

10 Time Management Tips That Work

Are you working on clock time or 'real' time? Learn how to manage your day by understanding the difference with these 10 time management tips.

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Chances are good that, at some time in your life, you've taken a time management class, read about it in books, and tried to use an electronic or paper-based day planner to organize, prioritize and schedule your day. "Why, with this knowledge and these gadgets," you may ask, "do I still feel like I can't get everything done I need to?"

The answer is simple. Everything you ever learned about managing time is a complete waste of time because it doesn't work.

Before you can even begin to manage time, you must learn what time is. A dictionary defines time as "the point or period at which things occur." Put simply, time is when stuff happens.

There are two types of time: clock time and real time. In clock time, there are 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour, 24 hours in a day and 365 days in a year. All time passes equally. When someone turns 50, they are exactly 50 years old, no more or no less.

In real time, all time is relative. Time flies or drags depending on what you're doing. Two hours at the department of motor vehicles can feel like 12 years. And yet our 12-year-old children seem to have grown up in only two hours.

Which time describes the world in which you really live, real time or clock time?

The reason time **management** gadgets and systems don't work is that these systems are designed to manage clock time. Clock time is irrelevant. You don't live in or even have access to clock time. You live in real time, a world in which all time flies when you are having fun or drags when you are doing your taxes.

The good news is that real time is mental. It exists between your ears. You create it. Anything you create, you can manage. It's time to remove any self-sabotage or self-limitation you have around "not having enough time," or today not being "the right time" to start a business or manage your current business properly.

There are only three ways to spend time: thoughts, conversations and actions. Regardless of the type of business you own, your work will be composed of those three items.

As an entrepreneur, you may be frequently interrupted or pulled in different directions. While you cannot eliminate interruptions, you do get a say on how much time you will spend on them and how much time you will spend on the thoughts, conversations and actions that will lead you to success.

Practice the following techniques to become the master of your own time:

1. Carry a schedule and record all your thoughts, conversations and activities for a week. This will help you understand how much you can get done during the course of a day and where your precious moments are going. You'll see how much time is actually spent producing results and how much time is wasted on unproductive thoughts, conversations and actions.
2. Any activity or conversation that's important to your success should have a time assigned to it. To-do lists get longer and longer to the point where they're unworkable. Appointment books work. Schedule appointments with yourself and create time blocks for high-priority thoughts, conversations, and actions. Schedule when they will begin and end. Have the discipline to keep these appointments.
3. Plan to spend at least 50 percent of your time engaged in the thoughts, activities and conversations that produce most of your results.
4. Schedule time for interruptions. Plan time to be pulled away from what you're doing. Take, for instance, the concept of having "office hours." Isn't "office hours" another way of saying "planned interruptions?"

5. Take the first 30 minutes of every day to plan your day. Don't start your day until you complete your time plan. The most important time of your day is the time you schedule to schedule time.
6. Take five minutes before every call and task to decide what result you want to attain. This will help you know what success looks like before you start. And it will also slow time down. Take five minutes after each call and activity to determine whether your desired result was achieved. If not, what was missing? How do you put what's missing in your next call or activity?
7. Put up a "Do not disturb" sign when you absolutely have to get work done.
8. Practice not answering the phone just because it's ringing and e-mails just because they show up. Disconnect instant messaging. Don't instantly give people your attention unless it's absolutely crucial in your business to offer an immediate human response. Instead, schedule a time to answer email and return phone calls.
9. Block out other distractions like Facebook and other forms of social media unless you use these tools to generate business.
10. Remember that it's impossible to get everything done. Also remember that odds are good that 20 percent of your thoughts, conversations and activities produce 80 percent of your results.

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