

It's Your Time

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By Dawn Marie Barhyte



We all have 24 hours in a day. Yet for many of us, managing that time is a struggle. Why then, do some people accomplish so much more in a day than others? The secret is they manage those 24 hours more wisely by taming time traps and using time savers. You too can get more done in those precious hours, by improving your ability to function more effectively, even when time is tight and the pressure is high. Good time management is not a difficult concept but it can be difficult to practice. Maximize the time you have by seizing control of your agenda and cultivating good habits. If you are more intentional about how you manage your time you can get more accomplished, although it takes organization and planning – it's an acquired skill that you can begin to practice today.

Once you do integrate time management techniques into your schedule you'll find you can juggle all those balls. By mastering the art of time management and managing your time more efficiently, you can get optimal use of the hours in your day so better results will be achieved. A win-win. Good time management lets you work smarter so you get more done in less time, improving productivity. You may even find you have extra hours in your week to spend doing something you love. Every day can be more productive if you make some tweaks in your daily routine. If you are committed to making the best use of your time, time management should become part of your daily routine. Failing to manage time well can have undesirable consequences, stall careers, increase stress and lead to burnout. Try these strategies to become better time managers, enhance your professional reputation, and feel more in control of your life and your

crazy busy schedule.

MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TIME: MASTERING TIME MANAGEMENT

► Take A Personal Time Inventory!

Audit your time use. Begin by examining closely how you spend your time. Think of all the activities that make up a typical day for you. For a week, keep a detailed diary of your day-to-day activities. Write down everything you are involved in. Everything from workouts, to lunch, meetings, and driving. Next reflect and see what patterns emerge. Keep in mind, it's difficult to make intelligent decisions about managing your time more effectively if you don't know what you are doing with your time.



► Find the right time!

You'll work more efficiently if you are cognizant of when you do your best work. Determine your high-energy peak and down time. For example if you're sharper early in the day, don't put off complex projects till late evening. Map your productivity cycle and tweak routine to fit it.

► First Things First!

Create a to do list, including how much time you will spend on each item to set priorities, order your to do list from most important to least. Decide what tasks need to be done immediately, those that can be done, in the week ahead and those that are long-term or on-going projects. Determine if you need to cut activities and those you want to do, no matter what. Consider what you have to do versus what you want to do and plan accordingly.

► Use a calendar or PDA.

Organizing your days and weeks will save you time, help you set priorities, and allocate quality time for everything on your agenda.

► Heads Up!

Plan ahead and be proactive each night by spending a few minutes making an agenda or to do today list of what you have to do and what you want to do the following day, deciding which tasks are the most important by ranking them. By reviewing your day before it starts, you won't get caught off guard by agenda like a faculty meeting scheduled two weeks ago. Do it the same time every day so it becomes a good habit.

► Get Your Ducks In A Row!

Design an organized workspace where vital information and papers are at your fingertips. Have a place for everything and everything in its place.

► Beware of personal time thieves!

Eliminate distractions! Let calls go to voice mail and avoid checking email every other minute.

► Use time sensibly!

Take advantage of little chunks of time like between appointments, meetings and commuting to read industry journals, catch up on emails or review caseloads.

► Monitor your progress!

Evaluate if your time management system is working. Ask yourself are you achieving what you planned on; analyze what worked, what didn't and how you could be more productive with your time in the future.

► Don't procrastinate!

It's a big time waster but do examine why you are tempted to do so in the first place.

► Home in on tasks!

Do focus by taking the time to complete a task correctly the first time. Having to redo work can waste time and multitasking can lead to poor quality.

► Avoid perfectionism!

Aim for excellence!

► Don't overschedule yourself.

Over-committing can lead to feeling overwhelmed and stressed out.

► Just say No!

Be assertive in protecting your schedule, it's sacred.

► Be flexible! Allow for the unexpected!

In this business, crises occur so be prepared.

► Give Yourself A Pat On The Back!

Reward yourself for progress made – can be something small such as reading your favorite novel, going for a walk or doing yoga.

Dawn Marie Barhyte is a widely published freelance writer and former educator who continues to touch the lives of young people through her writing.

