



Time Management

Do you get frustrated with an unproductive day?

Would you like to achieve more in a day?



The idea of time management has been around for over a hundred years but the term is really a little misleading! Time can't be managed; you can only manage yourself and your use of time, so it is really all about self-management.

- *At the heart of time management is a need to create an important shift in focus.*
- *The key is to concentrate on getting results not on just being busy.*

Many people spend their days being extremely busy, but achieve very little because they are not focused on the right things.

The 80:20 Rule - (Pareto Principle) says that typically 80% of unfocused effort generates only 20% of results. *The remaining 80% of results are achieved with only 20% of the effort.*

Use the time management tips and information here to help you optimize your effort to ensure that you concentrate as much of your time and energy as possible on the high payoff tasks to ensure you achieve the greatest benefit possible with the limited amount of time available to you.

Time is a finite commodity – something that is easy to forget when you are experiencing stress and maybe working long hours. To help you remember the importance of time, here is a simple guide:

QUALITY TIME:	Leisure & relaxation, hobbies, time with friends & family, sport & exercise, holidays
+ WORK TIME:	Commuting, emails, phone calls, meetings, staff appraisals, projects, doing your job
= TOTAL TIME:	The sum total of your adult life! - Work to live rather than live to work

How you manage your time will also impact on your work-life balance and your wellbeing

Circle the number below to show where would you place your work-life balance today



How much does your personality affect your ability to manage your time? Surprisingly quite a lot!

- If you try to fit more & more into your day, it often means there is not enough time to prepare or finish properly. You get a lot done, but at the cost of high stress and low quality of life.
- Always putting others before yourself, doing more & more means your own tasks fail to get done.
- The need to do everything perfectly & not make mistakes can mean your tasks take much longer.

Review your personality traits & if necessary review or modify the appropriate Type A traits

How to Prioritise Your Time

In today's busy environment, it is good to have a plan, maybe even several. A good plan will include putting both your needs (not wants) and any tasks that need to be done alongside the available time that you have.



Once you have a list of your needs and tasks you can then use the following matrix that was introduced by Stephen Covey in his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.

This matrix is an extremely useful way to help you focus, it then gives some order to the tasks and demands you are experiencing:

1. Guidelines for using your matrix

- Start with making a list to identify all your needs, demands and tasks
- Now put them in one of the four boxes that you feel is the most appropriate
- What does your matrix look like?
- Review each box and re-evaluate each demand/task and consider if it is in the right box
- You may now wish to reassign some of the demands and tasks

	URGENT	NON-URGENT
IMPORTANT	Urgent and Important (Firefighting)	Important but Not urgent (Quality work)
NOT-IMPORTANT	Urgent but Not important (Distractions)	Not urgent and Not Important (Time Wasting)

2. How it works

- Aim to work in the TOP two boxes
- The balance may change, but aim to have most demands and tasks in the top right box
- Set realistic expectations and break your goals into smaller, more manageable tasks
- Be aware that what is important to others may not be one of your key priorities!
- Use this matrix with the Top Tips to help you manage your time

*Many of us spend too much time on tasks that are **urgent and important**.*

This can be an exciting and productive experience; however you need to decide whether you want to work like this most of the time.

Prolonged deadline chasing has a significant impact on morale and efficiency and can increase your levels of stress affecting your health.

Your ability to prioritise effectively will improve with good assertive and time management skills

Top Tips to Help You Manage Your Time



These top tips are designed to help you ‘find’ the time you do have – but think you’ve lost, and manage those time stealers!

- **Spend time at the start of the each day planning;** make your priority ‘TO DO’ list (daily, weekly, monthly) then critically review it at the end of the day: e.g. Tasks not being completed, same jobs appearing regularly, jobs not being done? Identify why and look for solutions. Do the job you least want to do first!
- **Set (SMART) goals that are realistic & achievable;** use regular activities like washing the car, walking the dog, gardening etc. as personal time for you to think and forward plan
- **Have a plan & allow time for the unexpected,** problems will always occur so a plan will help you identify them early, look for solutions & try to be proactive. Successful people write down their goals & make lists all the time
- **Most of your time needs to be spent on a small but very important number of tasks** rather than the unimportant ones that may be someone else’s priority and just a distraction to your plans
- **Developing an assertive behaviour will help you to prioritise effectively,** by indicating your plans to others, clearly and not aggressively, you will be more likely to get a positive outcome
- **It is ok to say NO (nicely);** being a people pleaser will steal your time, negotiate alternative ways to achieve a win:win
- **Avoid procrastination,** and decision avoidance is one of the biggest thief’s of your time, base decision making on weighing up all the pros and cons, learn to trust your instincts & remember, many decisions can be modified or changed if needed!
- **Delegate as much as possible,** a team approach is can be time saving, ask yourself if you are the right/best person to do the job/task? You can still remain responsible for the final result
- **Assess the real amount of time you spend on meetings,** allowing for the time to follow up the outcomes & tasks allocated to you, time stealers you may not account for in your planning
- **Reserve blocks of time for different activities.** Don’t jump from job to job, resist being distracted by interruptions (“Have you got a minute”), group essential phone calls together, let your answer phone take messages & return the calls at your convenience. Never hold on, ring back or leave a message
- **Develop a flexible and problem solving outlook,** this will allow you to manage interruptions or distractions effectively. Often frequent and repetitive demands or tasks can cause you to stray from your main priority
- **Make the best use of available technology,** e.g. checking your emails too often is a real timewaster and can distract from your priority task. Decide on set times you will check & respond, then advise others that this is what you do. Try turning of your email alert!
- **Be realistic about what you can do rather than attempting too much,** know your limits and focus on your strengths; give yourself enough time to do things properly as finishing off tasks will give a real sense of achievement
- **Look after your desk or work space,** a cluttered work space reduces your effectiveness, if you can see less than 80% of your desk you may be suffering from ‘desk stress’!
- **Take regular breaks,** when you are refreshed you will be able to think more clearly, be more energized, productive & efficient
- **Make one of your priorities looking after yourself;** although the last top tip in this list, it could so easily be the first. By looking after your own needs and wellbeing, your ability to better manage other parts of your life will then become easier



The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once - Albert Einstein