

Are you making the most of your time at work?

Rate your time management skills and find out.

Take inventory of these best practices in time management to see how well you use your time. As you read each tip, think about your previous workday and mark the checkbox if you followed the tip. If not, leave it blank. Count up the total boxes you marked and check your score at the end.



Make lists

Whether it's your daily action items, key points to include in a presentation, or breaking a large project into a series of smaller, more manageable tasks, lists are valuable time management and planning tools.

Prioritize

Once you have your list, highlight the top three priorities. It's important to revisit this key time management task daily, or at least frequently, as priorities are always subject to change.

Weigh importance over urgency

It's easy to get caught up in the sense of urgency associated with short deadlines. But what's urgent isn't necessarily important in terms of long term goals and objectives. When a new action item arrives, time management experts advise us to weigh its relative importance to other tasks we're already managing. Find the balance between tasks that require immediate attention and those that support larger company/ career objectives and goals.

Schedule for success

Identify three important tasks every day and schedule time for them. If it's difficult to find extra time in your schedule, reserve time in advance. Take control of your work day to ensure you accomplish your most important tasks every day.

Work in stages

It's no secret that productivity declines over longer periods of time. If you have a project that you estimate will take four hours, try working in smaller increments throughout the day instead of doing it all in one session. When fatigued or frustrated, switch to another task and you'll return refreshed—perhaps even with a new perspective.



Rate your time management skills.

Automate reminders

To help keep yourself on schedule use the automated appointment pop-up reminders available in most desktop calendar applications. Schedule five or ten minutes of buffer time between appointments to have time for travel, meeting prep and checking of urgent messages.

Balance effort and benefit

Some things need to be perfect, others don't. Make a conscious effort to weigh the value of perfectionism versus its reward. It's likely the extra time it takes to ensure some tasks are perfect could be better spent applied to something else.

Stop saving everything

The more files you save, the harder it is to find the one you need now. Learn what to keep and what to discard by browsing through your old files, archiving some and deleting others. As a rule, if you haven't referred to them in the past year, chances are you won't need them in the future either.

Think a step ahead

One of the best ways to take control of your time is to get ahead of the curve. Instead of reacting to circumstances, spend some time thinking about what's next. Make plans and take action proactively to save time later.

Make time for your career

In an ideal world, hard work and dedication are always rewarded. But in the real world, your best bet for advancement is to ensure you allow some time for networking, learning new skills, and pushing yourself to grow. For most of us, our advancement is up to us.

Multitask judiciously

Make no mistake, texting while driving is not a good idea. But reading on public transit is—or listening to a business audiobook while exercising. Look for opportunities to combine compatible tasks and get two things accomplished at once.

Do it sooner than later

Without a deadline, it's too easy to put things off. If a task doesn't have a deadline, give it one—and stick to it. If it's really not all that important, consider taking it off your action item list entirely.

See how you rate

Now count up the checkboxes you marked to see how your score stacks up:

A (10 to 12) – Congratulations, you're top-notch at time management! Be sure to share your successful techniques with your colleagues.

B (7 to 9) – Great work, you're already a time management pro. Keep adding to your skills to become even more productive.

C (4 to 6) – Good work, you're making some sound decisions about how to use your time effectively. Keep going and take it to the next level.

D (1 to 3) – There's room for growth. Pick three unchecked items from your list and start working them into your life to boost your productivity today.

F (0) – Give yourself a pat on the back for taking the time to take the test. Now follow our recommendations to start maximizing your precious time.

Save Time and Expense

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