

TIME MANAGEMENT *TACTICS*



50 TACTICS TO MAKE YOUR
TIME MORE PRODUCTIVE

1. Realize time management is a myth. Many want to squeeze too much into one day. Coming to the realization that there are only 24 hours in a day and that one can only fit so much into those hours, releases one from the worries and anxieties of things that are yet to be done.
2. Find out where you're wasting time. Conduct a complete time examination. Walk through your day in 15 minute intervals, writing down what you are doing and for how long.
3. Create time management goals. Having clear goals will guide you through the process of getting control of your time. The best way to start is with pen and paper in hand and write out what you want more time to do.
4. Implement a time management plan. Just like a budget guides money spending, a time management plan will guide how you can use your time.
5. Use time management tools. There are thousands of time management tools available today. The best is a daily or weekly planner. Other options are online calendar's such as Google Calendar or Outlook.
6. Prioritize ruthlessly. Learn to cut out what is not important to you. Make a list of all the things that you need to get done, then think through each one and decide if it is worth your time or not. If not, cut it from the list.
7. Learn to delegate. Look at your to do list and see what can be handed off to other people, a spouse, a coworker or a friend.
8. Establish routines and stick to them. Find your rhythm in life. Learn what time you need to go to bed, what time is best to wake up and find specific times to do daily tasks, such as checking email and filing.

9. Set time limits for tasks. Time can get away from you really quickly if you do not have a set amount of time for a task.
10. Organize your systems. Do you use several email addresses? Several online programs? Bookmark often visited websites or put them on your explorer tool bar.
11. Don't waste time waiting. If you find yourself waiting for things to get done, bring work along with you, or even a good book that you have been wanting to read. Getting an oil change? Bring something to work on.
12. Get a planner. There are many types of planners out there today, some of the better ones out line each day of the week in 15 minute intervals, as well as included a full page monthly calendar. Once you find one you like, use it.
13. Differentiate between urgent and vital. Urgent are things that are due soon, but may not be life or death. Vital are things that may or may not be urgent, but that you absolutely must do.
14. Schedule your priorities do not prioritize your schedule. Take charge of what you have before you. You have the power to decided what you do and when.
15. Time journal for two weeks, giving account for every 15 or 30 minutes of time. This will help you see where your time is going and what takes up most of your time.
16. Learn to say no. This is your greatest ally. Practice saying no in polite but firm ways. You are no one's door mat. Decide what you are going to do, then do not get distracted by other tasks that people may want you to do for them.

17. Learn what drives procrastination. Examine that times that you find yourself procrastinating. Is it because of the task, the time of day, or your overall mood?
18. Figure out what your time is worth. If you make 30,000 a year, each hour is worth roughly \$3.50 (including waking and sleeping hours). Now, decide what tasks are worth your pay and don't sweat the small stuff.
19. Set clear goals. Having a clear direction will help keep you on task. For everyone item on your to do list, think through each step that needs to get done to complete that task.
20. Put things into perspective. Take a moment each day to take a larger picture look. This can be considering yourself in relation to your life goals, or to humanity in general.
21. Respond to email when you read it. Most people have to read an email at least twice, once when it arrives then again whenever they get around to replying to it. To cut out one reading, just reply to the email as soon as you get it.
22. Admit multitasking is bad. Studies have shown that multitasking actually inhibits productivity. The best thing to do is take on one task at a time, stay focused, and finish it before you began another task.
23. Do most important things first. Find the more urgent and vital things on your list, concrete on them first. Getting a big gorilla off your back first thing in the morning is a great way to start the day.
24. Check your email on a schedule. Find a specific time or times to check your email on a consistent basis. For example: check it first thing in the morning

then right after lunch or right before you leave for the day.

25. Keeps web site addressed organized. The fewer clicks or buttons you have to push to get to a frequented site the more time saved.
26. Know when you work your best. Some people are morning people, some afternoon, and some evening. If you work best at a certain time of the day, schedule the most urgent and vital tasks then.
27. Think about keystrokes. Use keyboard short cuts as much as possible. Changing from keyboard to mouse can slow you down. Many programs have customizable keyboard shortcuts.
28. Break large projects into smaller ones. Take a mountain and make it a mole hill. By taking a larger project and making it into smaller ones you are more often reinforced for success and the tasks seem much less daunting.
29. Organize your to do list every day. Days change and so should their tasks. Every day look over your to do list and prioritize it and organize it by task type and importance. What was important the day before may not be so today.
30. Know when to take your time with a task. Rushing through a project or task can actually cost you time in the long run. Know when you need to slow down and make sure you get it right the first time.
31. Keep distractions to a minimum. Avoid the water cooler, keep the radio off, and exit the internet explorer. The more there is to distract you the more time it will take to get things done.
32. Create a to do list. It is simple and takes little time. A great opportunity to make a to do list is when your head hits the pillow at night. Keep a notepad by

your bed and think through the next day or week and write down what needs to get done.

33. Reward yourself. Take time to reinforce success. Work for an hour, then a ten minute break. When the big project gets down, a trip to the movies or theatre. This will keep you going when the going gets tough.
34. Create work/home boundaries. For the most part the rule of thumb is to leave work stuff at work and home stuff at home. Keep your home a place of rest and relaxation away from work.
35. Rest. This means sleeping well at night, getting enough sleep, and taking breaks during the day. Take walk during work and get some fresh air. Get a glass of water mid-afternoon (it will also help ease that tension headache as well). Self-care is vital to productivity.
36. Eat well. A good breakfast will ensure you stay alert for the morning time. A light lunch filled with fruits and veggies won't weigh you down and will keep you motivated through the afternoon. It is hard to concentrate when the stomach is not satisfied.
37. Get an accountability partner. Share with a co-worker the tasks that you need to get done and when they need to get done. Ask them to check in for progress periodically.
38. Forgo perfectionism. There are some tasks that require perfection, but most task just require that they get done. Know your job and know which ones can just be completed.
39. Complete unpleasant tasks first. Get through the muck and mud first. Take on the task you are dreading first and get it out of the way. You will be glad you

did.

40. Visualize your long term success. Do not get caught up in the small things. All the things you need to get done are in service to your long term success and goals.
41. Create routine. A routine is the best way to pump out consistent productivity. Find a time each day to file, check email, take breaks etc. Do it everyday. The control you exercise over your day will translate into control over your to do list as well.
42. Separate to do list into priorities A, B, C. An "A" means that it has to get done, a "B" means that it should be done and a "C" means that it would be nice if it got done. Tackle A's first then work down the list.
43. Plan for emergencies. Plan ahead if you need to make a million copies or have to get a project to the other store. Traffic and copy machine meltdowns are classic and common. Plan ahead, plan extra time, and save yourself a lot of stress and heartache later on.
44. Check off items as you go. Keep track of your daily success. Checking things off your list will keep you motivated to finish the day. It is gratifying and energizing to see what you have gotten done during the day.
45. Keep a firm yet flexible schedule. Things happen. Schedule in some flex time, for example schedule only 45 minutes of an hour, leaving 15 minutes of flex time. This will account for the coworker that just had to tell your something or the coffee the spilt on your briefcase.
46. Exercise. Exercise actually energizes your body and protects you from illness. It also releases neurotransmitters that fight against stress and depression.

Exercise really is the miracle drug.

47. Take a break during the day. Take a mid-morning break and an afternoon break. Take a walk, do some stretches, get some water and have a snack.
48. Stay focused. Keep on task. Let others know that you are working and cannot be disturbed. Keep your task list and materials organized so that you do not get distracted by other tasks that are staring at you from your desk.
49. Know your limits. Know when you just need to shut it off for the day. When your mind is spent and your body is tired, it's time to take off for the day. Work done when you are exhausted will most often have to be redone later.
50. Keep your daily to do list small and manageable. Keep it to 5 items or less. A massive to do list will only serve to overwhelm you. Put the most important tasks on the list and then set out to work. Do not borrow tomorrow's worries (or work).

