



101 Time Management Tips to Boost Productivity Every Day

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For most of us, time management and staying productive is a daily struggle. Sometimes that's not the end of the world. But, if you don't address this sooner than later, the things you were supposed to do today get pushed to tomorrow, then the next day. Eventually, you could end-up several weeks behind.

That's not good for business or your stress-level. Thankfully, you can prevent that from happening by using these 101 time management and productivity tips. Let's start to gain yourself more time.

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1. Just breathe.

Here's an interesting fact from Tom Evans, host of the Zone Show podcast. A tortoise's life expectancy is around 120 to 140 years, while an elephant lives for around 80 to 90 years. Even though our own life expectancy is increasing, it used to be just between 50 and 60 years.

While there are a number of factors that influence the life expectancy of these animals, Evans notes that, "a tortoise breathes around four times every minute. An elephant breathes around eight times every minute and we breathe around 12 to 15 times every minute."

As such, Evans, suggests that if you want to change your relationship with time then you should start breathing more slowly. "To begin we need to use our diaphragm and to do belly breaths. This of course is how a baby breathes. We've just got out of the habit."

"Now you don't have to do it all the time but just doing seven to nine deep and slow breaths at the start of the day is enough to slow things down. You can also do it before any creative task or if you have been stressed. It works especially well if you are running late for a meeting. By breathing more slowly, we 'expand' time."

2. Measure twice, cut once.

My dad used to tell me, "Measure twice, cut once." This is actually a famous proverb for anyone involved in carpentry or building since it advises to do things right the first time around.

Double-check your work so that you don't spend the time going back and correcting your mistakes.

3. Turn off the TV.

It's been found that we spend eight years and ten months of our lives watching TV - plus an additional eight months discussing plot holes and characters. Instead of watching so much television, spend that time on higher-leverage tasks.

4. Eat the frog first.

"Mark Twain once said that if the first thing you do each morning is to eat a live frog, you can go through the day with the satisfaction of knowing that that is probably the worse things that is going to happen to you all day long," writes Brian Tracy.

"Your 'frog' is your biggest, most important task, the one you are most likely to procrastinate on if you don't do something about it."

5. Schedule according to energy.

Speaking of eating that frog, do that when you have the most amount of energy and focus - aka your "magic hours." This is typically 2.5 hours after you wake-up. By creating a schedule based around your energy you can create a routine that ensures your as productive as possible. Make sure to schedule out time on your Calendar.

6. Wake-up earlier.

Want more time? Then start waking-up earlier. This way you have the time to read, exercise, respond to emails, and plan out your day properly.

7. Keep a time diary.

A time diary a simple way to find out how you spend your time. By recording how you spend your time for a month or two, you'll see where you're wasting time and what influences productivity.

8. Make use of waiting time.

Let's say you have a doctor's appointment. Have something with you to do. This could be reading a book, catching up on correspondence, or writing your upcoming eBook.

9. Make a list and get it out of your head.

Don't let everything you have to do swirl around in your head. Jot them down so that it clears your brain and prevents you from getting overwhelmed.

10. Think "half-time."

For example, if you're cooking dinner, make the twice the amount and freeze half of it. This way you're not spending that time again preparing and cleaning your meal on another night.



11. Ditch commitments that waste your time, energy and attention.

One of the most effective ways to gain more time is to eliminate those commitments that are, well, a waste of your time. Identify these commitments that are unproductive and don't schedule them into your calendar growing forward.

12. Be decisive.

That time you spend flip-flopping on a decision could be spent on something that's actually productive. Make a decision, live with it, and move on.

13. Cross something off.

We're familiar with crossing items off to-do-lists. But, you should also start crossing off items that you're not going to do. This keeps your to-do lists from getting out of control. It also prevents you from overcommitting.

14. Lighten your cleaning standards.

Obviously you want your home and office to be clean and organized. But, settling on "dirt removal" instead of "spotless" will definitely save you a ton of time and energy in the end. For example, as opposed to scrubbing your shower stall every week, wipe it down everytime you use it.

15. Establish "maintenance days."

Group your cleaning, laundry, and errands on specific days. This way they're not lingering over your head when working on more pressing matters.

16. Schedule your work in batches.

Speaking of grouping, start batching similar tasks together. For example, spend one day solely dedicated to writing, another to meetings.

17. Combine efforts.

If you're volunteering or meeting a client for lunch, then run errands that are nearby. This way you're cutting down on the time spend going back and forth all day.

18. Learn keyboard shortcuts.

Online users between the ages of 18 to 24 years old spend an average of 1,979 minutes online per month. With that in mind, it makes sense to learn keyboard shortcuts and touch type so that you can save some time when browsing online. Here are some Office 365 Calendar hacks, Yahoo Calendar tips and Google Calendar hacks to help along the way.

19. Shorten your emails.

Keep your emails short and to the point. I try to keep all of my emails under five sentences.

20. Delegate or outsource.

Instead of doing tasks yourself, delegate or outsource them to someone else so that you can focus on more important tasks.

21. Automate repetitive tasks.

There's also certain tasks, like scheduling meetings and recurring billing, that you can automate via software.

22. Schedule less.

I know what you're thinking. This is pretty obvious. But, you're probably spreading yourself too thin without even knowing it.

Review all of your activities and see which ones aren't helping you reach your goals. You should also look at the activities that no longer fit into your schedule.

23. Work four hours a day.

Science has found that you should only work four hours a day. This doesn't mean you can goof off the rest of the day. It's all about focusing on your most important tasks when you're most productive. Spend the rest of your days resting, practicing your skills, and completing less challenging tasks.



24. Stop multitasking.

Multitasking doesn't work. In fact, it takes longer to complete a task when we multitask because our minds are shifting back-and-forth. Instead, focus on one task at a time. Train your brain to slow down a little. It's like running, the more train your body, the faster you'll become.

25. Don't beat yourself up.

What happens if you spend a Saturday morning binge-watching Stranger Things? Stop wasting your time feeling guilty about it. Sometimes that happens. Do your best not to make that a habit and move-on instead of living in the past.

To make the most of your time, here are tips for implementing a productivity system.

26. The "Pomodoro Technique."

The "Pomodoro Technique" is where you use a timer and schedule short breaks, usually five minutes, after 25 minutes of focused work.

27. Seinfeld's "Don't break the chain" method.

Jerry Seinfeld would use a wall calendar and red marker to stay focused. He would cross out the days on the calendar when he wrote.

"After a few days you'll have a chain. Just keep at it and the chain will grow longer every day. You'll like seeing that chain, especially when you get a few weeks under your belt. Your only job next is to not break the chain."

28. David Allen's "two-minute rule."

According to David Allen, author of the best-selling Getting Things Done, if a task takes under two-minutes to complete -- do it now -- so that it's out of the way.

29. Break your day into five-minute slots like Elon Musk.

How does Elon Musk run both Tesla and SpaceX? He breaks his entire day into five-minute slots - even his lunch. Doing so keeps him productive since it ensues that he stays on-track and doesn't waste his time.

30. Jay Shirley's "Must, Should Want Method."

Here's a simple exercise from Jay Shirley. Every morning start your day by answering three questions: What must you do to create the most impact today? What should you do to build a better future? What do you want to do so that you can enjoy today and life more completely?

This gets your day started on the right foot, while increasing your productivity and happiness.

31. The Eisenhower Matrix.

This strategy was developed by Dwight Eisenhower. As explained by James Clear, "Eisenhower's strategy for taking action and organizing your tasks is simple. Using the decision matrix below, you will separate your actions based on four possibilities.

1. Urgent and important (tasks you will do immediately).
2. Important, but not urgent (tasks you will schedule to do later).
3. Urgent, but not important (tasks you will delegate to someone else).
4. Neither urgent nor important (tasks that you will eliminate)."

This matrix "can be used for broad productivity plans ('How should I spend my time each week?') and for smaller, daily plans ('What should I do today?')."

32. Airplane days.

"Some years ago, Hughes AirWest, a regional airline that once served the western U.S., hired a consulting firm to compare the efficiency of flying first-class with flying economy-class, and with working in a normal office," writes Brian Tracy.

"What they found was that one hour of uninterrupted work time in an airplane yielded the equivalent of three hours of work in a normal work environment. The keyword was "uninterrupted." If you plan ahead and organize your work before you leave for the airport, you can increase productivity by accomplishing an enormous amount while you are in the air."



Of course, you can apply this to your daily life as well since it highlights the importance of planning and organization.

33. Follow your ultradian rhythms.

Coined by psycho-physiologist Peretz Lavie, ultradian rhythms are simply the natural rhythms that the body cycles through every 90-120 minutes. It can get pretty complex, but the idea is that you should concentrate when your energy levels are highest, but to rest when you feel drained.

34. The “big rocks system.”

Based on the principles outlined by Stephen R. Covey, author *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, this is where you schedule time for your most important priorities first by imagining them as “big rocks” filling a bucket or jar. If you start with “big rocks,” and then put in sand or smaller rocks, all the gaps and cracks will get filled.

35. “No Meetings Wednesdays.”

Companies like Facebook and Asana have a rule where there are no meetings on Wednesdays. Other companies have this rule for other days of the week, but the idea is the same. As opposed to wasting your time in a meeting, you can focus on important individual tasks. I've implemented this two days a week at my company Calendar. It works like a charm. We've seen an increase in code deployed and bugs by 14% since implementing this eight months ago.

36. The “anti to-do-list.”

Instead of composing just a to-do list, create a to-done list where you write down everything you've already accomplished. It's a powerful way to keep you motivated when you need a boost.

37. Sunday check-ins.

There are some entrepreneurs and CEO's who briefly check-in with their teams on Sunday's. This way everything is ready to go on Monday morning. If you're a flying solo, you can schedule a Sunday check-in with yourself to make sure you have everything in-order for Monday and the rest of the week. We got this via Slack to make it easier for everyone and not be too formal.

What brings this altogether is focus and attention. The following tips can be a big help.

38. Get you environment right.

Work in an environment that has your auditory sweet spot (some prefer silence, others like background), organized, comfortable, free of distractions, and comfortable. Also make sure you have all the tools and resources readily available. And, paint your workplace a color that improves your productivity.

39. Turn off notifications.

Turn off all notifications for email, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media channels when eating that frog.

40. Plan for interruptions.

Try all you might, there will occasionally be interruptions. Plan for these in advance by having some flexibility in your schedule so that you don't get log jammed.

41. Shrink your mental deadlines.

If you believe it's going to take you an hour to do something, give yourself 40 minutes instead. By shrinking your mental deadline you'll work faster, as well as improve your focus.

42. Make a procrastination list.

This is a list of high-leverage activities that you can chip away at whenever you're procrastinating or have down time. Examples include reading industry magazines, organizing folders, or reviewing your contact lists.

43. Create a stop doing list.

This is a list of those bad habits that waste your time or hinder your productivity. Write these habits down so that you can develop a realistic plan to replace these bad habits with good habits.



44. Use Brainwave Entrainment.

Brainwave entrainment isn't a new development. In fact, it's a 100+ year old science that uses special tones and sounds to influence an individual's brainwave patterns. This has scientifically been proven to help change a person's state of mind.

45. Focus@Will.

Focus@Will is an app that not only removes distractions, it also increases productivity. How? It discovers the type of music to put your brain into a "flow state."

46. Use a password manager.

The average person has 27 discrete online logins. That takes-up a lot of real estate in our brains. And, trying to recover lost logins is time-consuming. Invest in a password manager, like LastPass or 1Password to rectify this problem.

47. Hack your vision.

Blue wavelengths from fluorescent lights and electronic devices can fatigue your eyes and accelerate eye aging. To combat this start by taking a couple of small steps like blinking more and reducing your exposure before bed. You may also want to consider getting protective lenses.

48. Actively listen.

Active listening is when you all of your attention and focus is at the conversation at-hand. As a result, you'll free-up and boost productivity since you're avoiding misunderstandings and not having the other party stop and repeat themselves.

49. Have a cut-off time.

Set a specific time to completely check-out from work so that you can avoid further exposure to blue light and recharge your batteries. Doing so ensures you'll be fully energized the following day.

The foundation of our productivity is our health, so here are physical productivity tips to simplify getting and staying in shape.

50. Exercise.

"I definitely can achieve twice as much by keeping fit," Richard Branson tells FourHourBodyPress. "It keeps the brain functioning well."

When does someone like Richard Branson find the time to exercise? By waking up at 5:00 am everyday.

51. Fuel-up wisely.

"Keep your energy high by eating the right foods that fuel your body instead of dragging it down," recommends Rieva Lesonsky on the OPEN Forum. "Avoid sugar, simple carbohydrates like pasta and bread, and junk food -- they can give you a temporary energy high, but then you may crash."

52. Drink caffeine intelligently and stay hydrated.

"Use caffeine strategically: It can take about 20 minutes for a cup of coffee to kick in, so drink it 20 minutes before you need to power up, and you should be good to go," adds Lesonsky.

"Above all, try to stay hydrated. Often, when you feel tired or hungry, all you really need may be a big glass of water to get back in the game."

53. Get 7-to-9 hours of sleep.

You might be able to get by with a couple of hours of sleep when you're younger, but that won't fly as you get older. Remember, getting seven-to-nine hours of quality sleep every night improves your attention, concentration, creativity, decision-making, and health. It also reduces stress and impulsiveness.

54. Skip the nightcap.

Drinking alcohol before bed prevents your from getting a quality night's rest. If you do have an alcoholic beverage, have one several hours before your hit the hay.

55. Stop and smell...the lemons.

Via Rodale's Organic Life;



“Research from Ohio State University found that sniffing lemon improved people’s moods and raised levels of norepinephrine, a brain chemical linked to executive decision-making and motivation. Another study found that students exposed to a citrus-scented cleaner were more likely to clean up after themselves, while in a Japanese study the scent of lemon improved typing accuracy, with workers making 54 percent fewer errors.”

56. Meditate

As mentioned in a previous Calendar post, “Meditation at its simplest form is the ability to focus on a single point typically your breath. In order to truly meditate you need to remove everything else from thought.”

57. Strike a power pose.

“Strike Power Pose for More Productive Day: A 'Power Pose' is a method of telling your body to start moving,” states Murray Newlands.

“Productivity is all about telling the brain: 'I am in charge, I feel good to go.' A 'power pose' actually can cause a burst of testosterone, that's responsible for feelings of dominance. Having a power pose in place for around 2 minutes may assist with confidence, decrease stress, and encourage a greater tolerance for risk.”

If you want to learn some awesome power poses, then check out Murray's 7 body positions and gestures that can improve productivity.

58. Take a nap.

When you feel like you're dragging, go ahead and take a short nap - preferably in the afternoon. This doesn't just recharge your batteries, napping can improve your memory, alertness, and creativity.

59. Set the right temperature.

Productivity decreases when you're either too hot or too cold. That makes sense since you're focused on how much you're sweating or shivering. While there are several factors to consider, keeping the temperature between 70°–72°F (21–22°C) is usually ideal.

60. Soak up the sun.

Natural light increases your energy levels, helps you focus, reduces stress, and assists in better sleep.

61. Smile!

According to A Life of Productivity, smiling makes you more productive because it boosts your immunity, makes you happier, handle stress better, and helps you focus on the big picture.

62. Bring your dog to work.

Studies have found that we “become more trusting, relaxed and nicer towards each other after interacting with a canine.” Furthermore, playing with your best friend reduces stress. This isn't a problem if you work from home, but what if you can't bring your dog to work? Looking at pictures of animals can have similar effects.

63. Standing and walking meetings.

Some meetings are essential. But instead of sitting - like you've been doing all day - start having standing or walking meetings. It's not just better for your health, these types of meetings reduce distractions, promote collaboration, and saves time.

Success requires being equally fit physically and mentally. Try these mental productivity tips:

64. Have a plan.

Let's say you're building your dream home. Obviously you would have an architect design your home. This ensures that it's built correctly and that you have all the materials needed to get the job done on time.

Start by identifying a daily mantra, your short-term goal, and your long-term goal.

65. Take five.

This isn't taking a five-minute break. It's actually taking five minutes before any call or task to determine what you want to attain. As noted in Entrepreneur, "This will help you know what success looks like before you start. And it will also slow time down."

After the call or task, decide on whether or not the desired result was achieved. If not, figure out what's missing for the next time around.



66. Develop a growth mindset.

Discovered by Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck, those with a growth mindset “believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.”

67. Regularly review the past week.

This is a time management habit championed by David Allen by taking the following steps;

1. Get clear by emptying your inbox, wrapping up any loose end, and tidying up.
2. Now you want to get current by reviewing your upcoming calendar, projects, actions lists, and checklists and ditching the inessentials.
3. Finally, get creative. Find unique ways to slip projects you’ve been putting off into your schedule.

68. Write in your happiness journal.

Every night write down the three things you’re grateful for that occurred within the last 24 hours. As explained in *Daring to Live Fully*, “This brings your brain into better balance. It also retrains your brain so that it will start seeing more possibilities.”

You can also write about one positive experience you had in the last 24 hours and jot down at least four details about this experience. “This is helpful because when you take a moment to remember a positive experience, your brain labels it as meaningful, which deepens the imprint.”

69. Get an easy win.

While you should usually focus on tackling the hardest tasks first, sometimes you need an instant victory, like making your bed when you wake-up. It’s a simple way to feel accomplished and build momentum for the rest of the day.

70. Learn to say 'no' effectively.

When starting out in your career, it’s not uncommon to say “yes” to new responsibilities. There comes a point, however, that you can’t keep this pace-up. *The Power of No: Because One Little Word Can Bring Health, Abundance, and Happiness* by James Altucher and Claudia Azula Altucher is an excellent book to help you learn how to say “no” more effectively.

71. Find your groove.

A flow state is where you’re completely absorbed in what you’re doing at the moment. To get into this flow state, you should work on activities that are challenging, but also equal to the skills you possess.

72. Schedule breaks throughout the day.

“There’s a lot to be said about the power of rest throughout the workday,” writes Renzo Costarella. “If you power through the day without taking the time to decompress you’ll do yourself more harm than good.”

“The best way to take breaks is to schedule them throughout your day. That way you can truly control the flow of work.”

73. Disconnect

Sometimes you need to completely unplug and disconnect in order to recharge and avoid burnout. For instance, on Saturday afternoons shut off your phone for a couple of hours so that you aren’t answering phone calls, texts, or emails.

74. Rehearse situations.

Rehearse your commute home, for example. What can you grab for dinner? Is there a Salad Works along the way? If so you can stop there than McDonald’s. This way you can resist temptations.

75. Bargain with yourself.

“If you don’t want to do something, make a deal with yourself to do at least five minutes of it,” says Instagram founder Kevin Systrom. “After five minutes, you’ll end up doing the whole thing.”

76. Identify your keystone habits.

Charles Duhigg, author of *The Power of Habit*, defines “keystone habits” as those that can transform your life. Examples include planning out your days, exercising, and having strong willpower.



77. Establish S.M.A.R.T. goals.

Make sure your goals are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time based. This makes it easier to define and achieve them.

78. Stop tracking your progress on goals.

According to psychologist Kelly McGonigal, “although it runs counter to everything we believe about achieving our goals, focusing on progress can hold us back from success.” Instead, McGonigal suggests that you, “View your actions as evidence that you are committed to your goal” and remind yourself why you want to reach your goal.

79. Set “process goals.”

A process goal is what you actually need to achieve in order to achieve a larger goal. For example, if you want to increase sales by 25%, then your process goal would be to call 5 potential clients daily.

80. Anticipate obstacles.

While you can't expect for every unexpected occurrence, you should anticipate certain obstacles. This way you can have a contingency plan so that you can keep going forward no matter what.

81. Own your mistakes, then move on.

We all mistakes. Learn from them so that you won't repeat these same mistakes in the future.

82. End your day on a high-note.

Did you get that blog post written ahead of schedule? Did you then call your best friend since you now have the spare time? That feels awesome, right? Ending your day on a high note encourages you to do the same the next day.

Success always is a team sport, so here are organization and prioritization tips:

83. Schedule your entire day.

Benjamin Franklin said, "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!" With that in mind, kick-off every morning by planning your entire day. This includes everything from your most important tasks to meetings to commute times.

84. Keep your desk clear.

When you have a cluttered desk that sends a visual cue to your brain that causes stress. Spend the last couple minutes of your day cleaning and organizing your desk so it's clear for the next day.

85. Use an online calendar and calendar tool.

With an online calendar you can access it from multiple devices, schedule meetings/appointments, set up reminders, block time, and set up recurring events.

On top of an online calendar, a calendar tool creates a daily routine, puts time limits on tasks, keeps your time in-check, and helps you plan for breaks.

86. Declutter your calendar.

Calendars are paramount to time management and productivity. But, they're not effective when they're so full that they're bursting at the seams.

Clear the clutter from your calendar by only adding priorities that are date-specific. Don't fill it with minute activities or events that no longer fit into your lifestyle.

87. Consolidate your tools and apps.

Even though there thousands of tools and apps that can assist you with time management and productivity, don't go hog wild. Having too many of these tools and apps are counter-productive. Limit yourself to the essentials.

88. Share your calendar.

Share your calendar with clients and colleagues so that you can schedule productive meetings and be aware of deadlines without the back-and-forth emails. You can also share your calendar with your family so that they know where you are and that you can delegate household chores.



89. Set a maximum of three priority tasks per day.

Lengthy to-do lists aren't effective. That's because you simply don't have the time or energy to cross everything off your list. Instead, keep your to-do lists lean and mean by choosing your three most important tasks for the day.

90. Define three daily outcomes every morning.

This isn't your to-do list. These are three outcomes that you want to accomplish by the end of the day.

91. Jot down "forgettables."

What happens when something pops in your mind while you're working on an important task? Have a pen and paper nearby so that you can jot it down. This gets the thought out of your head, without doing much damage to your flow.

92. Schedule buffer and travel time.

Don't jump directly from task-to-task or meeting-to-meeting. You need time to recharge, refocus, and/or commute. It also prevents you from running late, which eats into the time you've set aside for another task or appointment.

93. Break larger projects into bite-sized pieces.

It's almost impossible to set the light at the end of the tunnel when working on a large project. That's why breaking these projects into smaller, more manageable tasks. The University of Georgia has published a handy article to get your started.

94. Set deadlines.

Setting deadlines on everything is a useful trick to keep you on track and avoid procrastination. Personally, if I need to have a blog post submitted by Friday, I set the deadline for Thursday. It alleviates stress while giving me time to review it.

95. Tap into the power of visualization.

"Mental practice can get you closer to where you want to be in life, and it can prepare you for success!," writes AJ Adams, MAPP in Psychology Today.

For example, in a study of weight trainers, those "who carried out virtual workouts in their heads" increased muscle strength by almost half as much when compared to those who didn't.

96. Set-out visual reminders.

These could be inspiring quotes that you print and display around your home or office to keep you motivated.

97. Find a mentor.

A mentor will share with you the tips and tricks that have worked for them, as well as the mistakes to avoid.

98. Enhance or develop skills.

Learning or strengthening skills can help you complete tasks faster. This is because you not only have the knowledge, you also have new approaches to solve problems. It also boosts your confidence.

99. Take one step at a time.

Baby steps. It's probably one of the easiest and most powerful time management and productivity tips. Instead of focusing on the task, focus on what you're doing now.

For example, when I was writing this massive article, I focused on one point at a time and then moved-on, as opposed to worrying about all 101 tips at once.

100. Don't worry about perfection.

Stop worrying about something being "perfect." It doesn't exist. It's only a figment of your imagination that can never become a reality. Do your best and keep on moving forward.

101. Reward yourself.

It's no secret that rewarding yourself when you've reached a goal or milestone is an effective way to keep you motivated and productive. The trick is being smart with your rewards. Skip the sugary treats for something like a massage. This avoids sugar crashes, but reduces anxiety and stress.