

The Tips & Tricks of Time Management

Time is valuable. So, here are some of our top tricks and tips to help you improve your time management. Give some a go and see what works for you!

Planning Your Day

- Always plan your biggest and most important tasks first, the smaller tasks will fill in the gaps around them.
- When working out how long something will take you to do, imagine how long it would take somebody else to do instead as we tend to underestimate how long it'll take us to do it.

Avoiding Time Bandits

- Plan specific times of the day for when you'll check your emails and read your post.
- Turn off your email and text notifications.
- Unsubscribe from any unnecessary mailing lists to reduce your total number of emails.
- Screen phone calls, use an answering machine, or ask a colleague to temporarily take your calls for you.
- If you need to make a call, know what you want to say in advance and stick to the point.
- Learn to say "no" to people who waste your time.
- Use definite phrases like "I'm sorry but I can't".
- "Just a second" is another great phrase to use. It allows you to finish reading or writing the sentence you're on and come to a natural rest.
- Use visual cues to show people you're busy - wear headphones, close the door, or put up a "Do Not Disturb" sign.
- Work somewhere different to avoid interruptions - an unused meeting room, outside, or in a coffeeshop, for example.
- Keep your work area tidy - it focusses your mind and reduces the chances of losing things.
- Temptation Bundling. Only allow yourself to do something positive if you first accomplish something constructive - for example, only allow yourself a cup of coffee once you've finished your paperwork.

Getting Started

- Break your daily tasks down into small steps - perhaps 10 minutes at a time. This can make your to-do list much less daunting.
- Try the 5 second rule. If you feel yourself hesitating, imagine you're a spaceship ready for launch. Count down from 5. When you get to 0, begin working. This helps focus your mind and gives you a clear prompt for starting work.
- Eat a frog. Get your most unenjoyable or dreaded tasks out of the way early so that things can only get better.
- Conversely, complete a couple of smaller tasks first and boost your confidence early in the day.
- Form positive habits. Always make a cup of coffee just before starting work or always listen to the same motivational song. This cues your brain, letting it know it's worktime.