

Unit 1 Introduction to Time Management

TIME MANAGEMENT: DEFINITION

“Time management” is the process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between specific activities. Good time management enables you to work smarter – not harder – so that you get more done in less time, even when time is tight and pressures are high. Failing to manage your time damages your effectiveness and causes stress.

It seems that there is never enough time in the day. But, since we all get the same 24 hours, why is it that some people achieve so much more with their time than others? The answer lies in good time management. The highest achievers manage their time exceptionally well. By using the time-management techniques in this section, you can improve your ability to function more effectively – even when time is tight and pressures are high.

Good time management requires an important shift in focus from activities to results: **being busy isn't the same as being effective**. (Ironically, the opposite is often closer to the truth.) Spending your day in a frenzy of activity often achieves less, because you're dividing your attention between so many different tasks. Good time management lets you work smarter – not harder – so you get more done in less time.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TIME MANAGEMENT:

Whether seeking a promotion, working to grow a business, or striving for the next rung on the ladder, successful time management is the key factor to achieving personal goals. A day spent with no focus or direction turns into time well wasted. Seconds turn into minutes, minutes to hours and hours to days. Before you know it, another year has passed. Seize the opportunity to take control of your path by following six characteristics of successful time management.

1. Evaluate

Spend a couple days documenting time spent on different tasks. Determine what you want to achieve, then be alert to activities that do not fall in those categories. Note any distractions that prevent accomplishing goals in a timely manner. Jot down any daily duties that could be streamlined to save time.

2. Plan and Prioritize

Set aside time at the beginning and end of each day to plan, prioritizing tasks based on your ultimate goals. Break large projects into small tasks to prevent becoming overwhelmed. Keep a calendar, schedule and to-do list with you at all times to remain focused. Check off accomplishments. At the end of the day, do not panic if something has not been completed. Move unfinished business to the next day's list.

3. Eliminate Time Thieves

Remove distractions that interfere with productivity. Schedule a block of time each day to return phone calls, answer text messages and respond to email. Unless an emergency occurs, stick to that appointment to avoid getting distracted by calls and messages throughout the day. Steer clear of social media during work hours. Close the office door when focusing on a project, to keep co-workers from stopping by just to chat.

4. Delegate

Avoid micro-managing and start delegating tasks to subordinates. Cross-train to better equip staff on work duties that consume your time, allowing employees or co-workers to learn new skills. When swamped with a project and a co-worker offers to help, let go of pride and welcome the assistance.

5. Say No

Learn to politely decline additional work and activities that do not fit into your personal goals. Joining a committee or club simply to be nice could cost you valuable time that is better spent on tasks that are important to you.

6. Rest and Replenish

Take breaks to clear your mind and schedule time for fun. Plan regular exercise in your daily routine to stay energized. Consume healthy meals as opposed to junk food that can lead to sluggishness and lack of focus. Stop working in time to unwind before bed, then get a good night's sleep.

OBJECTIVES OF TIME MANAGEMENT

Knowing how to manage your time properly is important as it brings a number of great benefits to your work routine and life overall:

1. It helps you achieve what you want, and faster

When you understand the importance of time management, you gain the motivation to stop sitting around and pursue your goals. As a result of this hard work and new found motivation, you reach your goals faster.

2. It helps you get more done, but in less time

When you properly manage time, you get more done, but also save more time for activities you truly enjoy. Allocating a specific time period, say 1 hour, to a task and sticking to your plan will have a better effect than working on a task with no predefined time slot.

3. It helps you waste less time, and avoid more friction and problems

Properly managing time includes making a to-do list, allocating time to each item from your to-do list, and then scheduling those tasks on your calendar. By doing so, you'll no longer be indecisive about what you have to do next, and whether you'll have to finish everything you need to.

4. It helps you clear your schedule for more leisure time, and feel more energized

Considering that proper time management helps you finish your work faster, you'll find that you now have more free time as a consequence. More free time will mean you have more time to spend with your loved ones, practice a hobby, or even go on a trip – which will all result in you feeling more energized.

5. It helps you fulfill more tasks in less time, and in turn, feel more fulfilled

When you properly manage time, you'll enjoy the feeling of success. a completed to-do list brings – you'll see how you can live up to your expectations and in turn feel a boost of self-confidence about your abilities.

6. It helps you feel calmer and less stressed over time

When you properly manage time, you don't have to worry about missing deadlines or forgetting errands – because you already planned your time in such a way that prevents such mishaps from happening. As a result, you'll feel less stressed about your workload and more calm about the end results.

7. It helps you make a change in your lifestyle for the better

Proper time management makes sure you spend less time busy as a bee but as productive as a sloth on a duvet day.

You'll be able to single out your priorities and schedule your time in such a way that you manage to both attend your daughter's recital and go over some crucial project issues with a client.

SIGNIFICANCE OF TIME MANAGEMENT:

Time management is important because it helps you control your workday so you can build your business without compromising your work-life balance. Here are seven benefits of proper time management:

1. IMPROVE YOUR PERFORMANCE

When you learn to block time out of your day for all your important tasks, you'll have a better idea of everything you need to accomplish and how long each task should take. When you have a schedule to follow, you'll likely find that you spend less time deciding what to work on or procrastinating and more time getting down to important work. Time management can help you focus on just the essential tasks ahead of you and avoid time-consuming distractions.

2. PRODUCE BETTER WORK

When you're not constantly racing to meet a deadline, you can put more effort and thought into your work. Time management helps you prioritize your tasks so that you ensure you have enough time available to complete every project. The quality of your work increases when you're not rushing to complete it ahead of a fast approaching deadline.

3. DELIVER WORK ON TIME

Properly managing your time involves assigning every task on your list to a specific blocks of time. Many people use time management to allow themselves several days to complete a project, or finish it ahead of the due date to provide a buffer for any challenges that might arise. If you properly schedule the time needed to complete your work, you'll be able to hit your deadlines every time.

4. REDUCE YOUR STRESS

It's easy to become anxious when you have a full list of tasks to accomplish both for work and in your personal life. Good time management can help you prioritize your to-do list and set aside the time needed for your most important tasks, so you know exactly what you need to do and how much time you have available to complete everything. Prioritizing your tasks and giving yourself enough time to accomplish them can help reduce your stress levels.

5. IMPROVED CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Time management can help you become a more reliable employee who always submits high-quality work by your due dates. This in turn will make you more valuable as a worker and improve your professional reputation, which can help you find new opportunities to expand your career.

6. BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE

When you manage your time properly and successfully meet your deadlines, you'll feel a sense of accomplishment and confidence in your abilities. Consistently finishing your daily to-do list is a huge motivator that can drive people to further improve their time management skills and take on new work opportunities.

7. BECOME MORE EFFICIENT

When you understand how to manage your time effectively, you'll become more focused at work which allows you to accomplish more with less time available. For example, instead of trying to work on a big project when you have fifteen minutes free before a meeting, you can accomplish a few small tasks in that time and save the bigger tasks that require more brain power for when you have a large block of time free. You'll be able to work more efficiently to achieve more with less time.

FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF TIME MANAGEMENT

However, if you WANT to make something a part of your life or if you want to make a change, it starts with adjusting your mindset from believing that thing is impossible to believing you can make it work.

1. YOU CAN'T DO EVERYTHING.

Be realistic. I want to be able to manage everything. Ex. I do plus be a bendy yogi master, properly rest/recover every day, harvest my own produce, diy my cleaning supplies, go hiking every weekend, and so much more. but I CAN'T. It's not feasible. Unfortunately, most of our lifestyles are taken up by making a living and taking care of others/things. You may not be able to manage everything I do because you have kids, but what is a priority to you? With the little extra time you do have, what do you really want to do with it??

2. YOU NEED TO BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF

Do you actually not have time for things? Are you actually busy? Or are you actually spending 3 hours a day scrolling through social media? Don't worry, most of people use to do that too. Keep reading articles about time management and productivity hoping to find the key to getting things done and finding success, but the answer was always there. Just focus on or start what you actually should be doing!

3. SACRIFICE IS NECESSARY

If you want to do something outside of working, sleeping, and other basics of life you are going to have to sacrifice something else. We sacrifice going out/fun/entertainment and sometimes we sacrifice sleep because we would rather use our time to work on our side hustles.

What are you willing to give up in order to do something you want to/should do? If you're not willing to give it up, you probably don't really want it.

4. PROGRESS CAN STILL BE MADE IN A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME

From example above, you can see that a person spend about 9 hours at the gym each week (or 1.5 hours 6 days a week). That is ME. The gym makes him happy. He has strength and physique goals that most people don't have.

In order to look and lift how he does, he has to train. If you just want to be healthy and in shape, 1.5 hours in the gym every day is no where near necessary!!

30 minutes 3 times a week? Done. 15 minutes 5 times a week? Great! Just because you can't dedicate hours to something doesn't mean you can't make progress!!

You can even start a side hustle with 10 minutes a day. It may take you longer to gain momentum or see results, but those 10 minutes add up.

I'll break an example down for you:

These days, most endeavors that involve the internet are very practical. Blogging, YouTubing, social media, flipping, etc.

Let's say you want to start an Instagram side hustle and you only can spare 10 minutes a day to do so. Many people profit off of sponsored IG posts or brand deals.

Day 1: Come up with username, niche, and a list of ideas and hashtags

Day 2: Create the account, follow a few relevant accounts, create a realistic posting schedule

Day 3: Take a photo of something, find a quote, etc (maybe you post it maybe you don't)

Day 4: Post the image, write a decent caption, like/comment on a few accounts (you'll gain a few followers)

Day 5: Find/take another image, brainstorm or write up a caption

Day 6: Post the image and caption, engage with other accounts

Day 7: Maybe you have an extra hour today so you go out and take 20-30 photos

This repeats for awhile, you post every other day and engage with others consistently. Day 457: You now have 12,567 followers and a company just sent you some water bottles for free and they're asking you to post a nice photo for \$300.

Again...this repeats itself and maybe you get more free time a couple years from now and you can expand into blogging or Youtubing. Progress is still progress. And if you're willing to stay patient and consistent with ANYTHING you will start to see results.

5. EXCUSES ARE MONUMENTS OF NOTHINGNESS

"Excuses are tools of the incompetent used to build bridges to nowhere and monuments of nothingness." - Barack Obama

At the end of the day, MOST of the things we say we can't do are just excuses. We hold ourselves back. If you instead replace those excuses with action, you might just start seeing results.

6. YOU NEED TO BE SELF-AWARE

You need to know yourself, what makes you tick, what makes you happy. Ex. Spending my free time working out, blogging, and creating videos makes me happy. Watching Netflix all night and sleeping in late might make you happy, and that's all that matters.

You need to design your life around what you want. If you can't see yourself dedicating a lot of your time to something, then don't. I think a lot of people desire something because they see others living a certain way. However, you may not have it in you. Life is honestly quite simple, if you can manage the basics and still do things that make you happy, you're doing a lot better than you think.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF TIME MANAGEMENT:

1. Planning

Planning is always important, no matter what you do. Take a few minutes in the morning to plan your activities for the day. For a hectic schedule, minimize distractions as much as possible. You can also use various personal planning tools to plan and organize your schedule. These tools include calendars, wall charts, notebooks, electronic planners, pocket diaries and index cards. List all your tasks and schedules so that you can focus on your priorities in your planning tool.

Consider the following important things when using a planning tool:

- Record all the information on your tool only.
- Review your planning tool every day.

- Always carry your planning tool with you.
- Make a list of your priorities on the tool and stick to it.
- If you are using an electronic planner, synchronize it with your computer and recharge the batteries of the planner regularly.
- Ensure that you get a backup system for your planning tool.

At the end of each workday, invest a few minutes to quickly make a list of things to be done the following day in your mind. It will mentally put the most important duties on your mind and less important ones out of your mind on the next day.

2. Organize and Prioritize

Imagine your boss has given you a presentation for the coming board meeting and you have just 3–4 days to prepare it. The workload is high and you already have a few important tasks to do. It will be an extremely stressful situation for anyone.

Thankfully, there is The Eisenhower's Principle! In a speech, former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower said that he had two kinds of problems: important and urgent, and both are different. Based on this principle, there was an app developed named as Priority Matrix that lets you differentiate between Do Now and Critical tasks.

The most fundamental premise of effective time management is differentiating what is important and what is urgent. Note that the most important tasks are not the most urgent tasks and vice-versa.

The problem is most of us let urgent tasks dominate our lives. But, experts suggest that though both urgent and important tasks can be done together, one must first focus on important ones regardless of their urgency. Focusing on what you want to accomplish, will give you full control over your time.

The easiest way to prioritize your tasks is to make a to-do list on daily, weekly or monthly basis depending on your lifestyle. Rank the items in your list on the basis of priority as high, medium and low. Execute and mark off the highest priorities first.

3. The 80/20 Rule

Also known as the Pareto's Principle, the 80/20 rule, when applied to work, means that approx. 20 percent of your hard work produces 80 percent results. So, you should focus that 20 percent on making the most effective use of your time.

Identify your most important tasks and follow these five steps:

- Think about the outcome you expect.
- Break it down into actions required to get the job done.
- Do the action with complete dedication and in the most accurate order, you can.
- Identify and execute the next important action.
- Repeat until complete.

Apply the 80/20 rule on all tasks on your to-do list to boost your efficiency.

4. Do One Thing At A Time

We all try to do too much all at once and end up achieving almost nothing. The people who try to accomplish multiple goals at a time were less dedicated and had the fewer chances to succeed than those who keep

themselves focused on a single goal at a time. Successful people concentrate on just one thing at a time, as far as possible.

When we try to be multitasking, tasks at hand takes more time and we become less productive. As we feel pressured, we start thinking about other unimportant things, such as what to buy for the party, arguments with colleagues, etc. It, eventually, turns into stress and keeps us from completing our tasks by time and efficiently.

As Rob Brandsma, psychologist and mindfulness coach, says, “When you speak, speak. When you listen, listen.” Be present at the moment so that you can fully concentrate on the task at hand. Practice doing one thing at a time and eventually it will become your normal routine.

5. Avoid Distractions

You sit at the desk with determination in mind to complete a task no matter what. As you turn on your laptop, you notice a friend’s message on Facebook or text on your phone and forget about that important task.

Well, distractions happen and it’s hard to avoid them. It’s really challenging to stay focused on a task for hours at a time. But, the practice can help you achieve the same!

First, identify internal or external distractions and pinpoint their cause. Tiredness? Lack of skills? Find the cause and fix it.

Common Tips to avoid distraction

- **Put down your phone:** Constant unscheduled phone calls and messages are common distractions. So, switch off your mobile phone and forward your work phone to voicemail. Make sure you check your calls every 2–3 hours — just like your inbox.
- **Close Your Web Browser:** Admit it that you’re into social media as they are serious distractions. Gather your willpower, log off your social media profiles and close the screen down.
- **Wear Headphones:** If you work sitting in a cubicle, wear noise-cancelling headsets to make the world a quiet and peaceful place.
- **Take a Break:** Take a short break if you feel getting distracted by something or feel tired after working for long hours at a time. Short breaks will help you get relaxed and make your mind clearer.

6. Delegate

Delegation means identifying if some of your tasks can be handled by others and assigning those tasks to someone else. It will free up some of your time that you can give to other core activities. Select appropriate persons who can assist you by sharing your responsibilities in the best possible way. They should have appropriate skills, interest, experience and authority required to accomplish the task.

Be specific and clear while defining your tasks and expectations. Also, allow the person some freedom to personalize the assigned tasks. Make sure you occasionally check if the person is progressing and going in the right direction or needs your assistance. In work settings, we have found that project management software like TimeOn can be very helpful for managing teams and making sure everyone is performing well and are headed in the right direction. Finally, reward the person for a job well done or ask to make improvements if required.

Also, you can ask others to help you with other urgent tasks, giving you time to focus on important tasks. For example, pay someone to mow your lawn or clean your house; Join a carpool to transport your kids to their school to allow yourself the time that you can devote to other activities.

7. Keep Yourself Healthy and Stress-free

The care you give to your body will help you rejuvenate mentally and physically. Only people with a healthy mind and body can accomplish their tasks quickly, easily and efficiently. Practice managing your time according to your biological clock by scheduling priority tasks during the peak time of the day, when your energy levels are at their best.

If you are bad at time management, you will end up struggling with moodiness, fatigue, stress, and frequent illness. To avoid stress, recognize that you have accomplished a task and are ready to move on to the next one.

One thing we can definitely recommend is getting some exercise done during the week. Every time you have done a workout you will be feeling much healthier and full of new energy — ready to tackle all your tasks for the day.

8. Learn to say “NO”

Unless something truly important comes to you, practice saying ‘no’ to the tasks that you feel pressured with. Instead, save your energy and concentration for the activities that are important for you and you enjoy doing.

Being a “yes” man or woman can lead to you getting too much on your plate and becoming overwhelmed with work. This does no good for anyone. You will be stressed and your manager will most likely complain about not getting the work done on time or in adequate manner. Know that it is perfectly OK to say “no” to tasks you feel overwhelmed by.

9. Make Realistic Schedules

Plan your schedule before the week starts. Don’t strive for perfection as nobody in the world is perfect. Instead, focus your efforts on being excellent and don’t worry about things that you can’t control or handle.

Stay positive and when you feel stressed, take a 10-minute break to do things that you enjoy. Take care of your health, eat and drink healthy, exercise daily, sleep well and laugh as much as you can!