

Ten tips for more effective time management

Do you feel exhausted by the end of day? Does your "to do" list seem endless? Get more control over your time and you'll feel better and accomplish more. Our tips can help.



1 Make time management your first priority

Take a few moments to prioritize your daily action items. The best time for this is either first thing in the morning or the last thing before you leave the office. Use whichever time slot works best for your schedule, but make sure you do it consistently. It will help you manage your projects and stay in control.

2 Stop driving yourself NUTs

Nagging Unfinished Tasks (NUTs) can easily zap your energy. After a week or two of putting off an unpleasant task it can start affecting your attitude and productivity. When an action item stays on your "to do" list too long, either buck-up and get it done or agree with yourself to let it go and stop worrying about it.

3 Find out what works for you

There are many time management tools available. Some people prefer date books or calendars. Some prefer software applications or programs like Outlook with built-in features like Task Lists. Ask your colleagues what tools they use to manage their time. Try several and then settle on the one that works best for you.

4 Give yourself a break

As your time management improves you'll see an increase in your personal productivity. It can be exciting and even a little addictive. If you find yourself frequently exhausted or working into the evening remember to pace yourself with occasional downtime. Schedule breaks or rewards to add a little balance to your workday.

5 Keep purpose top-of-mind

It's easy to follow familiar routines. Once a regular meeting is set-up or a process established it's easy to just go with the flow. But things change. Try to keep the larger purpose in mind when you find yourself following the usual routine. If the purpose is valid, fine. But when routines are losing value or efficiency encourage a better use of the time.

6 Stay on track

In today's fast-paced, demanding workplace it's easy to get sidetracked. Keep your priority action items in mind throughout the day. Take a moment to reprioritize when an unexpected disruption occurs. The best time managers find a practical balance between dedication-to-task and flexibility.

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7 Get organized

Being organized doesn't necessarily mean being neat. An organized person is one who can find what they're looking for quickly. If that's not you—whether it's your physical desktop or your computer desktop—take some time to get organized. You'll know you've been successful when you can find what you need fast.

8 Don't waste time waiting

It's only a matter of time before you find yourself delayed or stuck waiting for something or someone. With a little preparation you can put the unexpected time to good use by reading, making notes, or catching up on email or phone calls if you have a mobile device in hand. Much better than watching the minutes tick away.

9 Take charge of your time

Open calendars fill up quickly. If your workdays are often full of meetings with little time for your task list, try scheduling some time for yourself. Block out an hour or more on your calendar for working through your daily action items. And if you want to avoid a working lunch, you may need to schedule a daily lunch period too.

10 Track your time

If you can't figure out where your time goes, try keeping a time tracker. As you go through your day jot down everything you do in 15- or 30-minute intervals. In a week, you'll have enough data to see where improvements can be made.



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