

Time Management – 6 Tips

Too much to do? Here's six things to help you manage your time.

What's time management about?

Time management is more than just using your time more effectively. It should be about aiming for a balance between work and your other activities (and therefore less about trying to suck your last drop of blood so that you can get more done). Studies show you'll be more effective overall with a balance between work and other activities.

What eats up our time?

In business, the major "disturbances" are:

- Emails
- Phone calls
- Walk-ins
- And for many, Meetings.

Here's 6 things you can do

1. Prioritize
2. The two minute rule: Handle things efficiently
3. Write (and ask for) better emails
4. Run better meetings
5. Learn to (politely) handle office walk-ins
6. Delegate

See below for more on each.

1. Prioritize.

Use the "A B C" method to help decide what is most important for you to do

- A-"got-to-dos"
- B -"ought-to-dos"
- C -"Nice-to-dos"

Or use the Steven Covey "Quadrant 2" method.

Steven Covey defines 4 quadrants for work based on urgency and importance. Your aim is to get the Urgent and important tasks (quadrant 1 -the crisis elements) done ASAP and then focus on "Important Not urgent" (referred to as "quadrant 2"). This "quadrant 2" space is where you are more in control and can plan better.

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important		
Not important		



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2. The two minute rule

The 2 minute rule basically means if you can do it quickly, then do it now.

The Two minute rule was popularized by from David Allen (who runs a multi-million dollar company and has written three books, including “Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity” and “Ready for Anything: 52 Productivity Principles for Getting Things Done”. Allen states:

"I have a two-minute rule that says: If you determine an action can be done in two minutes, you actually should do it right then because it'll take longer to organize it and review it than it would be to actually finish it the first time you notice it. If you don't avoid the question about what's the next step, lots of two minute items could be done right then. Now, there are many times that you have a next step that's going to take longer amount of time, like drafting some big new spreadsheet. You wouldn't want to do that in two minutes. It's a good idea to keep a whole lot of little things to do when you get those strange little windows of time, like clean up old e-mails, or purge some of your files. There's a lot of things around me to do when I get a weird little window of time and when I don't have a lot of energy. Let's say I finished a big phone call and I don't have another one for seven minutes, I'm likely to just be cleaning spam out of my e-mails or you know purging a file, or perhaps going and getting a cup of coffee."

3. Write and ask for better emails.

Here's 4 points to help you handle and write better emails:

1. Send fewer emails. Consider an email free day, Pick up the phone or talk direct.
2. Include “NRR” – i.e., no response required.
3. Keep it short and make the purpose clear up front. From the title and the first sentence, people should know what you want. Bold and include titles (e.g., **Action requested**, **Background**, etc.). Deal with just one point
4. Handle quickly.

For more on improving email use: <https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/EmailCommunication.htm>

4. Run better meetings

Here's 6 things to keep in mind for better meetings.

1. Have an agenda
2. Be on time -finish on time (or earlier) – i.e., be professional.
3. Have objectives and target outputs (what do you want at the end of the meeting that will make the meeting successful?)
4. Invite only those who are relevant to the meeting objectives
5. Facilitate and capture discussion as you go
6. Provide a summary of key to do next steps.

For more on running effective meetings: <https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/RunningMeetings.htm>

5. Learn to (politely) handle office walk-ins.

If you don't have time for chitchat, then here's 6 suggestions:

1. Offer to visit their office.
2. Be polite and honest. Reschedule if you have to cut short (e.g., can we continue later...?).
3. When someone comes in be clear on the purpose of the visit.
4. Invite them to join you as you leave the office (go for a break or to copy something)
5. Respect others time and they will respect yours.

6. Delegate

1. Delegate but don't just pass off what you don't want to do!
2. Check people can, are interested and have the time to help.

For more on delegating: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_98.htm

Resource: Mindtools.com