



Time Management

What is time management?

“Time management” is the process of organising and planning how to divide your time between specific activities. Good time management enables you to work smarter – not harder – so that you get more done in less time, even when time is tight and pressures are high. Failing to manage your time damages your effectiveness and causes stress.

It may seem counter-intuitive to dedicate precious time to learning about time management, instead of using it to get on with your work, but the benefits are enormous:

- Greater productivity and efficiency
- A better professional reputation
- Less stress
- Increased opportunities for advancement
- Greater opportunities to achieve important life and career goals

Failing to manage your time effectively can have some very undesirable consequences:

- Missed deadlines
- Inefficient workflow

- Poor work quality
- A poor professional reputation and a stalled career
- Higher stress levels

Spending a little time learning about time-management techniques will have huge benefits now – and throughout your career.

Let us look at some of the Top Time Management Skills. Think about using the **SMART** method when setting goals, that is, **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**imely.

Prioritising

Prioritise to complete the most important tasks in order by defining your priorities:

- what is important and urgent
- when must be done by?
- how long it will take
- does it involve others
- what are the consequences if it is not completed?
- does it affect other tasks in the process?
- create a to do list

Scheduling

Plan by estimating the time it will take to complete each prioritised task:

- allocate time to complete each task
- block out time in your calendar to do these tasks
- schedule to do tasks when you are the most productive, eg first thing in the morning
- Remember allowing time to take a break between tasks – this helps prevent stress

Task Management

Split all the tasks up into a list each day, take your tasks one day at a time.

- emails
- meetings
- phone calls
- projects
- breaks
- make a to-do list at the end of each day

Workload Management

- create tasks list
- break them into smaller, manageable task
- allocate tasks
- tackle difficult and highest priority tasks first
- batch similar tasks together
- set start and due dates
- set estimates and track time

Delegation

Some people resist delegating, it is important to know what and when to delegate. Sometimes things cannot be done by one person and requires the assistance of others. It is better to succeed at a few tasks than attempt and fail at many. Do not be afraid to delegate, ask your team for help or seek expert assistance.

Hints

You can say **NO** when you have work priorities - It is okay if you do not want to upset anyone but only agree to deadlines that you can handle. If your to-do list is already full and you receive a request to complete an additional task on the same day, decline it. Do not agree to work on a task or help a colleague until you have some spare time. Keep your priorities straight and simple.

Another thing **STOP MULTITASKING** - managing two tasks at once often results in loss of productivity. According to a recent psychological study, people who prefer to practice the habit of multitasking are finding it difficult to concentrate and maintain focus on work when needed. Most of them believe that routine multitasking helps to save time and accomplish more in a day, but the opposite is often true.

Other hints are, let colleagues know you are unavailable for a certain period of time, if you have shared calendars block out the time, close the office door, advise your receptionist you are not taking calls or take the phone off the hook.

Finally, your health and well-being is important so live a work-life balance. Remember, to take breaks, have time out for you, enjoy a healthy diet, proper sleep, and exercise. A healthy balance helps you meet your deadlines at work and still have time for family and friends and to do the things you enjoy.

