

TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES & TIME SAVER TIPS THAT WORK

Simple but effective ideas to improve your efficiency.

What would you do with an extra hour a day?

1. Must Do's

- Keep reviewing Alan Laiken's question: "Is this (activity you are about to do) the best use of my time?"

1. Ask yourself Townsend's question: "Is what I am doing, or about to do, moving me toward my objectives?"
2. Set high expectations for each and every day.
3. Decide to stop procrastinating on large tasks.
4. Rewrite your personal goals and activities, and reprioritize them at least every three months. The world changes, we change and so must our goals. Consult your family on the validity of the goals for them. Think 5 years out.
5. Get at least 10 minutes of programmed exercise every day; and throughout the day use every opportunity to walk, stand, climb stairs, bend over, etc. This promotes health, and increases your "Prime Time" by reducing fatigue.

2. Office Organization

- Start by clarifying your personal and professional priorities.

6. Focus on income generating emails and letters or proposals as your priority at the start of the day.
7. Place every task into one of the Priority Matrix quadrants.
8. Focus to eliminate the top 10 Time Wasters
9. Write it down. Do your thinking on paper. You will make quicker and better decisions if you write down the pros and cons of a line of action.
10. Discuss time management with your boss and with your coworkers and determine what you can do as individuals and as a team to use time more effectively.
11. Think of the Pareto Principal – the critical few versus the trivial many – where to spend the time and energy?
12. Keep a Time Log then ask yourself: What am I doing that can be done better by someone else?
13. Control time spent in meetings. Do you need to be there? Can you submit a report? Can you turn up at a certain time and leave after? If running the meeting, start and end on time in respect of others time.
14. If you find it difficult to get any "quiet time," try to arrive at the office before anyone else, to gain uninterrupted time for planning and other tasks.
15. File, file, file! Avoid clutter. Keep everything you are not working on out of your immediate working area and out of sight, if possible. Always tidy up your desk and work area before leaving the office.
16. "Let your fingers do the walking/surfing" before running errands for personal items or office supplies. Phone to compare prices, determine availability, hours of operation, specials, if they deliver or not, etc.
17. Write a memo to yourself, for future reference, whenever you have completed a difficult task which is going to recur. You will benefit from an experience when you have a written record of mistakes and lessons learned.
18. Work on only one item at a time.
19. If a conversation on the phone is dragging on, try standing up. Your conversations will be shorter.
20. Establish your lowest productivity hour as "interruptions" hour. Encourage your subordinates to see you then.
21. Try to avoid being placed on hold on the telephone. It takes less time to call back.
22. Hire specialists / consultants so you don't have to invent the wheel.
23. Take a Speed Reading or Memory Techniques course so you can learn to read routine material more rapidly.
24. Never put uncompleted activities from today at the top of tomorrow's "to do" list. You must reprioritize them.
25. Never do errands at work on impulse. Plan your route carefully, handling as many errands as possible each time at lunch, or going to and from work. Can the activity be pushed back a day or two to be more convenient?
26. Don't be afraid to give yourself time to relax, to meditate and "blue sky". This allows you to relax, become less stressed and more creative.

3. Subordinates

- The people closest to the job know the best way to improve it – ask them for suggestions.

27. Always delegate slightly more than what you feel the subordinate is capable of handling – set high goals.
28. If you are always "putting out fires" ask yourself after each crisis: (a) Why did it occur? (b) What can be done to prevent its recurrence? and (c) If it does recur, how can I handle it better next time?
29. Expect others to succeed; it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.
30. Don't micro-manage others. It is frustrating for them and time-consuming for you.
31. Calculate what you and each of your subordinates are worth per minute so tasks receive a cost / benefit look.
32. As often as possible provide written instructions to subordinates to prevent interruptions for both of you.
33. Since your own time use is tied to the effectiveness of those with whom you work, arrange a time management seminar for your entire organization, so that you can mount a concerted attack on wasted time.
34. When you go to work, pretend you don't know anything. What you will learn from asking and listening will save you a great deal of time. Jack Welch built GE to a huge corporation by asking lots of questions to the front line.

4. Paperwork

- Remember Parkinson's Law: Work expands to fill the allotted time.

35. In handling correspondence, consider answering routine letters and memos on the original. Change "To" to "From" and "From" to "To", make your notes, run through the office copier for your own records, and returning the original to the sender.
36. Purge your files annually. You'll be able to find needed items quicker and will save on storage costs.
37. Create "slush files". Have a specific place to put all papers which are not important enough to file permanently, but which you feel uncomfortable about throwing away just yet.
38. Set up a desk date file (sometimes called a future file, a suspense file, or a tickler file) to provide an automatic method of bringing papers to your attention on specific dates in the future.
39. Use window envelopes where appropriate for correspondence, saving time of second typing of name and address.
40. Except for file cabinets and your desk, remove from your office any item on which you accumulate paperwork.
41. Divide seemingly overwhelming tasks into small increments and attack them one at a time.
42. Do one task each day that you don't like to do. It's good discipline and it will help you through the tough times. It will force you to make the decisions you should make on a timely basis.

5. At Home

**- Where do you want to spend your time? Think of the Dr. Leo Buscaglia quote:
"Live everyday as if it were your last – you never know when you're going to be right."**

43. Plan each night what you are going to wear the next day, and lay it out ahead of time.
44. Hire someone else to do yard work, housework, and other routine home chores where possible.
45. Plan your TV viewing a week ahead to be more selective. Never turn on a TV set just "to see what's on."
46. Consider moving closer to your place of work. If you saved just 15 minutes on commuting time each way, you would gain an additional three weeks of home life or working time per year!
47. On the weekend, plan and schedule your personal chores and errands for the next week.

6. Travelling

48. Purchase or borrow from your library, CD's or cassette tapes on time management, leadership, self-motivation, and similar subjects, as well as any which are available in your professional field, and listen to them whenever you are traveling in your vehicle.
49. Carry a portable recorder when traveling or making calls. It is the most convenient way of making detailed notes following a phone conversation, or while driving or flying.
50. Buy paperback books; remove a chapter at a time, and read it during your waiting times.

**What are the good habits taking you closer to success or the bad habits holding you back?
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