

TIME MANAGEMENT -

101 WAYS TO CRACK IT

INTRODUCTION

Are you fighting a losing battle with time management? Here are 101 quick tips to help you win it!!

ORGANISATION

1. Identify your team's key success criteria.
2. Keep a note of your own K.P.I.s (Key Performance Indicators).
3. Break your K.P.I.s down into achievable objectives.
4. Write down items 1 to 3 above and keep them always at hand.
5. Review your activities against your goals and objectives at regular intervals. Are you spending your time on the right activities?

PLANNING

6. Plan your activities in line with your objectives.
7. Assess your work-projects, tasks, in-tray, post, etc. – allocate priorities.
8. Arrange and allocate your priorities:
 - 1) Very important and very urgent.
 - 2) Very important and not urgent.
 - 3) Not important and very urgent.
 - 4) Not important and not urgent.
9. Sub-prioritise your priorities.
10. Attend to categories 1 and 2 first, not 3 or 4.
11. Make appointments with yourself in your diary-this is the personal time you must have during the day for thinking/planning.
12. Stick to your plan-make it and start to do it now.
13. Select your personal 'best' time to get things done, and plan to do your most important work then.
14. Chop a big task down into smaller, more manageable pieces.
15. Estimate the end time for a task, not just the starting time.
16. Always ask the questions - What, Who, Why, Where, When, How? Have you sufficient people resources? Are they the right quality?

OPERATING

17. Use the 'To Do' system daily.
18. Have a rolling 'To Do' list-particularly for your 'category 2' items.
19. Review the daily list each day (first thing in the morning or last thing in the evening) and plan your priorities.
20. Keep your daily 'To Do' list always in sight.
21. As you clear each item, delete it in brilliant red - just looking at a list of completed tasks makes you feel better!
22. Don't include too many items – allow space for the jobs which always crop up unexpectedly.
23. Maintain a second 'To Do' list for longer term tasks or those to which a date cannot yet be given.
24. Transfer items from the second list to the daily list whenever relevant.
25. Make a note of essential items to cover against

telephone calls 'To Do'.

26. Use the 'To Do' lists-don't ignore them: they are probably your most powerful time management tools.
27. Write it down - don't try to keep your 'To Do' lists in your head (keep that free actually to do them).
28. Have the things you need constantly together in one place, close at hand, in one book.
29. Identify and concentrate on the high-yield tasks i.e. easy to do, high impact on your objectives.

DELEGATING

30. Delegate whenever possible - down, sideways, even up!
31. Delegate tasks but do not abdicate them - if it is your task, you still have the final responsibility, check that tasks have been done.
32. Agree task reviews as they are part of the delegation process.
33. Don't keep poking your nose in when you haven't agreed to do so.
34. Always make the instructions for the tasks you delegate complete and clear, and ensure that they have been understood.
35. Always give or agree a final completion date.
36. Concentrate personally on those tasks whose success depends on you.
37. Find new tasks to delegate-this saves your time and develops your staff.
38. Arrange for decisions to be made at the lowest realistic level.

MEETINGS

39. Allocate a time for each agenda item.
40. Allocate both starting time and finishing time wherever possible and stick to them.
41. Always ask yourself questions - Is the meeting necessary? Is it the most effective way?
42. Creating your meeting agenda means something - don't just have a 'shopping list' which doesn't tell the members whether they are to discuss, to decide, to recommend, etc.
43. Stick to it far as it is realistic to do so-if it isn't realistic, why not?
44. Are the right people at the meeting?
45. Is everything necessary for the meeting there, and have all relevant papers been sent out beforehand?
46. Define, state clearly, and stick to your objectives for the meeting.
47. What are the other members' issues likely to be?
48. Suggest to other people that they send you an e-mail instead of having a meeting.
49. Go to the other person's room to meet them - you can always get up and go.
50. Continue standing up when you meet somebody and your time is short.
51. Can you arrange conference calls? Avoid unnecessary travel.
52. If you have an agenda spot in somebody else's meeting, try to obtain a definite entry time and leave after your allocated time.

TELEPHONE CONTROL

53. Put specific time aside to make telephone calls.
54. Plan your telephone calls-use telephone 'To Do' lists and telephone agendas.
55. "Horsetrade" telephone reception with a colleague when you want some uninterrupted time.
56. If possible arrange a specific 'call-back time' - don't just say 'I'll ring you later' or, even worse, 'You ring me later'.
57. Have your call interceptor briefed to record name, company, number and extension and reason for call.
58. Give your call interceptor authority to make certain decisions on certain subjects on your behalf.
59. Give your call interceptor authority to state a call-back time.
60. If interrupted during a task, before answering the call, pencil in your next thoughts - when you return to your task you will know what you were going to say next.
61. Cross index your telephone directory-name as one entry, organisation as the other entry.
62. Quickly get to the purpose - it's pleasant to socialise (gossip?), but it wastes a lot of time.
63. Make sure you get the call-back name and number right .

DISCIPLINE

64. Time management is 99% self-discipline.
65. Recall your K.P.I.s and objectives-do you really want to achieve them?
66. Do the unpleasant tasks first, or as early as possible-particularly if it is in your category 1. (It is most people's experience that they usually turn out to be less unpleasant than was anticipated).
67. Keep a time log. Analyse where your time goes.
68. Stop being the 'nice guy' all the time-learn to say 'NO'
69. Make sure you do it right the first time. Every time you have to re-try, you are wasting time.
70. How open is your 'Open Door' - should it be as wide open?
71. Try that time system again - this time **make** it work.
72. Keep a time log at intervals and analyse it for slippage.
73. Avoid procrastination - get on with it, do it now!
74. Avoid all those time wasters, things you like doing perhaps!
75. Set yourself personal deadlines for most tasks and stick to them, if at all possible.
76. Stick to the task you know must be done.
77. Do one thing at a time.
78. Always have something to do - even if it is constructive relaxation.
79. Always be on time yourself.
80. Use stress reduction techniques; do you know what works for you?

PAPERWORK AND E-MAILS

81. Handle it only once, act on it, forward it, file it, or delete it.
82. Use a dictating machine rather than drafting scripts or dictating shorthand.
83. File your paperwork regularly and read your file often - boring but effective.
84. Design your filing system so that you can find things quickly.
85. Set aside time to look at paperwork and e-mails - resist responding to the e-mail 'beep'.
86. Use the telephone if it will be more effective than a written response.
87. Ensure your own written work is concise.

READING

88. Read only what you must. Keep reading available, so if other people run late you can use the time to read.
89. Increase your reading speed/comprehension rates; ever taken a speed reading course?
90. Learn how to scan important items. Don't pile up intended reading matter - you'll probably never read it!

TRAVELLING

91. Don't leave it until the last minute to set off.
92. Don't be a one-side-of-the-country-to-the-other-traveller - plan groups of visits within easy range of each other.
93. Keep a dictaphone close at hand; dictate during your travelling day.
94. Use travel time as reading or planning or thinking time.
95. Use a hands-free car phone - preferably for outward calls only and when parked up!
96. Use train time to:
 - read
 - write
 - discuss
 - brainstorm ideas with yourself.
97. Plan what you have to do, who is going to do it, how it is going to be done, where is it to be done, by when it has to be done - why has it to be done?
98. Use 'reminder' signs - on your desk, walls, etc.
99. Have a time management system, preferably with a complete planning and personal organiser system - electronic or paper-based.
100. Regularly review and improve your time management techniques-which are working best for you?

MANAGE YOUR LIFE

101. Keep only one diary and record important home or personal events as well as work- you must keep a productive balance between home and work.

Good luck with your improvements!