

# The Importance of Time Management

How to Optimize your Time  
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# The Importance of Time Management – How to Optimize your Time

## Introduction

Why does it seem that there is never enough time in the day to get everything done? As busy individuals we are always battling the clock. There has to be a way to overcome time constraints in our lives that don't involve warping time or passing into another dimension.

Time management is an answer to the issue of “not enough time.” simply put, time management revolves around the tools, skills, activities and mindset needed to use each day in the most efficient manner possible. You have to admit that wasting time is a favorite pastime for most of us. It sneaks up on you when you aren't looking and finds you watching television or staring out the window when there are other things to be done.

Sure, the mind needs a break every now and then, but the difference here is that the break is an avoidance tactic so we don't focus on all that stuff we haven't done yet. Like we said, it's sneaky. You could lose a quarter of an hour without even batting an eye and then wonder where the time went.

Time management can be learned by anyone. All it takes is a willingness to get your house in order. That is half the battle right there. Once you have made up your mind that your life needs to change so that you can stop putting off until tomorrow what you didn't have time to do today, the benefits to your life will be amazing. You'll wonder why you didn't implement time management techniques sooner.

In this report we will discuss how time management is supposed to benefit us. Without any benefit there is no reason to do it. You may know a bit about time management but when the principles of it are laid out for you, you'll see that the scope of it is even greater than you thought you knew.

Also, you will learn the advantages to your life and your business through simple tools, easy to follow steps and continued assessment to make the process work better for you as time goes on. Don't let time march over you. Get in line and embrace each moment you have in the day to live a freer life.

## PRINCIPLES OF TIME MANAGEMENT

### Hierarchy of Needs

Before you say anything, this is not going to be a boring lecture about someone inventing this technique or other. It is just an explanation of the way we, as humans, think about our lives. We put things into a hierarchy with the most important first and work our way up from there.

As a person you have basic needs that have to be met. These include food and water, air, clothing and shelter. Without these things, life has a hard time proceeding. You can't seem to get to other needs in your life unless these are met.

From there, you have your need for safety, companionship, psychological needs and needs that feed your self-worth. All of these needs (includes wants) play into your daily life roles. You might be a mother, a wife, an employee, a business owner, a friend or several other hats that are worn by you. All of these things fight for time in your day.

Everything can't be the top priority. Some things have to wait their turn. You determine through self-assessment what is most important to you right now and work on that first. It doesn't mean that that's all you devote time to in your day. It just means that the top spot is occupied by that need so it gets more time.

### **Becoming More Efficient**

We alluded to the fact that sometimes we waste time. All of us do it. You come home from work and vow to only sit on the couch for five minutes before getting to the dinner. Before you know it, the kids are screaming in your ear and it's time to go to the PTA meeting, soccer practice or have a conference call with a client.

Time management allows you to be tired at certain points in your busy day but without a four-alarm fire in the form of kids and missed appointments waking you up. You can take a quick or prolonged nap knowing that all is well in the kingdom so you don't have to stress. Staying on top of your schedule keeps away stress and the strain of playing catch-up.

Every minute of the day is filled with something important. It could be a nap or reading a story to your toddler but something is being done and you feel good about it. Good feelings are a benefit of time management that keeps you motivated to keep following your system.

### **Business Needs**

In business, time management is important. It could make the difference between keeping a client and losing one. Sure, things get hairy every once in a while but that should be the exception to the rule and not the norm.

For working moms who have a home business or work outside the home, time management is crucial. You have a family that is dividing your time. Work needs to have a set schedule just like personal time. This is particularly difficult for work-at-home moms because your kids are right there with you and the lines between work and home get blurred...a lot. Guilt keeps you working and that same guilt can pull you away in the middle of your work to play with the kids.

Time management techniques in business will see you meeting deadlines, finding new clients and making more money than you were before. The quality of your work will be better because you have taken the time to do it instead of cramming everything in at the eleventh hour. Finishing one project and moving on to the next provides a sense of accomplishment you don't get when you are scurrying around putting out fires.

## **Personal Needs**

No man or woman is an island. You need the comfort of others to make your life complete. It could be a spouse or a child. Nurturing those relationships is just as important as nurturing the business side of things.

Spending ten or fifteen minutes playing ball while waiting for a conference call is not exactly quality time. Your mind is on the call not the ball. Personal time with family and friends needs quality just like your work.

Being in the moment is a gift of time management that can't be duplicated or replaced. Spending quality time with those you love and focusing on them fulfills a need in your hierarchy as well. Knowing that you are needed, loved and valued by the ones who are with you at the end of the day is important.

## **Advantages of the Time Management Process**

If time management didn't have any advantages you wouldn't do it. There would be no need to do it. It would be wasting time and that is not what you are trying to accomplish. We can do that quite well on our own.

Time management increases your motivation. That's a big advantage. Why do you feel like you are going through the motions every day? You don't need motivation to live your life on auto-pilot. Once you see how your productivity increases, you are motivated to keep using time management tools and share them with everyone you know.

A happy family is another advantage. This is a concern of mompreneurs. Are you sacrificing your family for your business? The two can coexist peacefully. You can find the balance through time management. A family that is happy leads to a mom who is happy and thriving in her business knowing that her family's needs are being met.

Your business will take off in big ways. Now, you might take on one project a week (depending on the nature of your business). After implementing some time management processes your productivity could double or even triple. But, you will be using not much more time than you did before to get the work done. It's amazing! Makes you want to jump in with both feet doesn't it?

Even though you are a businesswoman, a mother and a wife, you are first and foremost, an individual. You have your own dreams and goals to fill your life. These needs are things that only you can achieve for yourself.

With time management, you can begin working on those things. They are that “something missing” that you couldn’t put your finger on. Now, you have time to fulfill them and round out your life.

## **USING TOOLS**

### **Needs versus Wants**

We all have needs and wants. Wants are just as important as needs. You need food and water. You want to make a better life for yourself and your family. Perform a self-assessment. What are your needs? List them all. Do the same for your wants.

Now go back through the list. What needs have you met already? If you have a freezer full of food and the means to get more, that need is being met. The same goes for water, clothing, shelter and etc.

Look at your wants. This category is varied: job security, a home in a good neighborhood, transportation, financial security, a home business, time with family and etc. if any of these have been met, mark them off just like with your needs.

Of the items that are left, what is most important to you now? Maybe you want to concentrate on growing your business or spending time with family. Those are the things that take top priority when you set up your time management strategy.

### **Calendars**

To begin, you don’t need fancy notebooks and binders. Use a large calendar that has enough room on it to record daily activities for you and your family. Each person needs a column. Whenever a trip is planned, kids bring home notices, you have an engagement or hubby will be out of town write it down on the calendar. Place it in a room where everyone will see it (like the kitchen).

If you have allotted certain time during the day for work, record that time frame on the family calendar as “work time.” in your home office, use a separate but equally large calendar to map out what work will be done that day during work hours.

Knowing what to do when you walk into your office saves precious time trying to find out. Set your next day’s schedule the evening before. Be sure to leave enough wiggle room in case a conference runs long or you have unexpected things come up. Being too rigid sets you up for failure.

## **Time Management Software**

Software is helpful on the business side of things. Time tracking software lets you see where you are spending most of your efforts and if it is cost effective. At the end of the week, evaluate what projects took most of your time. If you are taking several hours every day to answer emails but leaving no time for marketing, that can be a problem. It might be time to hire a virtual assistant to handle some tasks that you can outsource to free up your time.

If one project is taking more time and costing you money, break it down into more manageable parts. Set a timeline for each piece of the project to get it done more efficiently. Use that same principle with all your projects to meet smaller milestones and finish sooner.

## **Task Lists**

Task lists help more in your personal life. If you are going to the park with the kids the next day, write out what you need to take and organize it the night before. A permanent task list can be posted in the kitchen for morning chores: lunch prep, kid's backpacks, your briefcase, breakfast meal and etc.

Use a task list at the grocery store and when doing other shopping so you won't miss anything on your way through the store. Lists are quite helpful for meeting agendas, website planning, and creating time lines for a project.

## **TIME MANAGEMENT IDEAS**

### **Take Care of You**

Now you have come to the nitty-gritty. These are things that you will have time for once you work on time management. Start with yourself. If you are not taking care of yourself, no one else will get taken care of either. It is easy to get rundown when you are up and down day in and day out.

Don't neglect your sleep. Getting seven to eight hours is crucial. The body spends that time repairing itself while you are still. Your body is ship shape the next morning and ready to go again. Lack of sleep can cause stress, irritability and poor concentration. Avoid this if at all possible.

Soak your cares away at night. Set aside time for self before bedtime to let the body relax and the mind unwind. Take a relaxing bath with candles and aromatherapy oils. Listen to soft music in the dark and reflect on your day. Read one of the many books you have on your bookshelf. That time is for you to do whatever will make you feel better.

The same goes for the morning time. Some people meditate to get the day started in focus. You can roll out of bed 30 minutes early to set yourself for the day. That time can be used to work on your personal development goals if you wish.

## **Exercise**

Exercise is just one of the activities that keep you young inside and out. Good feeling hormones called endorphins are secreted when you work up a sweat. They encourage clarity, focus and a sense of well-being within you. Exercise also relieves stress while helping you stay in shape or get in shape.

All of us have at least 30 minutes a day we can devote to getting physically fit. You might not know it yet. Those 30 minutes you spent watching television when you got home could be used to take a walk. If you are a member of a gym, decide on a time to go each day and plan your schedule around it. Account for driving time to and from the gym so you aren't running behind for other things.

## **Eat Right**

What are you putting in your body? Natural foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meats provide vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and other nutrients that help the body run as an efficient machine. Add cooking meals at home to your schedule. If you need to, take time on the weekend to prepare meals and freeze them for suppers throughout the week.

Make healthy snacks like fruit, yogurt and veggies with dip readily available for the family to grab when they are hungry. The best thing is that the entire family will be eating healthier and losing weight through your planning and time management.

## **Work Life**

Here's the kicker. When you work at home you have lots of distractions. If your kids are home, you are working around their schedules as well. It is tough to juggle.

Who said you had to work every day? If you manage your time well, you can get five days worth of work done in three days. Hire a babysitter for your work days. The sitter will keep the kids occupied with a routine that you set up so that you can work without interruption. On the other two days, spend quality time with your kids as well as get housework done. Set up a schedule of what needs to be done those days and allow adequate time so you are not rushed.

Even when you work, allow breaks throughout the work hours to get a drink, go to the bathroom, take a few minutes to enjoy a cup of coffee or stare out the window at the

day. Constant breaks keep the mind from getting numb. In the office you get two fifteen minute breaks but you can cut yourself some more slack when you are the boss.

## **Family Life**

All work and no play is not any fun. Spend time with your family and live in the moment. Resist the urge to work on weekends and leave that for family outings. Through the week, your family needs you also. When work is done, let it go for the day and get reacquainted with your husband and children.

When you schedule family time each day, it can remain unscripted if you don't have anything planned. Include holiday recitals, sports matches, practices and free time in this grouping called "family time." when your kids get older, they need to know that you are available to talk to or just spend time in each other's presence. Neglect the urge to scale back family time in favor of increasing your work schedule.

Staying close with your kids is a major factor in keeping them away from activities that every parent worries about: drugs, smoking, alcohol and sexual activity. Talk with them and remain close (as you can be) during the ages when they need your input the most.

Don't forget about your spouse. Carve out family time to be alone with him. A marriage needs nurturing as well. Let him know that he is loved and special on a regular basis.

## **CONCLUSION**

What have you learned here? Time management is important to a well-balanced life. Juggling family and work is a constant concern. But, both can have their time in the spotlight with effective time management.

Each day has 24 hours. You get no more and no less. How you use that amount of time makes all the difference to your life. You can create a happy family, a growing business and realize personal goals in that time if you want to change your life.

Time management takes time, though. It may not be weeks, but months and years to get all of your needs and wants satisfied. But, every step of the way, there will be tangible benefits to show that you are progressing in the right direction. Pull out that calendar and get the ball rolling today.