



7 STEPS TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGING YOUR TIME

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Summary

Everyone is overwhelmingly busy these days. So many of us work from the moment we wake up through to when we go to bed. And we wonder why we don't sleep very well!

Effective time management is critical to truly experiencing a balanced life - and being the best version of ourselves. In the face of so much to do it is easy to feel overwhelmed. Follow these 7 steps to managing your time, and feel less overwhelmed.

Introduction

It seems the greatest challenge of the 21st Century is how to manage time, and more specifically how to manage the conflicting and ever-increasing demands on it. Less delineation between work and home, the 24/7 world of mobile devices, and a changing expectation of standard of living all contribute to how busy we have all become. So now more than ever it is critical we learn how to effectively manage our time, and ensure we leave enough for ourselves, our passions and our families. Follow our tips below.

7 Steps

- 1. Treat time as finite**
- 2. Don't procrastinate**
- 3. Focus on the outcome**
- 4. Prioritise**
- 5. Delegate what you can**
- 6. Celebrate your success**
- 7. Put gas in the tank**



1. Understand time is finite

One of the biggest mistakes we see people make when trying to manage their time is that they operate on the assumption that there will always be more time, or sometimes that you can wish more into existence. This is complete fallacy.

If we keep front of mind that time is finite, it becomes essential to construct a diary or appointment book to allocate this most precious resource, and ensure that it is being spent wisely. You must view your time as any other resource, and construct a time budget for yourself. Running over on your time budget, has the same effect as running over on your money budget. There's only so much of it - so something is going to have to give.

When constructing a diary or appointment book for yourself, you need to understand that time is a finite quantity. Like your weekly budget, you have a fixed amount every week and you are simply allocating it out to yield the highest reward.

It can be helpful to actually count the amount of time you have in units and allocate those units to areas of your life. For example if you have 60 units in a week, you might allocate 30 units to work, 20 units to family and 10 units to yourself or similar. Then you have the finite amounts in your time budget to allocate to each area.

And as my Mum used to say, when it's gone, it's gone.





2. Don't procrastinate

A great many things do get better with age. Tasks, though, generally don't. When you are really busy it is so very easy to just select tasks that you enjoy doing more. The less desirable tasks just never seem to get done. Delegation of tasks can help ease this pressure. However, if you can't delegate, you are going to have to do it at some point. If you simply schedule in the time, and know that you have to do something you don't enjoy particularly for that short period of time it becomes less intimidating. You know that it will be unpleasant for a short period of time only, and then it will be done.

If you find yourself still resistant to doing certain things - like your tax, or phoning those prospects - then build a reward at the end for yourself. Maybe have your favourite coffee, go for a walk, or schedule something you really enjoy directly after the less desirable task. Knowing that there is something you like occurring as soon as you get that task done might give you that little bit of extra incentive to just get it done. And I'm always shocked when I do finish those tasks I have been putting off - they are never even half as bad as I imagine them to be!





3. Focus on the outcome

Be clear on what each task contributes. Getting the groceries means you can cook your favourite meal, phoning prospects means you might get that big sale and doing your bank reconciliation means that you will have a clear view of your cash position. Tasks must always have a purpose to be on the list, and if you focus on the outcome not the mechanism of actually doing them, they become a lot more meaningful and you will

be a lot more engaged in the performance of the task - and ultimately more efficient. Outcomes contribute meaning to our lives, whereas tasks may seem menial. Connection to purpose makes tasks important, and makes them matter.

If you are unclear on the outcome of the task, see the next point for whether it should indeed be on the list at all.

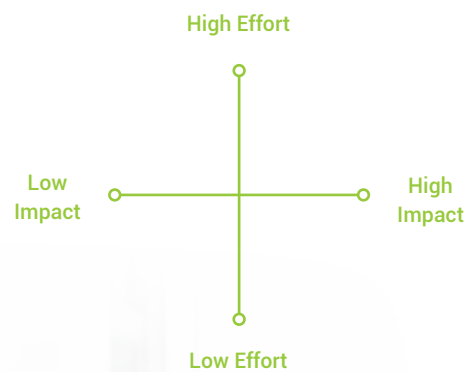




4. Prioritise

Once you have identified the clear outcome or objective that the task achieves in the step above, you are much better positioned to prioritise tasks. The reality for most people is that there is more to do than can be done. This means that you must clearly prioritise tasks in order of urgency and also the impact of what they contribute.

Try breaking your tasks into level of effort required to achieve it vs. the benefit or impact the task will yield.



Allocate your tasks into the quadrant above. Focus on 5 tasks in the High Impact/Low Effort quadrant every day. Next focus on 2-3 tasks in the High Impact/High Effort quadrant. If there's any time left then start working through tasks in the other quadrants. In time you should end up with less tasks in the Low Impact half of the quadrant, as these can likely be delegated or not done at all.





5. Delegate what you can

Whilst this is not possible for all tasks or for all people, it is important to delegate where you can. Frequently people say "I can do it myself in less time than it would take to explain", however if it is a regular task add up the lifetime time allocation of that task. Imagine what you would save if you explained or documented the process once, and then never had to do it again!

Many tasks can be effectively delegated, even though it can feel scary to do so. If tasks are falling in the Low Impact portion of the quadrant but are necessary, chances are you are not the most appropriate person to

be performing the task. Assess who would be the best resource to complete the task, document the process and hand it over. Your time is better spent elsewhere!

In the business context, this is also important for training the next generation. If the tasks are never delegated they will never learn how to best complete them. Many younger workers are hungry to learn, and if you spend the time teaching them they will be grateful and you will lessen your load and give you time and space to focus on bigger things.



6. Celebrate your success

Don't be afraid to pat yourself on the back for a job well done. Culturally we don't tend to celebrate our successes, however it is so important to maintaining momentum and drive. Celebrate when you get things done, do something special for yourself and remember that your contribution matters.

The tasks on your list, that you invest your precious, finite time into matter, so when you achieve them and do a great job celebrate, and reward yourself - even in little ways.





7. Remember to put gas in the tank

The delineation between work and everything else no longer really exists. For this reason the two need to work in harmony - supporting each other, and making each richer for the existence of the other. In order for this to even be possible you need to keep yourself topped up. Treat yourself, play with your kids, spend time with your spouse, read that book - whatever it is that fills your cup so that you feel balanced.

You must schedule into your diary - the same as any other appointment - the things that put gas in your tank, and allow you to function at your highest level of productivity. Without that, the list will never reduce and you will certainly burn out.



Conclusion

Time is the most precious commodity most of us possess. We should treat it with the respect that warrants. We need to make time for work, family and all the things that matter to use. To do that you need to prioritise, focus on the purpose and be as efficient as possible. Follow the steps above to get the most out of every day, and stay as productive as you can without feeling swamped and overwhelmed.