

10 HOT TIPS
FOR
MANAGING YOUR
TIME!!

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1. Where Is It Going?

The first plan of action that needs to be taken is to figure out exactly where all of your time is going. A list needs to be generated that can account for each hour of your day. Once you know where it is going then it can be managed a lot easier. For instance if you have to balance school, work, social and family lives it will help to create a time management plan to know you spend X amount of time at work, X amount at school, X amount with family, and X amount for your personal Social life.

It is important to understand how we spend our time to be able to successfully manage our time. With respect there are certain instances we may feel overwhelmed with the current situation and 'waste' time avoiding that which we do not want to do. Create an hourly calendar of how your time is spent. If you wish to jot down shorter periods of time that is good; some of the most well known organizers will create task lists that break down their time management into minutes and sometimes even seconds.

2. Create a List of Goals to Accomplish

One of the single best things we can do to help manage our time is to know what it is we need to manage. Most of us have several things during that day that need to be completed from waking up in the morning to falling asleep at night and everything in between. The kids may need to be picked up from school/practice at a certain time, dry cleaning, grocery, post office, meetings, doctor appointments and a myriad of other events.

By creating a list of what we need to accomplish during any given day it will allow us to gain a much needed focus and understanding of time. We may even surprise ourselves and find out that some events take much less time than we thought they would, simply because we don't have to 'rush' to get them done because we forgot.

3. Use a Planner

To error is human, we all forget things; which makes using a planner an invaluable tool for time management. There are monthly, daily and hourly planners that come in all shapes and sizes. It is a good habit to get into with keeping track of what time things need to be completed. No one likes to wait and if you are late for a job interview, doctor appointment, or picking up your child from play practice it does not put you in a good light. Missing scheduled appointments can cause a tremendous amount of damage to your reputation and respect. Stay on time and use a planner to keep organized with your activities.

4. Write Down ASAP (As Soon As Possible)

The first moment you learn of a new appointment or scheduling change you need to write it down. This is a great reason to have a planner handy; most planners come with a 'notes' section perfect for writing things down quickly. A lot of us have a lot of things on our mind, we are stretching ourselves in several directions and if we do not make note of new items it is

possible we will forget them. From my time spent in the military I have learned to constantly carry pen and paper with me. I use a small note pad the size of my business card case and two ball point pens. You may not use it everyday, or even once a month but when you do need it you will be happy you have it. It is a habit I started and haven't stopped. When I put items into my pockets the pad and pens go with me each and every time.

5. Time Budgeting

Now we know what we need to accomplish during the day the next step is to create a budget allowing us enough time to successfully complete each task. Take for instance we have a 2 O'clock lunch date and have a business meeting across town at 3 O'clock. We have to budget time for traveling, so here we will estimate about 30 minutes. Lunch on the other hand we need to know how long it will take to be seated, order, eat, and pay. I would assume it was not a fast food restaurant, so giving us only 30 minutes to accomplish those tasks is not much time. This means the lunch would need to be canceled or set at an earlier time.

Prioritize your time, what are the more important events of the day, those are the tasks that need to make sure they have satisfactory time to accomplish with a small cushion then other events can be budgeted around them. In the example above I would assume business would be more important than a lunch date. A lot of us try to squeeze as much in during the day as possible, however, how much of it is enjoyable if there is not enough time allowed to enjoy it? I would much rather have casual lunch dates, then a rushed one with worries of needing to be somewhere soon.

6. Set Aside Time Everyday

The things that are the most important to you needs to have its own special time each and every day. This time can be used for anything you desire, I know several successful people who will use this time to practice their craft. This could be used to spend with your family, pursue a hobby, take a bubble bath or play games. This time really is about you, and unwinding/resting/relaxing from the hectics of everyday life. This is more commonly known as 'Me Time', time for you to be selfish in what you do.

Life is stressful in the amount of things we want/need to accomplish. However the stress of having to do certain tasks to even stay alive can be an overwhelming burden. By taking me time you can help release those tensions and help to keep a healthier attitude and outlook on life in general. By setting aside this time it will allow you to gain a clear picture on your tasks at hand. Not by thinking about them during me time but by gaining a fresh perspective by not thinking about them. Gravity was discovered by someone napping under an apple tree; what can you accomplish by budgeting me time?

7. Stick to a Routine

The one thing none of us want to be tied down with, a routine. Walking the same miles in and day out sounds dreary and unfulfilling; though steady. However, the important thing to think about with a routine is that it will help to manage your time and organize certain events. Let's take for instance,

every day you have to go to work, pick-up the kids from school, stop by the post office and cook dinner. A routine when these tasks are accomplished would work out greatly to help budget your time for other events. You accomplish these tasks in a certain order, and you know how much time it takes to accomplish each one; so now you can add additional items in between that can change from day to day. The one thing you want to remember is that the events that continuously occur from day to day are the events that need to be in a routine, everything else is just frosting.

8. Don't Procrastinate!!!

The one thing many of us are guilty of, procrastination. We try to avoid doing things that we do not want to do. We choose to find other 'distractions' that will aid us to avoid and procrastinate for as long as possible; most the time to the last moment. The key is to NOT procrastinate, if we accomplished the tasks we don't want to do but have to quicker, then they will be behind us and we can certainly move forward without a cloud hovering over us.

Do what you can today and something new tomorrow.

9. Divide and conquer

One of the major reasons we procrastinate is because the tasks at hand may be monstrously intimidating in size. We see the large item in front of us and feel pessimistic towards completing it. However, if we can break the larger item into smaller more manageable pieces the big scary project will look like a child's puzzle waiting to be put together. It will also help us to budget time per segment instead of for the total.

You have a two thousand page report to edit and fix within a weeks time. The report itself is thick and heavy with single sided printing. The first reaction is repulsion then avoidance then agitation and stress to complete the task at the last moment. Yet, if you look at the two thousands pages between five days you can break it down into four hundred pages a day. Four hundred feels a lot more manageable then the whole thing. We can now budget our time to complete the task without added deadline pressures or feeling overwhelmed by the size. If you can break it down do it.

10. Say No when there is work to be done.

Work Now Play Later! This mantra I have heard many times and have even told several people myself. This is something many people find difficult to accomplish especially when there are tasks we do not want to do needing to be done. However, I have always tried to explain to my workers that once the task at hand is finished it allows us to ease up and relax before the next task needs to be started. Yet, some of the younger workers will 'procrastinate' and not manage their time properly, they will put off the tasks until the last minute and then not understand why they are falling behind and why others get to relax when they get to work.

Saying No when there is work to be done is just that, telling others around you no to extra smoke breaks or gossip sessions. Saying no to family and friends when they want to 'blow off' work to play. We have to understand that what we do is extremely important and it needs to be completed if we

want to succeed. We need to take pride in what we do and know when it is ok for 'me time' and when it is 'work time' and be able to tell others you don't have the time until you are completed. Creating this stronger work ethic will rub off on other people and help others to work now and play later.

In conclusion, to properly manage time we have to understand where it is going, how it is getting there and what we can do to organize the usage of it. Measure twice cut once then run out into the field to play. In other words if you do it right the first time around, you will save yourself time and stress. Write it down and follow your routine but don't forget to take me time.

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