

## Time Management – Ten Time Management Tips

### 1. Do the big/most important things first

Know what the 'important' things are and resolve to do them first; protect and defend your time on these tasks. [Watch our video on time management](#) and the 'rocks of time'. You may also find the Eisenhower urgent/important matrix useful.

### 2. Minimise solving other peoples' problems/their expectations of instant responses

During time on important work, avoid getting involved in solving other people's problems or feeding their expectations that you will reply respond immediately to requests. You can still be helpful, but you can place your own parameters around this: instead of saying yes when they ask for help, practice saying "yes, if..", or "yes when..", or "No because..".

### 3. Identify things to do in the margins of the day

Identify the small, urgent tasks that can be done in the margins of the day and ticked off rapidly. Have a separate to-do list for these and only look at this list when you have completed your important work. Having all tasks on one list doesn't help with prioritizing the important work...and you can predict that the important tasks will be the ones left on the list when everything else has been ticked off!

### 4. Work in short, times 'chunks' (Pomodoro Technique)

Try working in small, focused chunks of time rather than long tiring sessions. Then take time off in between to do something different and give your brain a break. This is known as the [Pomodoro Technique](#), which many researchers have found a useful way of working to tackle a large piece of work or perhaps to 'chip away' at something you're not enjoying but you must make progress on.

### 5. Turn off email (most of the time)

Try to have your email switched off most of the time. If you deal with you emails twice a day for example for 45 minutes, you will find that you can process a lot of them in a very short space of time – particularly if you set a timer and race against the clock. What's the worst that could happen if you don't look at emails for a few hours? If there is a real emergency, then email is perhaps not the best way to get your attention. You could let some colleagues know your work pattern so they don't expect instant replies and know that if there is a genuine emergency they should phone or come and find you instead.

### 6. Make yourself accountable to others

Often, we're more likely to prioritise things where we feel accountable to others. If your important work has no deadline, and no one asking for it, can you create a deadline? For example: connect it to other deadlines such as departmental meetings or seminars where you can present your ideas. Or, you could you arrange for a colleagues to give you peer feedback – tell them you will get your draft to them on a specific date for review...then you will have to prioritise that work so that you don't let your colleague down or waste their time.

**7. Work in the right environment or change that environment**

Notice which environments best suit your important or 'deep work': is there a specific place where it is easiest to concentrate and screen out distractions? For some people it might be a silent, private room, for others it could be in a busy café wearing noise cancelling headphones and listening to ambient sounds.

**8. Get to know the energy rhythm of your day...and use it to be efficient**

When are you at your most productive? If you are a morning person, do your deep work in the mornings. If you are more alert and energized in the evening, do it then. Match your important work to these times. Do the more trivial 'busy' work at other times of day so you are not giving them your best energy.

**9. Notice what breaks your good resolutions**

Notice what kinds of people, events or tasks tend to lead you to break your good time management habits...keep a mental note and try to work out ways to minimize or manage out their impact on your time management.

**10. Do things well (enough)**

Finally – many researchers have a perfectionism habit (your inner critic will tell you that it's what got you to where you are). If a task just needs to be 'good enough', we waste time making it perfect. Perfectionism is impossible (except perhaps in a math's test!), it hampers creativity and most tasks, particularly the small, less important ones do not need to be perfect. Always seek clarification on what is actually required, what will be good enough and, once you have achieved this, stop and move on to the important work. Look at our [resources on the inner critic](#) to better understand where this time-wasting perfectionism comes from.

If you were only to commit to one of these ideas, which would have the biggest impact on your time management and productivity?