

## Time Management

Time management skills are not simply skills that we should learn to master; they are a must in today's society. Technology has made us available to our employers and members both day and night, thus creating an increased workload. Demands on our time are not limited to our careers. We also have increased commitments and pressures placed on us by our families and friends. It is often overwhelming to think of everything that needs to be accomplished. We hope that this edition of PSO Power Tools will provide you with some new ideas to help you manage your time.

**Good time management skills allow you to deal with the critical few, rather than the trivial many.**

Source: [www.fastcompany.com](http://www.fastcompany.com)

### Thirteen Timely Tips for More Effective Personal Time Management

1. **Spend Time Planning and Organizing** - Using time to think and plan is time well spent. In fact, if you fail to take time for planning, you are, in effect, planning to fail.
2. **Set Goals** - Goals give your life and the way you spend your time, direction. Your optimum goals are those, which cause you to "stretch" but not "break" as you strive for achievement.
3. **Prioritize** - Use the 80 – 20 Rule, that states that 80 percent of the reward comes from 20 percent of the effort. The trick to prioritizing is to isolate and identify that valuable 20 percent. Prioritize by colour, number or letter, whichever method makes most sense to you. Flagging items with a deadline is another idea.
4. **Use a To Do list** - Some people thrive using a daily To Do list which they construct either the last thing the previous day or first thing in the morning. Others prefer a "running" To Do list, which is continuously being updated. Don't be afraid to try a new system, you just might find one that works even better than your present one.
5. **Be Flexible** - Allow time for interruptions and distractions, but try and minimize the time spent on these distractions.
6. **Consider your Biological Prime Time** – Knowing when your best time is and planning to use that time of day for your priorities is effective time management.
7. **Do the Right Thing First** – Doing the right thing is effectiveness; doing things right is efficiency. Focus first on effectiveness (identifying what is the right thing to do), and then concentrate on efficiency (doing it right).
8. **Eliminate the Urgent** – Urgent tasks have short-term consequences while important tasks are those with long-term, goal-related implications.
9. **Practice the Art of Intelligent Neglect** – Eliminate from your life trivial tasks or those, which do not have long-term consequences for you. Can you delegate or eliminate any of those To Do list items?
10. **Avoid being a Perfectionist** - Yes, some things need to be closer to perfect than others, but perfectionism, paying unnecessary attention to detail, can be a form of procrastination.

11. **Conquer Procrastination** – Try the Swiss cheese method. When you are avoiding something, break it into smaller tasks and do just one of the small tasks or set a time and work on the big task for just 15 minutes.
12. **Learn to say “No”** – Such a small word – and so hard to say.
13. **Reward Yourself** – Even for small successes, celebrate achievement of goals.

Source: [www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/homemgt/nfl172.htm](http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/homemgt/nfl172.htm)

**The number one time robber is Procrastination. Procrastination is a bad habit that results in wasted time, missed opportunities, poor performance and increased stress.** Source: [www.just15minutes.com](http://www.just15minutes.com)

## Getting the Most out of Meetings

Meetings can be effective ways of sharing information or reaching a decision. They can, however, be ineffectively run in a way that swallows up your time without giving a sufficient benefit.

### Use the Agenda Effectively

- o The agenda of the meeting shows the aim of the meeting and points of discussion in priority of order – effectively it is a To Do list for the meeting.
- o If you circulate an agenda sufficiently far in advance, it allows people to prepare fully for the meeting so the meeting does not stall for lack of information.

### Attending Meetings

- o Be on time, and present only if needed.
- o Be well prepared and briefed on your contribution.
- o Be attentive to the discussion so that your contribution does not repeat someone else’s.
- o Be involved in the discussion.
- o Be brief, relevant, focussed and courteous in your interventions.

Summary: Meetings can be effective ways of reaching decisions, however, they can also be a waste of time. When you invest time in a meeting, you should expect a sufficiently large payback to justify that investment.

If you are running a meeting, use an agenda to focus discussion. Use the time set for the meeting as a tool for getting around bad habits of attendees if necessary. Summarizing the meeting with an action plan ensures that everyone knows what has been decided.

Source: [www.psywww.com/mtsite/themeetng.html](http://www.psywww.com/mtsite/themeetng.html)

**“If we learn to balance excellence in work with excellence in play, fun, and relaxation, our lives become happier, healthier, and a great deal more creative.”** Author: Ann McGee-Cooper

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