

THE SKILL OF TIME MANAGEMENT

A man was seen banging his head repeatedly against the wall. When asked why he was doing that he replied, 'It's nice when I stop.'

Have you noticed how time passes slowly in a day but quickly across the years!

What about the second week of a holiday? Does it seem to pass more quickly?

Nothing really belongs to us but time, which even (s)he has who has nothing else.

Yet time is a scarce resource – it is irreplaceable and irreversible.

How much time do you waste? Looking for something perhaps? We can see the problem but sometimes struggle with the solution. I hope that you won't be wasting time in reading this. Remember to save time you need to spend a little. Consider thinking about this article as an investment – budgeting time can get a rich dividend from its investment. Make time an ally not an enemy. Where is your time going? (Analyse it).

SOME BASICS

BE PROACTIVE

Take responsibility and control with mental discipline. Learn to re-charge your batteries.

BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

Imagine the eulogy at your funeral. What would you like said about your character and achievements?

PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ways to make better use of your time

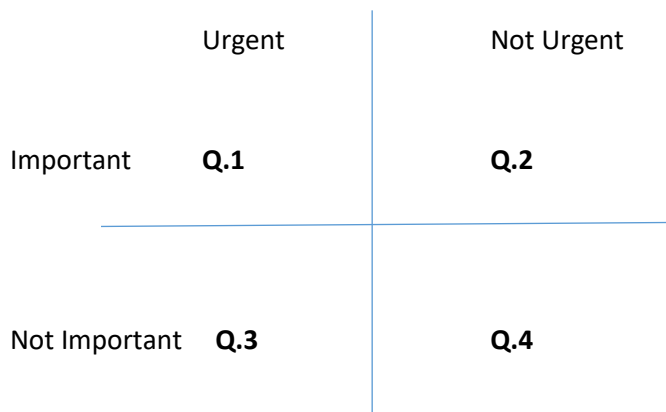
Discontinue low priority tasks

Find someone else to do some of the work [see 'The Art of Delegation']

Be more efficient at what you do.

Pareto's Law: 20% of time spent creates 80% of results.

Quadrants of time:



Quad 1 URGENT AND IMPORTANT - crisis management – tiring and leads to burnout

Quad 2 IMPORTANT BUT NOT URGENT – time for planning and prevention activities

Quad 3 URGENT BUT NOT IMPORTANT – interruptions, some meetings – short term out of control

QUAD 4 NOT URGENT AND NOT IMPORTANT – trivia, mail, time wasters – irresponsible

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF TIME MANAGEMENT ISSUES?

Insufficient non-contact time

Having more than one base

Uneven workload

Lack of self-organisation skills and inability to prioritise

Avoidance of unpleasant tasks

Having too many obligations or responsibilities

Distractions from teaching

Tiredness, worry and pressure

Interruptions and chasing up pupils

Inappropriate deadlines

Inadequate support

Too many initiatives

HOW CAN YOU CONTROL YOUR TIME?

- 1 Establish responsibilities, priorities and objectives
- 2 Eliminate unnecessary and inappropriate activities
- 3 Delegate as much as possible
- 4 Plan and schedule use of your time
- 5 Allow space for the unexpected
- 6 Make optimum use of peak energy time
- 7 Remove distractions and interruptions where possible
- 8 Organise your resources, space, phone calls and meetings
- 9 Regularly evaluate how you are using your time
- 10 Separate work and leisure – you need to relax and re-charge
- 11 Don't postpone unpleasant tasks that are important

Effective performance is 10% inspiration, 40% perspiration and 50% organisation.

TIME PLANNING

Immediate action: the fog bank – I'm in it! CRISIS!

Daily plan: Problem is here and now

Weekly plan: this will happen shortly, on the horizon

Monthly Diary: will happen sooner than you think

Yearly review: time to plan

REMEMBER a bull looks small from a long way away but up close it's BIG!

Allocating time:

Fixed commitments

Prime time for priorities and major tasks

Planning time and blocking to be free from interruptions

Allocating time to be available or for appointments and meetings

BEWARE THE TIME WASTERS:

- Interruptions
- Meetings
- Telephone calls
- Crises and panics
- Faulty equipment
- Chasing people
- Finding something
- Lack of resources
- Junk mail
- Administrative chores
- Social chat
- Procrastination
- Clutter

We do the little jobs before the big ones.

We do what we enjoy over less pleasant tasks.

We do the easy before the hard.

We do the familiar before the new.

We deal with interruptions not priorities.

We deal with urgent matters over important.

We tackle jobs on the top of the pile first.

We tackle short term tasks before long term ones (governed by deadlines).

We do what we have been asked to do before following our own priorities.

We operate without a strategy with inadequate systems and plans drifting through the day blown by events and letting time slip through our fingers.

CONTROLLING THE PAPER

What needs to be done today? This week? Placed on file? Simply read? Passed on?

Don't have a pending file – use the wastepaper bin!

Some tips:

1. Resist the temptation to be led into action by the latest piece of paper.
2. Don't allow curiosity to encourage you to start reading mail you haven't time to deal with.
3. Schedule a definite time to deal with mail when it suits you.
4. Don't rely on low priority paperwork to give you a false sense of achievement.
5. Don't work at a desk surrounded by mountains of paper.

CONTROLLING INTERRUPTIONS – 'I know you're busy but . . . '

Check (a) Is it actually a crisis?

(b) Does it need a simple factual response?

(c) Is it better delegated?

(d) Is it important but not urgent.

Try to avoid an 'open door' policy! When door is open – fine but when closed I am busy.

CONTROL THE TELEPHONE

Try to schedule important calls early in the day – can then be followed up later.

Make calls in short spaces of time.

Avoid re-ringing engaged numbers.

Don't leave open ended messages.

Resist the temptation to phone back immediately you receive a request when on essential work.

Don't allow calls to delay progress of important meetings or work.

PLANNING

Some people like a daily 'to do' list

Things you MUST do

Things you SHOULD do

Things you would LIKE to do

Some people like a diary or time planner:

- To set long term objectives
- Set weekly targets
- List tasks for completion
- Place tasks in order of priority
- Estimate the time you wish to spend on activities
- Plan for the 'prime' time when you are at your best