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50 PRACTICAL TIME SAVERS

These are just some simple ideas that can save you time and help you work more effectively. You can implement many of these ideas quickly and easily.

1. Write things down

A common time management mistake is to try to use your memory to keep track of too many details leading to information overload. Using a to-do list to write things down is a great way to take control of your projects and tasks and keep yourself organized.

2. Prioritize your list

Prioritizing your to-do list helps you focus and spend more of your time on the things that really matter to you. Rate your tasks into categories using the ABCD prioritization system described in the time management course.

3. Plan your week

Spend some time at the beginning of each week to plan your schedule. Taking the extra time to do this will help increase your productivity and balance your important long-term projects with your more urgent tasks. All you need is fifteen to thirty minutes each week for your planning session.

4. Carry a notebook

You never know when you are going to have a great idea or brilliant insight. Carry a small notebook with you wherever you go so you can capture your

thoughts. If you wait too long to write them down you could forget. Another option is to use a digital recorder.

5. Learn to say no

Many people become overloaded with too much work because they overcommit; they say yes when they really should be saying no. Learn to say no to low priority requests and you will free up time to spend on things that are more important.

6. Think before acting

How many times have you said yes to something you later regretted? Before committing to a new task, stop to think about it before you give your answer. This will prevent you from taking on too much work.

7. Continuously improve yourself

Make time in your schedule to learn new things and develop your natural talents and abilities. For example, you could take a class, attend a training program, or read a book. Continuously improving your knowledge and skills increases your marketability, can help boost your career, and is the most reliable path to financial independence.

8. Think about what you are giving up to do your regular activities

It is a good idea to evaluate regularly how you are spending your time. In some cases, the best thing you can do is to stop doing an activity that is no longer serving you so you can spend the time doing something more valuable. Consider what you are giving up in order to maintain your current activities.

9. Use a personal productivity system

Using a personal productivity system can help you keep track of everything that you need to do, organize and prioritize your work, and develop sound plans to complete it. An integrated system is like glue that holds all the best time management practices together.

You can learn more about how to develop your own personal productivity system in our [Effective Time Management course](#).

10. Identify bad habits

Make a list of bad habits that are stealing your time, sabotaging your goals, and blocking your success. After you do, work on them one at a time and systematically eliminate them from your life. Remember that the easiest way to eliminate a bad habit, is to replace it with a better habit.

11. Don't do other people's work

Are you in the habit of doing other people's work because of a 'hero' mentality? Doing this takes up time that you may not have. Instead, focus on your own projects and goals, learn to delegate effectively, and teach others how to do their own work.

12. Keep a goal journal

Schedule time to set and evaluate your goals. Start a journal and write down your progress for each goal. Go through your goal journal each week to make sure you are on the right track.

Keeping a journal on your computer has never been easier!

More than just a simple diary, this personal journaling software can help you take control of your life. If you've ever wanted to start a journal or keep a diary, take this opportunity to get started today with a free 45 day trial!

Visit:

<http://www.timethoughts.com/resources/journal.htm>

13. Don't be a perfectionist

Some tasks don't require your best effort. Sending a short email to a colleague, for example, shouldn't take any more than a few minutes. Learn to distinguish between tasks that deserve to be done excellently and tasks that just need to be done.

14. Beware of "filler" tasks

When you have a to-do list filled with important tasks, be careful not to get distracted by "filler" tasks. Things such as organizing your bookcase or filing papers can wait until you tackle the items that have the highest priority.

15. Avoid "efficiency traps"

Being efficient doesn't necessarily mean that you are being productive. Avoid taking on tasks that you can do with efficiency that don't need to be done at all. Just because you are busy and getting things done doesn't mean you are actually accomplishing anything significant.

16. Utilize "productive procrastination"

Procrastination doesn't necessarily have to be a bad thing if you use it to delay working on low priority tasks that may not need to be done at all. Wait

until a task becomes important enough to deserve your time before you work on it.

17. Ask questions

Asking questions can be an effective tool to help keep you on track. Whenever you are unsure of what to do next, just ask yourself "What is the most valuable use of my time right now?"

18. Apply the 80/20 rule

The 80/20 rule states that 20% of your tasks account for 80% of the value in your to-do list. Some tasks have a much greater return on your investment of time and energy than others. Use prioritization to identify and focus your time on these high payoff tasks.

19. Avoid attempting to do too much

While it is good to balance important long-term projects with urgent tasks, you can take this too far. If you spread your time and energy over too many different projects, you may not be able to make meaningful progress on any of them. Good time management often requires that you focus your time on a smaller set of objectives.

20. Use your energy cycles

We all have times in our day when we feel productive and other times when we feel sluggish. Use these highs and lows to your advantage. Get complex and mentally challenging tasks done during your energy highs. During the lows, take care of low priority, routine, or non-challenging tasks.

Achieve Planner time management software helps you get organized, set and achieve your important goals, and take control of your projects and tasks. You can use the time charts feature to identify your energy cycles and map out what your ideal week looks like.

Download Achieve Planner for a free 30-day trial!
Visit: <http://www.fffexis.com/achieve/planner.htm>

21. Avoid saving too much stuff in your files

Experts estimate that between 60 and 80 percent of items that people file they never look at again. Learning what to save and what to throw out is the first step in creating an effective filing system.

22. Urgent vs. Important tasks

A key principle in time management is that important things are not always urgent, and urgent things are not always important. Learning to distinguish between the two is essential for effective time management. Weekly planning helps you maintain a balance between projects with long-term importance and your more pressing matters.

23. Make time for important projects

Schedule regular time each week to work on important long-term projects. If a project is important and not urgent, you run the risk of neglecting it unless you make regular time for it.

24. Clean your desk

When you have too many things on your desk, it can be distracting. Only keep things on your desk that are necessary. When you eliminate unnecessary distractions, you will find that you use your time more wisely.

25. Learn to relax

Working hard is important, but you also need to take time off to relax and enjoy yourself. When you do, you will find that you use your time more wisely while you are at work. The extra time off renews your energy and gives your brain much needed rest.

26. Avoid wishful thinking

Wishful thinking can ruin any well-laid plan. Avoid this by identifying risks and learning how to place realistic expectations on your projects. Make sure to schedule room for error and unexpected problems when creating a timeline.

27. Don't over schedule

When you over schedule your days, it can cause unnecessary stress. When creating your weekly plan and scheduling appointments, always create room for error.

28. Learn to group your tasks

In order to use your time wisely, try to perform certain tasks in batches. For example, sort out the papers on your desk and file at the same time, or process several emails in your Inbox at the same time. Related tasks don't take as long when you do them all at once.

29. Don't automate email

Some email programs have a timer so your email gets checked on a certain schedule. Turn this feature off. Handling emails as they come in as a distraction and it wastes time. Depending on your needs, use 3 to 5 predefined times during the day to check your email.

30. Don't file an item that still requires an action on your part

Avoid filing an item that still needs your attention before you record it in your time management system. Otherwise, you might easily forget about that item and the associated work that you still need to do. The same rule applies to emails and paper documents.

31. Balance your time

When you have a lot of different types of activities, you can create a better sense of balance by giving each week a specific focus. For example, you can focus one week on your finances and your home, and the next week on relaxation and fun.

32. Weekly planning routine

Setting up a weekly planning routine will help you manage your time better. Make time to write and prioritize your pending projects and tasks, reconnect to your mission and goals, and create a plan for the upcoming week.

33. Practice easy-reach filing

Trying to find frequently used files in a complex filing system can be frustrating and time consuming. Instead of filing them far away, keep them organized within easy reach. The filing drawers in your desk are a great place to keep frequently used items.

34. File folders and labels

Keeping a supply of file folders and labels nearby can help encourage organization. Instead of keeping papers in piles on top of your desk, you can immediately create an appropriate file for them.

35. Record your favorite shows

Are you addicted to certain television programs? Instead of making your schedule revolve around them, record them so you can view them at your convenience.

36. Learn to speed read

Speed reading is a valuable skill, especially if you spend most of your day reading documents. You can take a class, watch a how-to program, or read a book on the subject.

37. Backup your work

How often do you back up your work? You never know when you will have computer problems. Back up your files frequently to prevent unnecessary stress later.

38. Schedule according to your energy

When do you have the most energy? Learning when you are most energetic will help you use your time more effectively. Perform tasks that require a lot of energy when you have the most of it.

39. Give each item a "home"

One of the key principles in organization is to make sure each item has a home where it naturally belongs. This alone can dramatically increase the organization in your home and office.

40. Sort your magazines and toss out the ones you don't need

To help reduce clutter, throw away any old magazines and newspapers you no longer read. This will help free up space for other items and will help you stay organized.

41. Make checklists for repeat tasks

Are there tasks you need to complete on a routine basis? Making a checklist is an easy way to make sure you finish the task without forgetting anything important.

42. Baby steps to time management

Learning how to manage your time is an art. Make one small change at a time to foster lasting change. Remember that it takes at least a few weeks to form a new habit.

43. Write in a journal

Keeping both a personal and professional journal can help you grow. Use it as a way to review your days and weeks. Think about what you did right, what you would have changed, and how you could have done better.

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44. Goals in small steps

Effective goal planning includes a list of smaller tasks that will help you achieve it. When you create a plan of action and take smaller steps, you increase your chances of success.

45. Find a role model

Is there someone who has achieved the same goal as you? Make this person your role model or mentor and follow in their steps. A role model can inspire you and boost your morale when it is low.

46. Just begin!

When you have a goal to achieve or a task to complete, just begin. Once you start, you can use the momentum you develop to help you finish what you start.

47. Organize your workspace

When your workspace is disorganized, it can distract you and make you less productive.

48. Get active

An active body leads to a sharper mind. Develop a consistent exercise routine to help you stay in shape and increase your mental capacity. If you don't have a lot of time to spend, take a few ten minute activity breaks throughout your day.

49. Get enough sleep

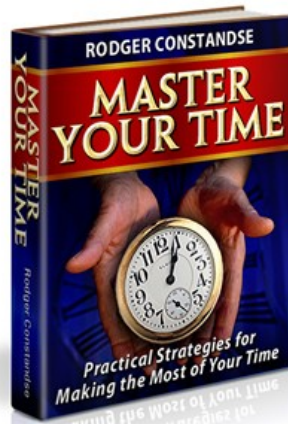
If your mind is well rested, you will be more productive. Make sure you get enough sleep every night. When you are over tired, it becomes nearly impossible to perform your best.

50. Have fun

What is life without a little fun? Make time to spend with your friends and loved ones. Having fun will help you feel more satisfied with both life and your job.

About the Author

Rodger Constandse is founder of www.GoalsToAction.com , a website that provides resources for personal and career success, and author of the time management eBook Master Your Time. He is also the principal developer of the Achieve Planner time management software application.



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