

Checklist: Am I Making the Best Use of My Time Right Now?

Stop Procrastinating

- Know where your time is going/Track it for 2 weeks!
- For projects, focus on your “start” time as well as the deadline
- “Perfection Paralysis” – doesn’t have to be perfect, just take action to start

Baby Steps for Big Projects

- Write down your to-do list/categorize into priorities
- Minimize distractions
- Allow for emergencies
- Meet people at the door to chat
- Stand to signal the end of a meeting
- Use the phrase “One more thing before you go” to indicate a conversation is about to end

FAT Paper Monster (File, Act, Toss)

- Date stamp everything
- Checkmark every time you touch it (more than 5 marks, throw it away)
- Have 30-60-90 day file for “to read” (after 90 days, it’s outdated...throw it away)
- Get a LARGE wastebasket (you’ll be tempted to throw away more)
- Rip to read-tear out article, toss magazine (mostly ads anyway)

Calendar/contacts

- Eliminate sticky-note avalanche
- Keep a notebook/journal even if you don’t use a paper day planner
- Use Outlook or a similar program/learn its various functions/tools
- Enter info from biz cards and toss
- Helps you stop wasting time searching for info

Organize your desktop/office

- Place for everything
- Phone on opposite side (Right-handed? Put phone on left side of desk)
- Calculator/Keyboard on same side as you are “handed”
- Get rid of inviting chairs, can attract unwanted visitors and piles of paper
- Arrange desk so it doesn’t face the door (eliminates distraction cause by movement outside)

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In The Workplace:

- Before leaving the office, CLEAR your desk - PLAN tomorrow
Take FIVE for FIVE (take the last 5 minutes of your day to plan your 5 priorities for tomorrow)
- Know when to say when - Learn to say "no" tactfully to optional investments of your time
- Understand the role of all departments (so you can refer customers/co-workers appropriately)
- Set aside e-mail and voicemail time (during your "low energy" times)
- Eliminate voice mail tag
Answer why you are calling, including specific information you need to further your cause
- Schedule friend callbacks for drive time/wireless headset, of course!

Meetings:

- Cut them in half (consider standing)
- Write meeting objectives and ending time on agenda
Keeps meeting focused/Eliminates stress
- Set an offbeat meeting time (like 9:27am, encourages attendees to be punctual)
- Do not recap for late-comers in the meeting (appoint someone to catch them up on what they may have missed)
- Serve breakfast BEFORE your meeting starts, not during
- Appoint the last to arrive to take minutes (They won't be last next time!)
- Recap the next action steps and who is responsible for each one
(gives focus and direction for the next meeting)
- Keep meeting on track and end early! (if possible)
- Even if you are not leading the meeting, take initiative to get started.
(Politely suggest to coordinator starting if the time to begin has passed.)

Personal:

- Get plenty of rest! (this translates to less stress and fewer accidents in the workplace)
- Weekends are to recharge (Even if work is planned, block out at least few hours for relaxation)
- Lay out clothes the night before
- Fill up gas on your way home, don't run low in morning rush hour (Always filling up means fewer stops to fuel up)
- Limit TV time/record favorite shows/fast-forward through commercials (DVR, Tivo)
- Find services on route to/from work (cleaners, grocery, movie rental, pharmacy)
- Pay bills online/batch payments once or twice a month to save time and late fees
- Listen to audiotapes
Average person spends 500 hours per year in his/her car - Make it learning time!