you start your work.

I find it is valuable to improve my processes and tool set a little bit every project. I find that in the long run, the time saved as a result more than makes up for the investment of time in improving your tools.

In this case, [DataMgr](#) received some major improvements. I was planning to make these upgrades a 1.5 release, but they have already had such a major impact on my coding, that I might rename the release 2.0 (still plenty of testing before it is ready though).

According to his quote, Abraham Lincoln would spend two thirds of his time improving his tools. I suspect he was exaggerating a bit. I spend about a sixth of my time improving my tools.