

Using Time Well: We All Procrastinate



We all procrastinate from time to time, and each of us have our own style of getting out of the hard choices: to take action or not to take action! There are many reasons for our follow through break downs, side tracks, distractions and even more situations that keep us stuck on this cycle of being stuck on the turnpike of life, circling the same old places. Some of the most common situations to consider in your anti procrastination effort can be as simple as waiting for the right mood or waiting for the right time, right?

Everyone procrastinates sometimes, but 20 percent of people chronically avoid difficult tasks and deliberately look for distractions—which, unfortunately, are increasingly available. Procrastination in large part reflects our perennial struggle with self-control as well as our inability to accurately predict how we'll feel tomorrow, or the next day. Procrastinators may say they perform better under pressure, but more often than not that's their way of justifying putting things off. The bright side? It's possible to overcome procrastination—with effort.

Then look at the way you organize your work. You may notice other reasons for procrastination like:

- Lack of clear goals
- Underestimating the difficulty of the tasks
- Underestimating the time required to complete the tasks
- Unclear standards for the task outcomes
- Feeling as the tasks are imposed on you from outside
- Too ambiguous tasks

And there are also other important reasons:

- Limiting decision making skills
- Fear of failure or fear of success
- Perfectionism—if I can't do it perfectly...



The trick is to organize your tasks and use your time effectively to get more things done each day. This can help you to reduce stress and do better at workplace.

- 1. Learn to see the difference between urgent and important** The important tasks are those that lead you to your goals, and give you most of the long term progress and reward. Those tasks are very often not urgent. Many urgent tasks are not really important.
- 2. Know and respect your priorities** Aim to do the important things first. Remember the 80-20 rule: 80 percent of reward comes from 20 percent of effort. One of the aims of time management tips is to help you refocus your mind to give more attention and time to those most important 20 percent.

Time management is a skill that takes time to develop and is different for each person. You just need to find what works best for you. Use few strategies listed below for few weeks and see if it can help you.

Ways to improve your work life time management skills and increase productivity.

4 Steps To Effective Management

1. Cascade **GOALS** to manage your priorities
2. Learn how to act as a **MINDFUL UNITASKER**
3. See your actions in terms of **CONSEQUENCES**
4. Manage your **TIME BUCKET LIST**

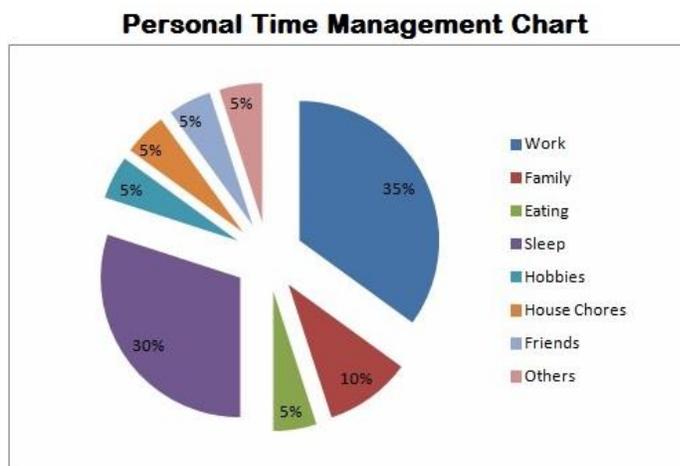


- 1. Delegate Tasks** Many of us take on more tasks than we can fit in our schedule. This can often result in stress and burnout. Delegation is not running away from your responsibilities but is an important function of management. Learn the art of delegating at work and home.
- 2. Prioritize Work** Before the start of the day, make a list of tasks that need your immediate attention as unimportant tasks can consume much of your precious time. Some tasks need to be completed on that day only while other unimportant tasks could be carried forward to the next day. So, prioritize your tasks and the steps to the task to focus on those that are more important.
- 3. Avoid Procrastination** Awareness is the first step, then taking action using tools for managing time.
- 4. Schedule Tasks** Use a planner and list all the tasks that come to your mind. Make a simple 'To Do' list before the start of the day, prioritize the tasks, and plug them into your planner for work, home, and personal.
- 5. Avoid Stress** Stress often occurs when we accept more work than we can do. The result is that our body starts feeling tired which can affect our productivity. Make time for rest and add some fun too.
- 6. Set up Deadlines** When you have a task at hand, set a realistic deadline and stick to it. Try to set a deadline few days before the task so that you can complete all those tasks that may get in the way. Challenge yourself and meet the deadline. Reward yourself for meeting a difficult challenge.
- 7. Avoid Multitasking** Our society has programmed us to think this is good time management...Not! We are more efficient when we focus and concentrate on one thing. Multitasking hampers productivity and should be avoided to improve time management

skills.

8. **Start Early** Most of the successful men and women have one thing in common. They start their day early as it gives them time to sit, think, and plan their day. When you get up early, you are more calm, creative, and clear-headed. As the day progresses, your energy levels start going down which affects your productivity and you don't perform as well.
9. **Take Some Breaks** Whenever you find yourself for 10-15 minutes, take a break. Too much stress can take toll on your body and affect your productivity. Take a walk, listen to some music or do some quick stretches.
10. **Learn to say No** Politely refuse to accept additional tasks if you think that you're already overloaded with work. Take a look at your 'To Do' list before agreeing to take on extra work.
11. **OHIO or only handle it once** applies to junk mail and emails, which should go straight in the trash. Beyond that, you should consciously evaluate the right number of times to view emails and handle a document.

TIP #1 There are some people that find a certain chaos around managing their workspace. Make items memorable with color: files, memos, text, schedules, etc. Virtually anything in the black-and-white of type can be made more memorable, arresting, and therefore *attention getting* with color. Therefore, color coding files, labels, and highlighting planner tasks makes it easier to get work done.



TIP #2 Break down large tasks and to small ones. Whether you are working on a work or home project, attach deadlines to the small parts. Then, like magic, the large tasks will get done. This is one of the simplest and most powerful of all structuring devices. Often a large task will feel overwhelming but the steps will feel easier to work on. When the large task is broken down into small parts, each component may feel more manageable.

Personal time management is as important as work time management. When things seem to pile up, remember these helpful tips for keeping your home clear and inviting to you and others.

1. **OHIO or Only Handle It Once** works much better at home than in the office. Sort mail at the bin, discarding trash as it comes into the house. Opening food boxes, bags, bottles, etc. during cooking or eating, toss it in the right receptacle (recycle, trash or compost). When you use a dish, glass, etc. and put it directly into the dishwasher. Toss all those

little bags with the cute little handles and other things that has outlived its usefulness in the recycle.

2. **Pick Up After Yourself** and encourage others to do so too. Why? Because it creates a free flow of energy that opens your home to more energy, more money, (money is energy) and better sense of self.
3. **Cluster Items** that need to go upstairs or to the other side of the house). When you go up, it is just as easy to take up an armload then a single item, then put them away.
4. **Clear Out the Old** If you haven't used something in a year or two, it might be time to toss it. Really, do you need it? Is it gathering dust? Those things of sentimental value or are bonded to a memory, can be just as memorable without the physical object in your life. Letting go of may be more powerful than you think!
5. **Create routine** around the house, because it feels better, reduces stress and symbolically grounds your life. The little traditions can be life enhancing.
6. **Chores are good for the soul**, so cleaning the house (car, yard, etc.) is a great way to ground yourself while creating flow. This offers a peaceful, meditative practice that puts you in a state of mindfulness. Work without thinking about anything and you will be rewarded with a sense of calm and harmony.
7. **Delegate** The same type of work ethic around the house frees everyone to get the most out of life, so that all have an equal share in making the home a good place to go to enjoy private life. Additionally, one person isn't taking all of the responsibility for household chores that are shared responsibility.
8. **Avoid Multitasking** Again, our society has programed us to think this is good time management...Not at all! We are more efficient when we focus and concentrate on one thing. Multitasking hampers productivity and should be avoided to improve time management skills.
9. **All Work & No Play...** Get your chores and household work done early in the weekend, and then do something fun. Down time allows much needed time to reduce stress that will keep on giving all of your work week, enhancing productivity. Do something fun: visit with friends, get some exercise, cook meals together, do a hobby, work in the garden or whatever helps to nourish mind and body.
10. **Feed the Soul** Take time to reflect on your week and on your life. Some people find going to church helps. While others take hikes in the mountains, shore other other soul enhancing places. Whatever feeds the soul for you will continue to give all week long.
11. **Inner Communication** While reflecting on life, stay in the present moment and out of the past and future. Learn to treat your inner self with kindness and respect: observing without dialoguing is more productive, than self-talk that is destructive. Use the information to design better action steps without self-criticism and detachment during the process.

A certain degree of detachment and inner peace are useful in managing your time effectively. True emotional and mental detachment is not a state of indifference, apathy or lack of energy. We can be loving, happy, helpful and energetic, and at the same time be detached from outcomes. I mean detached from worries, fears, negative emotions and the negative emotions



of other people. True detachment manifests as the ability to think clearly, stay balanced, and not getting agitated in response to what people think or say about you. This help you avoid spending too much emotional and mental energy on what people say and think about you. Also, it helps you stay calm, despite distractions or difficulties, and this saves you a lot of time and energy, which you can spend on better and more rewarding activities. This kind of thinking would enable you to focus on what you are doing, without stress and strain. Always plan your time well and don't waste it on

useless matters. Be aware of those times you procrastinate, and do everything in the best way you can, with focus, intention and attention. Be kind to yourself, we all have great failures and equally great wins. Growth is all about knowing when to stop and assess the changes coming to you, so you can regroup, and move forward. The old adage still stands, work smarter, not harder and you will enjoy a well lived life!

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