

# 116 Time Management Tips

1. Ask for shorter or better-structured reports.
2. Start the day with unpleasant tasks you've been putting off.
3. Plan time to talk with subordinates individually.
4. Cut out activities that would not be missed.
5. Delegate attendance at meetings.
6. Invest more time in training your staff.
7. Build into your plans an allowance for unplanned time.
8. Let people know if they waste your time.
9. Delegate travelling, visits.
10. Have smaller meetings.
11. Have stand-up meetings.
12. Shorten communication routes – improve information systems.
13. Identify recurrent crises and make them routine.
14. Find somewhere inaccessible, to work on important things.
15. Before interrupting someone, think whether it is really necessary.
16. Learn to say no.
17. Consolidate frequent short contacts with an individual into a regular meeting.
18. Avoid distractions - don't sit where you can gaze out of a window.
19. Tidy your desk.
20. Improve storage and filing systems.
21. Cut the joking and get down to business.
22. Accept that few tasks can be done to perfection.
23. Change the office layout; turn your desk around, so that you are not inviting interruptions.
24. Have fewer meetings.
25. Identify time wasters and root them out.
26. Learn rapid reading techniques.
27. Cut down on reading.
28. Consolidate your time into worthwhile chunks.
29. Link everything you do to the job's results.
30. Stop analysing, do something to improve.
31. Improve meetings - chairmanship, agenda, and discipline.
32. Ask your staff how you waste their time.
33. Let people know that your closed door means, "interrupt only if urgent".
34. Get rid of visitors as soon as the business is done.
35. Handle each piece of paper only once.
36. Make more use of standard letters and memos.
37. Send hand-written memos.
38. Reply to memos by adding a note to the original and returning it.
39. Check up on people less.
40. Accept uncertainty – take a few risks.
41. Don't get obsessed with details.
42. Work at home for an hour and come in later.
43. Finish what you start.
44. Keep a time log regularly to monitor improvement.
45. Carry with you a notebook, including a list of things to do.
46. Change your lunch-hour to get some time alone.

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47. Press for a system of flexible working hours.
48. Leave early and work at home.
49. When you leave your office, let someone know where you are going and for how long.
50. Use your secretary more to screen interruptions.
51. Ask to be dropped from some circulation lists.
52. Delegate some reading - trust people to tell you if there is something you should see.
53. Keep physically fit to be alert and make the best use of your time.
54. Make more use of the phone to cut down on personal visits.
55. Get all socialising done in coffee/lunch/tea breaks.
56. Get a coffee machine and manage without a break.
57. Live nearer the job.
58. Work longer hours.
59. Avoid people who share your outside interests.
60. Rank your tasks for the day or week as high, medium or low priority.
61. Try a simple system of time budgeting.
62. Share your problems and ideas with a colleague.
63. Use a telephone answering machine to listen who's calling before you answer.
64. Find out how new technology can help you save time.
65. Use tea breaks systematically for communication with staff and colleagues.
66. Identify tasks that are related, especially those concerning the same people, and tackle them together.
67. Start meetings mid-afternoon.
68. To improve self-discipline, commit yourself by voluntarily making promises to other people.
69. Negotiate time quality/bargains with people who want your services.
70. Take up relaxation, yoga or meditation exercises.
71. Draw up a "who-can-do-what" matrix of staff abilities, as an aid to planning delegation.
72. If you are subject to Parkinson's law, deliberately put off starting a task until the last possible moment.
73. Lock the door.
74. Eat better food.
75. Make greater use of informal communication channels.
76. Use a wall-chart to plan the year.
77. Practise being more assertive, to answer back people who take advantage of your good nature.
78. At the start of a meeting, always ask what time it is expected to finish.
79. Before starting new task, remind yourself you have options: what other tasks could you do instead?
80. Set yourself deadlines and treat them as unbreakable.
81. For a big job, set intermediate deadlines.
82. Plan time for domestic, social and personal needs.
83. Stop solving all your subordinates' problems for them: encourage them to solve their own.
84. Book appointments for meetings with yourself.
85. Set aside one hour a day when you do not accept interruptions, and let your staff and colleagues know.

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86. Recognise that a task's urgency is nothing to do with its importance.
87. If you get bored after an hour or two on the same task, switch to something else.
88. Before spending a lot of time on a decision, ask what would be the cost of getting it wrong.
89. Plan time for self-development activities.
90. At the end of the day, list the tasks you didn't get around to doing: assess their importance to the job's key areas.
91. Try a diary and time planning system such as Filofax, Time Manager, IPPS or Silverose.
92. Set your digital watch to bleep on the hour, reminding yourself and others how time is getting on.
93. Switch off the phone.
94. Promise yourself a brief "treat" (something you enjoy doing, whether work or not), for when you have finished a task you are tempted to put off.
95. Make a special point of always being punctual for appointments.
96. Start meetings on time, even if not all members have arrived.
97. Don't offer visitors coffee.
98. Have a clock in the office.
99. Let your staff know you are trying to improve your time management by using a time plan.
100. Sit visitors on uncomfortable chairs.
101. Get the secretary to interrupt meetings after a given time.
102. Before accepting a phone call, find out who and what it's about.
103. Keep staff fully briefed so they can solve problems.
104. Circulate fuller information before meetings.
105. Let staff know you expect them to have thought of options before coming to you with problems.
106. When necessary, hang a "do not disturb" sign on the door.
107. Get double-glazing to reduce distraction by noise.
108. If there is information that you need to refer to often (e.g., prices, rates, phone numbers), keep it pinned on the wall by your desk rather than hidden in files and drawers.
109. Confront the boss and demand to know the objectives and priorities.
110. Ensure all staff are pulling their weight.
111. Meet people on their territory rather than yours, giving you more control over bringing the meeting to a close.
112. Hire a hotel's meeting room for long, uninterrupted meetings.
113. Arrange with a colleague that one of you will take all the phone calls while the other is working on something important.
114. Learn to use the "qwerty" keyboard properly, using the right fingers, so your writing can keep pace with your thinking.
115. Ensure the organisation structure is suitable for getting the work done.
116. Dictate correspondence in a daily batch.