Course Title: Time Management

Time management is the coordination of tasks and activities to maximize the effectiveness of an individual's efforts. Essentially, the purpose of time management is to enable people to get more and better work done in less time.

Elements of time management include organization, planning and scheduling to best take advantage of the time available. Time management techniques also take into account an individual's particular situation and their relevant capabilities and characteristics.

Why is time management important?

The importance of time management is in its ability to assign meaning to time, letting people make the most of their time. In a business context, it is used to set goals and expectations for companies and their employees. Good time management skills help employees deliver quality work and meet their goals effectively. Time management also helps managers to understand what employees are capable of and to set realistic goals.

Poor time management skills cause employees to miss goals and deliver poor work, become overly stressed out and anxious, and run short of time. When time is used inefficiently, it has deleterious effects on employees, management and the company.

Time poverty is a result of poor or nonexistent time management. People find themselves in this state when they have too much to do and too little time to do it. Their personal lives suffer, and they feel increasingly overwhelmed with responsibilities and activities despite working hard.

Time management requires active decisions about what a person wants to do. Without time management, individuals continually react to external stimuli and lose a sense of control over their work and lives.

All work takes time, but some tasks are more valuable than others. Reallocating time to higher-value work improves both productivity and work-life balance. Good time management creates a healthier workplace overall.

Benefits of time management

The benefits of effective time management apply equally to the business and its employees. Some of these benefits include the following:

- **Happier employees.** When employees have enough time to get their work done, they are happier and less prone to burnout.

- **Improved creativity.** When not stressed by time issues, employees have the space and energy to be more creative in their work. They can actively engage with their work instead of passively reacting to it. This increases innovation.

- **Lower absenteeism.** Stressed and burned-out employees take more sick and other time off.

- **Lower turnover.** With a better work experience, employees are likely to stay at a job and not look elsewhere.

- **Increased productivity.** Employees who are less likely to be absent and who enjoy their work are more productive.

- **Enhanced reputation.** Businesses that encourage effective time management are known as good places to work, improving employee recruitment and retention.

Challenges of time management

Mallary Tytel, founder of consultancy Healthy Workplaces, categorizes barriers to effective time management as either internal or external.

Internal barriers are ones that come from the individual and are within the individual's control. They include factors such as the following:

- **Lack of self-control.** An individual who lacks self-control is prone to distraction and might miss goals because of this.

- **Procrastination.** People put off tasks until they feel pressured to complete them. This is a reactive behavior.

- **Lack of motivation.** An individual might not see the reason for completing something, choosing to do something else and setting other goals.

- **Anxiety.** Individuals experiencing stress likely find it harder to focus and be decisive.

- **People pleasing.** A person who is preoccupied with pleasing everyone inevitably fails because other people have conflicting needs; the individual will spread themselves too thin trying to please them all.

- **Multitasking.** Trying to do too many things at once, or Multitasking, can mean failing at all of them.

These internal factors relate to an individual's habits, behaviors and actions. Though the behaviors might be unconscious or ingrained, an individual has the power to moderate their behaviors and change the way they use time.

External barriers are factors that come from outside the individual. They include factors such as the following:

- **Workload.** An individual can end up with more work than they can handle.

- **Job constraints.** The job or workplace might keep the individual from reaching their goals.

- **Lack of corporate resources.** A company might not provide the resources employees need to complete their jobs. For example, it might be a remote-only position, but the company doesn't provide <u>collaboration tools for team members to work well remotely</u>.

- **Distractions.** External life factors, such as a family emergency or a <u>global pandemic</u>, might disrupt an individual's ability to manage their time effectively. Basic time wasters such as social media can also be a time suck.

External barriers, unlike internal ones, are not within the individual's control. They come from the outside environment. However, the individual can control how they react to these barriers.

Time management tips and techniques

Below are a few tips for achieving better time management:

- Keep a journal of activities for a week to identify the times of day that are likely to be most productive. Use that information to guide scheduling tasks.

- Take time at the start of each workday to make a to-do list of measurable goals and methods of reaching them.

- Schedule daily tasks according to priority and include unscheduled time in the day.

- Manage your communication availability. Open email and instant messaging applications at scheduled times rather than engaging with them all day.

- Follow other email management best practices, such as processing your email in batches and organizing messages to be dealt with at a later time.

- Assume periodic interruptions will happen and add time to specific tasks to allow for them.

- Manage your workload. Don't agree to more work than you can comfortably do and discuss unreasonable demands with management.

Using these tips and techniques, teams can decide what matters and how to use time most effectively.

Below are some time management techniques and tools:

- **Pareto analysis.** Based on the Pareto principle, Pareto analysis states that 80% of consequences come from 20% of causes. It is useful for categorizing courses of action according to their importance or value in a given context. It helps people use resources efficiently.

The Eisenhower matrix helps prioritize importance over urgency.

- **Eisenhower matrix.** The Eisenhower matrix is a tool to help with prioritization that divides tasks into urgent tasks and important tasks. The goal is to get people to prioritize more important tasks over less important but more time-sensitive ones that take attention from the important ones.

- **Time blocking.** Time blocking is a time management method that divides the day into specific blocks of time.

- **Getting Things Done method.** The Getting Things Done method is an approach to task management that helps individuals stop overthinking big and small tasks, and start prioritizing them, with the goal of reducing stress levels to increase productivity and clarity of thought. It involves writing everything down, categorizing it by importance and then doing the tasks.

- **Pomodoro technique.** The Pomodoro technique breaks time into 25-minute time slots of focused work interspersed with five-minute breaks, with a longer break after four consecutive work intervals. This helps people resist the urge to procrastinate and multitask.

- **Productivity apps.** Productivity apps can be used to set reminders and create schedules.

Time management and management theory

Many of the time management techniques are used in project management to help teams reach their goals.

Below are some broader theories and concepts related to time management strategies:

- **Parkinson's law.** The amount of work required to complete a given task will expand to fill the time allotted to the task, according to Parkinson's law.

- **The 70% rule.** By conserving energy, people can achieve better productivity while working at a less intense pace, according to the 70% rule.

- **Hofstadter's law.** A task always takes longer than estimated to complete, according to Hofstadter's law. People overestimate the benefits of a system -- in this case, the individual's capacity to work under a time constraint.

- **Pickle jar theory.** The pickle jar theory is a visual metaphor to illustrate the fact that a person's day can be filled with many small, unimportant things that take away space from the important things.

Characteristics of Successful Time Management

Time is of the essence to busy students, parents, workers and executives. Making the most of this precious commodity is key to staying on top of your work and reaching important milestones and goals. Successful time managers possess certain time management qualities that keep them on schedule. Embracing six characteristics of good timetable planning can decrease stress and increase productivity.

1. **Goal Orientation**

Effective management skills include goal setting, whether you're seeking to organize your personal life, school schedule or workload. In fact, Indeed Career Guide suggests that goal setting is the first thing you must do to gain mastery of your time. Setting daily and long-term goals helps you define objectives and make the best use of your limited time.

Goal planning is an art and a science in itself. Initially, goal setting starts with daydreaming and envisioning all the possibilities. From there, you decide on specific, measurable goals and identify the tasks you must complete along the way. The University of California recommends formulating S.M.A.R.T. goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. In other words, your goals should be quantifiable and doable within the deadline you set for yourself or your team.

2. **Strategic Scheduling**

Successful time management requires a workable system for allotting time and scheduling activities throughout the day and week. Instead of simply hoping to get a lot done that day, you make choices about what you will accomplish and then follow through. To a large extent, scheduling tools are a matter of personal preference. Options include everything from sticky notes on your computer screen to a penciled checklist and sophisticated project management software. Sometime managers take advantage of multiple methods.

3. **Prioritized Activities**

Start by blocking off time on your calendar for mandatory meetings and essential tasks that you must complete. Add other priority items such as working without interruptions to finish a project or a report by noon. Include running errands, shopping, paying bills and other chores that could be postponed if you're running late. Self-care is important to staying calm and positive, so schedule time for hobbies and activities you enjoy such as

socializing with friends, running, yoga and meditation. Understanding deadlines can help you recognize when adjustments are necessary that may involve asking for help or canceling some plans.

4. Appropriate Delegation

Successful time managers recognize that they can't, and shouldn't, try to do everything themselves. Synergy happens when work is shared by team members with shared goals who can bring their unique skill set to the project. Proper delegation requires careful deliberation of what has to get done and who can best tackle the assignment. Delegating tasks allows you to focus on your own priorities and meet fast-approaching due dates. Time management qualities to cultivate when delegating include clearly communicating assignments, expectations and time frames.

5. Emotional Composure

Successful time managers don't let fear and anxiety consume them when working under pressure and tight time constraints. They plan accordingly and let go of worry. Time management qualities necessitate strategies for emotional regulation of stress. Stress is managed by taking little breaks to stretch and decompress. Relaxed time managers practice work-life balance to maintain their positive attitude and physical health.

6. Time Limits

Knowing how long each task should take, setting deadlines and working efficiently are essential time management attributes, according to CFI. Positive outcomes are more likely to be achieved if efficiency is highly valued. Spending too much time on trivial or unnecessary details reduces productivity and profitability. Conducting a time study of each task in a production process, for example, can help streamline the workflow. Efficient workers have more time to pursue other interests and set new goals.

Objectives of Time Management Programs

The objectives of time management programs are:

1. It helps to decide the most expeditious and economic method of carrying out the work consistently with the available resources.

2. Provide continuous productive work for all labour and equipment employed, reducing unproductive time to a minimum.

3. Organize and control the work by early examination of all its aspects;

4. Recognize and deal with possible difficulties, thereby ensuring smooth and continuous progress.

5. Give accurate information relating to the timescale to use the resources employed.

6. Provide proper progress and control procedures.

7. Contribute factual data for use in future estimating and programming.

The Importance of Time Management

Time Management plays a vital role in various aspects of life, from personal to professional. Effectively managing time is crucial for maximising productivity, reducing stress levels, achieving goals, maintaining a healthy work-life balance, and promoting personal growth. This blog section will describe the Importance of Time Management in greater detail:

Importance of Time Management

1) Increased productivity: Time Management allows individuals to prioritise tasks and allocate their time efficiently. By focusing on high-priority activities, individuals can make the most of their productive hours, accomplish more in less time, and achieve better results. Effective Time Management prevents wasting time on non-essential tasks or getting overwhelmed by a heavy workload.

2) Reduced stress levels: Poor Time Management often leads to increased stress levels. Procrastination can be avoided, as well as missed deadlines, and last-minute rushes, which create unnecessary pressure and anxiety. By effectively managing time, individuals can plan and organise their tasks, stay ahead of deadlines, and approach their responsibilities with a calmer and more composed mindset. Reduced stress levels contribute to better mental and emotional well-being.

3) Improved decision-making: Time Management allows individuals to allocate sufficient time for critical thinking and decision-making. Rushed and impulsive decisions can lead to negative consequences. With effective Time Management, individuals have the space to evaluate options, weigh pros and cons, gather information, and make informed decisions. This applies to both personal and professional choices.

4) Enhanced goal achievement: Time Management is instrumental in setting and achieving goals. By breaking down larger goals into smaller, manageable tasks, individuals can create a roadmap for success. Effective Time Management helps allocate dedicated time slots for specific tasks, ensuring steady progress towards the desired outcome. Regular progress boosts motivation and creates a sense of accomplishment as goals are achieved step by step.

5) Healthy work-life balance: Time Management is essential for maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life. Without proper Time Management, work can encroach on personal time, leading to burnout and strained relationships. By allocating time for work-related tasks as well as personal activities, hobbies, and self-care, individuals can nurture a balanced lifestyle, improving overall well-being and satisfaction.

6) Increased effectiveness: Time Management allows individuals to identify and eliminate time-wasting activities or unnecessary distractions Individuals can work more efficiently and effectively by organising tasks and streamlining processes. Prioritising tasks, setting deadlines, and managing resources optimally contribute to improved efficiency in completing tasks and achieving desired outcomes.

7) Accountability and discipline: Effective Time Management cultivates a sense of accountability and discipline. By setting deadlines and creating schedules, individuals hold themselves responsible for completing tasks within the allocated time frames. This accountability fosters discipline, commitment, and a proactive approach to managing responsibilities and meeting deadlines.

8) Improved quality of life: Time Management enables individuals to balance their various responsibilities and commitments, resulting in an improved quality of life. Individuals can dedicate time to their passions, hobbies, relationships, and self-care by effectively managing time. This balance leads to greater satisfaction, fulfilment, and overall happiness.

Steps of Time Management

Step 1: List down your tasks

Every time management plan starts with the fundamental step of listing down all the tasks that need your attention. While doing this, have a clear idea of what you'd like to achieve from your daily and weekly schedule.

If you have a complex task, you can use project management tools such as a work breakdown structure (WBS) to help you out. The tool takes into account project costs, deliverables, and team coordination while breaking down large projects into manageable tasks. This way, you can break and divide your complex tasks into smaller tasks among your team members. With WBS, teams can work in tandem, ensure their project is within budget, and identify milestones.

Step 2: Prioritize tasks

Not all tasks share the exact due dates or difficulty levels. That's why it's important to prioritize tasks according to their urgency or complexity levels. The Eisenhower Matrix is a framework you can follow while prioritizing tasks to help distinguish important tasks from unimportant ones.

According to the matrix, you can define activities into four categories:

	Urgent Task	Non Urgent Task
Important	**Do It Now Tasks with clear deadlines and consequences**	**Schedule It Tasks without a set deadline but will help you achieve your overall goals.**
Not Important	**Delegate It Tasks that don't necessarily require your specific skills or intervention**	**Delete It Distractions that only make you feel good in the short term.**

Step 3: Schedule tasks

To create a daily or weekly schedule that you're most likely to follow, set a **time limit** for every task on your list.

When you finish a task under a specific time duration, even the most unpleasant one becomes easier to do. So scheduling tasks into time slots will help you stay organized, efficient, and focussed on your work – without getting overwhelmed by your long to-do lists.

Additionally, take note of your productive hours. For instance, some people are most productive in the morning while others work better post-noon. If you too have a specific window, schedule important tasks in those hours to get them done faster.

Step 4: Schedule discretionary time

Discretionary time refers to the **free time** that's not assigned to any task. It includes the planned discretionary time and time gaps in your planner.

For example, if your meeting ends an hour earlier than predicted, you have a discretionary time of one hour. You can either schedule this extra time to complete your tasks or use it to take a break, meditate, review your schedule, check emails, etc.

But always remember, unexpected events are bound to happen. Setting aside some free time will prepare you for the unanticipated task.

Step 5: Note your distractions

Distractions can keep you from giving your best at work. They can be small habits that go unnoticed, like frequently checking notifications or social media, procrastinating, etc.

As a result, it's important to anticipate and list your distractions, including unavoidable personal commitments, while you schedule your project task.

This way, you can create an efficient time management plan around these commitments and mindfully eliminate your distractions.

Step 6: Invest in time management tools

With the right tools, you can check your progress on a project task without manually tracking time, helping you focus fully on work.

Principles of Time Management

1) Set clear goals

Setting clear goals is fundamental to effective Time Management and personal productivity. It involves defining specific, achievable objectives that guide your actions and help you focus on what truly matters. Here is an in-depth look at the importance and benefits of setting clear goals:

> **a) Direction and purpose:** Clear goals provide advice and sense in your personal and professional life. They serve as a roadmap, helping you understand where you are headed and why. Without clear goals, you might feel aimless and lack motivation.

> **b) Motivation and focus:** Goals give you a reason to work diligently. You are more motivated to act when you set clear, meaningful objectives. These goals constantly remind you what you are working towards, helping you stay focused on your priorities.

> **c) Measurability:** Well-defined goals are measurable. They allow you to track your progress and evaluate your performance. This measurement helps you understand whether you are on the right track or need adjustments.

> **d) Practical planning:** Once you have clear goals, you can plan your tasks and activities more effectively. You can break down your goals into smaller, actionable steps, making managing your time and resources easier.

> **e) Priority setting:** Clear goals help you prioritise your tasks and responsibilities. When you know what's most important, you can allocate your time and energy accordingly. This prevents you from getting caught up in less critical tasks and lets you focus on what matters most.

2) Plan effectively

Planning effectively is a crucial Time Management principle involving organising your tasks and activities to maximise productivity and efficiency. It is the bridge that connects your goals to actionable steps. Here is a comprehensive exploration of why planning effectively is so crucial:

a) Clarity and focus: Effective planning brings clarity to your day. It helps you identify your most important tasks and goals, allowing you to concentrate your efforts on what truly matters. This focus minimises distractions and ensures that your time is well-spent.

b) Productivity enhancement: With a well-thought-out plan, you can manage your time efficiently. You can allocate specific time blocks to different tasks, making it easier to tackle them without feeling overwhelmed. This enhances your overall productivity.

c) Task prioritisation: Planning involves ranking tasks based on their importance and urgency. You can employ techniques like the Eisenhower Matrix or the ABCD method to determine which tasks need immediate attention and which can wait. This prioritisation allows you to save time on less critical activities.

d) Time allocation: Effective planning involves allocating time to specific tasks or projects. This allows you to estimate how long each task will take and prevents overcommitting. You will have a realistic schedule that helps you manage your time more effectively.

e) Reduced stress: Knowing what you need to do and when to do it reduces the stress and anxiety associated with uncertainty. A well-structured plan provides control over your day, reducing the likelihood of feeling overwhelmed.

3) Prioritise tasks

Prioritising tasks is a critical component of effective Time Management. It involves determining the order in which you should tackle your responsibilities based on their importance and urgency. This principle is vital because it ensures you direct your time, energy, and focus toward tasks with the most significant impact. Here is a comprehensive exploration of the significance of prioritising tasks:

a) Efficient resource allocation: Prioritisation helps you allocate your limited resources—time, energy, and attention. By identifying high-priority tasks, you ensure that your most valuable resources are invested where they will yield the most significant returns.

b) Focus on key objectives: When prioritising tasks, you focus on your primary goals. This prevents you from getting side-tracked by less important activities that can drain your productivity.

c) Stress reduction: Prioritisation reduces stress by clarifying what needs to be done first. You are less likely to feel overwhelmed when you have a clear order of tasks. Addressing high-priority items promptly also minimises the pressure of looming deadlines.

d) Improved decision-making: Prioritisation requires you to decide which tasks are most important. This decision-making process enhances your critical thinking skills and helps you become a more effective problem solver.

e) Prioritisation: When you prioritise effectively, you create a roadmap for managing your time. You can allocate specific time slots to high-priority tasks and reduce the risk of procrastination or time wasted on low-value activities.

f) Goal achievement: Prioritising tasks aligns your actions with your goals. It ensures that you make consistent progress toward your long-term objectives. Over time, this approach has led to significant accomplishments.

4) Avoid multitasking

Avoiding multitasking is a fundamental principle of effective Time Management and productivity. It entails focusing on one task at a time rather than attempting to juggle multiple tasks simultaneously.

While multitasking may seem like a way to get more done, it often leads to decreased efficiency and lower-quality work. Following are the significance of avoiding multitasking:

a) Enhanced concentration: When you concentrate on a single task, you can dedicate your full attention and mental resources. This heightened focus allows you to understand the task deeply, make fewer mistakes and produce higher-quality results.

b) Reduced mental fatigue: Constantly switching between tasks can be mentally exhausting. Avoiding multitasking helps preserve your mental energy, preventing burnout and improving your overall well-being.

c) Improved efficiency: Focusing on one task at a time often results in faster completion. This is because you are not wasting time and cognitive resources on the mental gymnastics required to switch between tasks.

d) Better Time Management: Multitasking can create the illusion of productivity but often leads to unfinished or poorly executed tasks. By avoiding multitasking, you can better manage your time and ensure that tasks are completed promptly.

e) Enhanced problem-solving: Many tasks require problem-solving and critical thinking. Concentrating on one charge enables you to approach problems more effectively and develop innovative solutions.

5) Learn to say no

"Learn to say no" is a crucial principle of Time Management and personal effectiveness. It involves setting boundaries and assertively declining requests, tasks, or commitments when they do not align with your priorities or capacity. Following is an exploration of the significance and benefits of learning to say no:

a) Protecting your Time: Your time is a finite and valuable resource. Learning to say no helps you protect your time and prevent over commitment. By declining tasks or activities that are not in line with your goals, your free up time for what truly matters.

b) Maintaining priorities: Saying no allows you to maintain focus on your most important tasks and objectives. It ensures that you allocate your time and energy to activities that align with your values and goals.

c) Reducing stress: Overcommitting can lead to stress and burnout. By saying no when necessary, you reduce the pressure of excessive responsibilities and create a more manageable workload.

d) Enhancing quality: When you say no to additional tasks or commitments, you can allocate more time and attention to your existing responsibilities. This often results in higher-quality work and better outcomes.

e) Empowering yourself: Learning to say no is empowering. It reinforces your ability to make intentional choices about how you spend your time and resources, rather than being driven by external demands.

6) Eliminate time wasters

Eliminating time wasters is a crucial Time Management principle that involves identifying and minimising activities, habits, or distractions that consume your valuable time without contributing to your goals or well-being. Effectively managing your time depends on your ability to recognise and eliminate these productivity-draining elements. Following is a comprehensive exploration of the significance and benefits of eliminating time wasters:

a) Increased productivity: Eliminating time wasters allows you to channel your energy and efforts toward productive tasks. This, in turn, enhances your overall productivity and efficiency.

b) Enhanced focus: Time wasters often fragment your attention, making it difficult to concentrate on important tasks. Eliminating them helps you maintain better focus and concentration.

c) Reduced stress: Time wasters can lead to stress and anxiety, especially when they cause you to fall behind on essential tasks or deadlines. Removing them from your routine can reduce stress levels.

d) Time for important activities: By eliminating unproductive activities, you create more time for activities that align with your goals, priorities, and values. This allows you to invest your time in things that truly matter.

e) Improved decision-making: Recognising and eliminating time wasters encourages a habit of better decision-making. You become more discerning in how you allocate your time and resources.

Time Wasters

Time wasters are activities or tasks that drain our time without returning positive/valuable results.

It's extremely easy to waste several minutes throughout the day with small talks with colleagues, scrolling through social media, navigating the internet, and getting off track gets easy.

The most common time wasters at work

1. **Meetings**

2. **Multitasking**

3. **Doing other people's work**

4. **Online distractions**

5. **Emails**

6. **Interruptions (i.e. notifications)**

7. **Bulky to-do lists**

8. **Disorganization**

9. **Postponing harder tasks**

10. **Excessive breaks**

1. **Meetings**

Avoid unnecessary meetings, always. Instead of just popping into a meeting and spending hours there, try to structure it ahead of time and get all the relevant discussion points. Also, set time limits for the meetings, don't let them slip away, and make them shorter. If everyone has already prepared their talking points, you won't need super long meetings to get to the point.

Additionally, try to stay on topic as much as possible. It's easy to start dissipating and start talking about personal matters and other things that are not relevant to the meeting itself.

2. Multitasking

We sometimes think that multitasking and/or content switching are timesavers, but most of the time it just doesn't allow us to commit to each project fully. Jumping from task to task won't save you in the long run.

It's proven that only a small percentage of people can multitask effectively because it can make you make mistakes, compromise the quality of your work, and inhibit your creativity.

3. Doing other people's work

If you're a team manager, this tip is for you. Don't take all the responsibility and work on your shoulders when you have a team. Delegate tasks and get things done. Even though it can be difficult sometimes because you're so confident in your work letting go and passing the tasks to someone else can be hard.

However, you have a team for a reason. Set goals for them, communicate openly, allow them to grow, provide constructive feedback, and delegate work.

4. Online distractions

We believe that this is probably one of the top reasons why we get so distracted and waste time, especially if we work digitally. The two most common online distractions are:

- **Social media:** Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, you name it. If you sneak peek at social media during your work time, it's not a big deal. However, if you frequently look at it and spend too much time on it, that kills both time and productivity.

- **Internet browsing:** Whether it's shopping for a piece of clothing, looking for a place to go on your next holiday, or just checking newsletters, try not to spend hours doing it. Use your break time to do this.

5. Emails

Our reliance on emails to communicate at work means that we regularly check them throughout the day, making us waste our time. It's probably one of the biggest time-wasting activities you can do on your job. So, if you're looking for a time management hack to remain productive, you must limit the amount of time that you spend checking your emails.

6. Interruptions

It's practically inevitable, especially if you're working at the office. From email notifications, calls, text messages, and co-workers stopping by to ask a question. While these interruptions may seem harmless, they can distract you from the tasks that were originally on your to-do list and make it challenging to refocus repeatedly.

Consider time blocking a specific period during your workday that you can use to focus without interruptions. You can put up an away message on your email or turn off your phone for no disturbances.

7. Disorganization

We've all been there. Have you ever struggled to find a super important document or file before a meeting, or just to send it over to a colleague?

The point is, that not having your work organized it's a major time waster. Besides, it's super stressful and frustrating looking for something essential and not finding it.

Try to organize your computer and workspace by setting up an organizational system that works for you and the people around you, declutter workstations, and keep a schedule or a checklist. It will make your life a lot easier.

8. Bulky to-do lists

To-do lists can be your best friend or worst enemy. Smart prioritization is essential to be more productive and successful in your workday.

For your to-do list to be effective, you need to keep it short, usually around 3 of your most important tasks per day. So, look at your tasks and mark what's important for that day.

This way you can for sure stay more focused on what matters, not feel overwhelmed and you can more easily be productive during the daytime.

9. Postponing harder tasks

There are just some tasks that we don't feel motivated enough to get done. We end up doing everything else and keep postponing that one task, but sadly that won't make it go away.

So, instead of letting that hang over at the back of your head, just avoid wasting time and go for it. We have a tip for you, do it in the morning.

10. Excessive breaks

It's necessary from now and then to get the mind and the eyes off the computer screen during work. It'll allow you to re-establish focus and motivation, as well as reduce stress.

Time Management Strategies

If you're looking to take control of your time, here are six tips and strategies to get you started:

1. Conduct a time audit.

Start by assessing where you actually spend your time. Create a visual map of the approximate hours you spend on work, school, housework and chores, commuting, social media, and leisure activities. Then, you can drill in on school or work, dividing your previous week into days, then hours. *How much time did it take to finish that paper? Did a work project take longer because you were scrolling on your phone?*

Set goals based on this outcome. Planning ahead and setting time limits on your tasks and priorities can free up time for what's most important to you, like spending more time with friends and family.

Start by dedicating a half hour every Sunday to intentionally planning your week ahead and setting daily goals.

2. Use the Eisenhower Matrix to set your priorities.

The Eisenhower Matrix is a popular tool that helps you distinguish between tasks that are **important, not important, urgent**, and **not urgent**. The quadrant has four boxes in which you can split your tasks to prioritize what you should focus on first. They also correspond with the 4 D's of execution: **do, defer, delegate,** and **delete**.

- Quadrant 1: **Important and urgent.** Do these tasks first. These are the priorities that are most relevant to your goals.

- Quadrant 2: **Important but not urgent.** Defer these for later in your schedule.

- Quadrant 3: **Urgent but not important.** Delegate these to others, if possible, especially if they do not contribute to your long-term goals.

- Quadrant 4: **Not important and not urgent.** Delete these tasks, or do them when you have free time because they are distractions from your priorities.

For an even simpler approach, create a task list and mark each item as urgent or important. Often, we prioritize urgent tasks instead of important ones—such as tasks that may be creative, important, and fulfilling but do not have a deadline—so identifying and labeling them can be a helpful step toward accomplishing your personal and professional goals.

3. Employ methods to "chunk" your time.

Once you have a better idea of what your priorities are, setting limits can be an excellent time management tool. There are several options for chunking your time into digestible pieces.

Try the **Pomodoro method**. This technique was developed in the late 1980s by Francesco Cirillo, a university student who was overwhelmed by studying and assignments. The Pomodoro method requires using a timer to break down your work into 25-minute intervals, separated by 5 minutes of break time. After four pomodoros, you may take a longer 15-30 minute break. Pomodoro ("tomato" in Italian) promotes concentration and relieves mental fatigue, which is especially useful for open-ended work like conducting research, studying for an exam, or finishing a consulting project.

4. Focus on one thing at a time.

For most of us, multitasking is generally less efficient than focusing on one task at a time. In fact, one study found that only 2.5 percent of people are able to multitask effectively. Doing too many things at once can impact your cognitive ability, making you feel unproductive or dissatisfied with your progress. Arranging your time so that you complete one task before starting another can boost your confidence.

Further, it may be helpful to compartmentalize tasks. If you are a writer, for example, you might dedicate Monday to research, Tuesday through Thursday to writing, and Friday to editing.

5. Give yourself a reward.

Rewards can be a great source of motivation for adopting good time management habits. For each important task you accomplish, you can give yourself a little treat. It doesn't need to be extravagant or expensive. Here are some simple ways to motivate yourself:

- Taking a break to enjoy your favorite snack

- Going for a short walk outside

- Call a friend or family member

- Meditate for five minutes

- Listen to a podcast episode or a chapter of an audiobook

For bigger rewards, you can indulge in activities like reading a book in the bath, planning a night out with friends, or booking a getaway. Exciting rewards can help you push through an especially tough project or work period.

6. Use apps to block out distractions.

Sometimes, rewards and good intentions are not enough to keep us focused. An app or browser extension can help you minimize distractions by blocking you from using social media or touching your phone. Here are some apps and extensions you can try:

- Forest is an app that helps you stay focused and off your phone. The company partners with an organization called Trees for the Future to plant trees when you spend virtual coins earned in Forest.

- StayFocused is a browser extension that prevents you from using time-wasting websites like Reddit, Twitter, Wikipedia, Instagram, and more. It's highly configurable, so you can customize it to your specific distractions.

- Freedom is a tool that can block both websites and apps on all of your devices, simultaneously. Take advantage of their free trial to know if it's right for you.

SMART Goals

Simply put, SMART goals are specific, measurable and actionable. By using a series of five benchmarks that comprise the SMART method, you'll be able to create concise goals and action steps that will keep you on track. How can specific goals make a difference? Consider this example of a vague goal, and how this same goal could be expressed after using the SMART Method:

Vague goal: I want to help my department stay on budget this year.

SMART goal: *Each month, I will distribute a budget report that shows our department's current expenses in comparison to our allotted annual budget and I will highlight areas where we are overspending. Based on our current spending, I will offer suggestions on how to cut expenses so that we are back within budget.* Your SMART goal is now something measurable and actionable with enough specifics to help you achieve real results. Keep reading to see exactly how we went from a vague goal to a SMART goal.

Setting SMART goals using the SMART method

Let's take a closer look at the five components of creating a SMART goal.

1. Make your goal SPECIFIC

The first step in creating a SMART goal is to make it specific. Consider your goal in quantifiable terms by asking yourself the following questions: What do I want to accomplish?

2. Make your goal MEASURABLE

This step in the SMART process prompts you to apply methods of measuring your progress toward achieving your goal. Being measurable also takes into account any actions you would implement to help you further your progress toward your goal. For instance, this may take the form of tracking the time it takes you to complete an action or meet a milestone.**Applying SMART "Measurable" criteria:** *"I will distribute a budget report that shows our department's current expenses in comparison to our allotted annual budget."*

3. Make your goal ACHIEVABLE

This aspect of the SMART strategy relates to your goal being achievable. Do you have the resources and time needed to achieve the goal? This may include gathering necessary data, asking team members for help and learning new skills. You're more likely to be successful in your goal once it is specific, measurable and deemed achievable. **Applying SMART "Achievable" criteria:** *"I will distribute a budget report that shows our department's current expenses in comparison to our allotted annual budget and I will highlight areas where we are overspending."*

4. Make your goal RELEVANT

A relevant goal will directly contribute to successful results. Keep in mind that every action you take should move you closer to your goal. In our example, a relevant goal will directly reduce expenses. **Applying SMART "Relevant" criteria:** *"I will distribute a budget report that shows our department's current expenses in comparison to our allotted annual budget and I will highlight areas where we are overspending. Based on our current spending, I will offer suggestions on how to cut expenses so that we are back within budget."*

5. Make your goal TIME-BASED

A time-based goal has a specific time deadline. You'll want to determine if your goal is a short-term or long-term goal (or a combination of both). From there, you can determine a timeline and set a schedule to meet deadlines and accomplish your objective. Your timeline should also be realistic and allow you plenty of opportunities to make adjustments to your goal regarding its relevance, specificity and achievability. Consider the final step in the SMART process in the following example. **Applying SMART "Time-based" criteria:** *"Each month this year, I will distribute a budget report that shows our department's current expenses in comparison to our allotted annual budget and I will highlight areas where we are overspending. Based on our current spending, I will offer suggestions on how to cut expenses so that we are back within budget."* This goal now fits all the criteria of a SMART goal because it shows how specific the objective is, outlines a way to measure progress, is achievable and relevant to the desired outcome, and sets up a timeline for each milestone.

Organizing and Planning of Time Management

Role of Planning in Time Management

A time management plan is a schedule you can create to help you manage your time better to accomplish your daily goals. Plans are essential to customizing it for your lifestyle, including your job and other daily responsibilities. For example, if you have children, when you're creating a plan for your workday, you may find it helpful to include time for school pickup. Creating a schedule fit for your lifestyle is more helpful than using a general schedule because it may not relate to your needs. For example, if a generic plan includes beginning your day early in the morning and you're a night person, this may not be sustainable for you. The goal of planning your time is to help reduce your stress and increase your productivity and complete your daily goals. Here are a few areas you can use time management to create a positive impact on your life:

Time Management plays an essential role in corporates and helps employees to finish off assignments on time. Doing the right thing at the right time is called Time Management.

Organizing & Planning of time management

Here are six steps to create and implement an effective plan to help with your time management skills:

1. Review how long it takes to complete tasks

Before you can accurately schedule your tasks, it's essential to understand how long they take to ensure you're organizing your time correctly. Conduct a time audit on yourself, tracking how long each task takes you to complete each day. Spend about one week working on different tasks and time yourself finishing all work items. You can use a time-tracking app or a timer to log your results daily. Use the log as a reference when building a schedule to increase your accuracy in estimating the length of various items. Additionally, it's beneficial to separate larger tasks into smaller, manageable goals. Working on a significant project with several elements, completing the project in small pieces can help increase your productivity and work quality. Create separate deadlines for the small goals to ensure you finish the entire project by its deadlines.

2. Make a list of all upcoming tasks

At the start of each week, write all the tasks you're required to finish. Listing your duties can help you visualize all upcoming work components to better organize and fit them into your schedule. Consider any recurring tasks you complete each week and review your emails to remind yourself of approaching deadlines. Seeing these tasks in front of you can help you understand your availability and which assignments to prioritize.

3. Set time limits

Use your current to-do list to build a clear schedule of business to complete within the next week. Your time audit can help you estimate how much time to budget for each task. Setting time limits ensures you spend enough time on each assignment, allowing enough flexibility to move on to the next item or to take a break. It's helpful to continue using a timer to remain aware of how well you're staying within your time limit, helping you stay on schedule and complete assignments on time.

4. Determine which goals to achieve for the day

Before each day, reflect on which goals are logical to complete that day. Remind yourself of your goals throughout the workday to focus on those tasks, increasing the likelihood of achieving them. As you build your schedule, record at least three assignments you hope to accomplish each day and manage your time around them. Scheduling your time around your priority tasks helps ensure you achieve these goals, even if other unexpected work demands occur throughout the day.

5. Focus on one task at a time

Block out time each day to allow yourself to work solely on one assignment at a time. Focusing on a single task increases your focus and provides you time to complete quality work faster. Consider planning to work on a priority project for one to two hours a day and limit distractions, such as putting your phone away, turning off notifications and working in a quieter area, if possible. Indicate on your work calendar you plan to use the blocked-out time to complete a specific task. For example, you might schedule 1 pm through 3 pm as your focus time and include it on your calendar.

6. Plan for unexpected occurrences

As you build your time management plan, account for any unexpected occurrences you may encounter. Anticipating unexpected situations can include instances such as meetings, questions from co-workers or assignments taking longer to complete than expected. Plan for unanticipated occurrences by budgeting more time to complete specific tasks. If you don't use the entire time block, use the extra time to start early on your next to-do list item or take a break.

The four Ds of time management

Here are the four Ds of time management to help you select and prioritize tasks:

1. Do

The first D is "do," and it stands for completing tasks that only take a few minutes to finish. This strategy is a great way to complete small chores or tasks. Completing small tasks ensures you complete them before they can become a large inconvenience.

2. Defer

This means you can postpone tasks you don't need to complete immediately. This doesn't apply to small tasks, which fall under "do." It applies to tasks that can take up a large part of your time. Abandoning your schedule to attend to new tasks can affect your focus and productivity. In contrast, following your schedule and prioritizing tasks based on their due date can have better results.

3. Delegate

Delegating involves sharing tasks with others if they are too many for you to complete in time. This works best with tasks that anyone can do effectively. You can also delegate tasks you feel you aren't qualified to handle or that someone can handle better than you.

4. Delete

Delete involves removing unimportant tasks from your schedule to create time for relevant ones. First, go through your schedule and reflect on the importance of each item. Then, remove any item you know doesn't add significant value, like needless meetings or calls. Once you remove the unimportant task from your schedule, you can use the space in your schedule for more relevant tasks.

ToDo List

The definition is a simple one. ***It's a list of tasks you need to complete or things that you want to do.***

Most typically, they're organised in order of priority. Traditionally, they're written on a piece of paper or post it notes and act as a memory aid. As technology has evolved we have been able to create a todo lists with excel spreadsheets, word documents, email lists, todo list apps, Microsoft to do and google to do list to name a few. You can use a to do list in your home and personal life, or in the workplace.

Having a list of everything you need to do written down in one place means you shouldn't forget anything important. By prioritising the tasks in the list you plan the order in which you're going to do them and can quickly see what needs your immediate attention and what tasks you can leave until a little later.

The Benefits of Using a To Do List

One of the most important reasons you should use a to do list is that it will help you stay organised. When you write all your tasks in a list, they seem more manageable. When you've got a clear outline of the tasks you've got to do and those you've completed, it helps you stay focused. While freeing up space in your mind for other more creative tasks.

When you complete a task, you can cross it off your list. This gives you a sense of progress and achievement, something you'll lack if you're always rushing from one task to the next. If you feel a sense of achievement, it spurs you on and motivates you to keep moving forward.

But that's not the only benefit of a to do list. Here are a few more:

1. **Improves your memory**: A to do list acts as an external memory aid. It's only possible to hold a few pieces of information at one time. Keep a to do list and you'll be able to keep track of everything, rather than just a few of the tasks you need to do. Your to do list will also reinforce the information, which makes it less likely you're going to forget something.
2. **Increases productivity**: A to do list allows you to prioritize the tasks that are more important. This means you don't waste time on tasks that don't require your

immediate attention. Your list will help you stay focused on the tasks that are the most important.

3. **Helps with motivation**: To do lists are a great motivational tool because you can use them to clarify your goals. You can divide your long-term goal into smaller, more achievable short-term goals and as you tick each one off your list, your confidence will increase.

Scheduling Task

A schedule is a plan that lists down your activities to help you prioritize your time and achieve your goals. In a business context, a schedule outlines an employee's work days and times. It includes information like working hours and shifts, employee names, and duties or responsibilities for that period.

A work schedule can be a physical document or digital document, or a scheduling app. Every business needs work schedules to manage time and human resources, whether your workforce is full-time, seasonal, or freelance.

Importance of Scheduling in Time Management

1. **Better Work-Life Balance**

Activities like medical appointments, meal planning, family time, and sleep are just as important as our jobs and businesses. Scheduled tasks allow us to plan our lives better, so work priorities don't interfere with personal responsibilities and vice versa.

2. **Managing Workload**

Scheduling also helps us to take on tasks that we can handle effectively. Otherwise, we may end up with too much on our plates, which leads to increased stress and dissatisfaction.

3. **Meeting Deadlines**

Time is money when delivering to your clients and maintaining good customer relationships. Scheduled tasks can improve efficiency if you consistently miss deadlines or lose leads.

4. **Steady Progress Towards Your Goals**

You can schedule days, weeks, hours, and even years to set short-term and long-term goals. A good schedule also accommodates contingencies to keep you on track with your targets.

5. **Accountability**

Work schedules ensure that everyone on the team receives the correct tasks and time allocation to level the playing field. Transparent work schedules also reassure the team that there's no favoritism in shift or task allocation.

6. **Happier Teams**

A good schedule encourages collaboration since operations run like clockwork, and every team member plays their part. It also opens communication so teams can adjust their schedules without severely impacting their productivity.

What is timeboxing

Timeboxing simply means that you open your calendar and enter a block of time that you'll spend on a certain task in the future.

Instead of working on the task until it's done, **you proactively decide how much time you'll spend** on it and when (and even where).

Timeboxing means setting a fixed amount of time in your calendar for a particular task.

It's like scheduling a meeting in your calendar. You select the day, start and finish hours, define the desired outcome, and reserve time in your calendar.

And once you reserve a box of time, **you should treat it like a scheduled meeting** – no rapid rescheduling, no distractions when you work on the timeboxed task, etc.

For bigger tasks you can reserve several blocks of time in advance. With such an approach, you have complete control over your schedule and priorities.

What are the main benefits of timeboxing?

There are many different benefits if you use the timeboxing time management technique. **Here are the main benefits:**

- You can more easily "force yourself" to start working on the tasks you procrastinated on or you know they're hard for you to be doing.

- You can more easily set strict limits on how much time you'll spend on a specific task and when you will spend it, and so you can organize yourself much better.

- You can boost your productivity and focus greatly if you make sure that nobody interrupts you or distracts you while you're working on your task in the boxed time for it.

- It's a great way to deal with perfectionism and any over-processing and over-doing of tasks.

- You can use timeboxing to plan the most important things right in the morning, and it can help you to plan a much better working rhythm in general.

With a timeboxing approach, **you can avoid late delivery, low quality, and over-doing and over-processing tasks.** As you know, time flies, and with timeboxing you can have really good control over it, making sure that it doesn't fly away uncontrollably.

Prioritizing Effectively in Time Management

Prioritizing effectively in time management are more popular themes than ever before and it's really no surprise. We live in a distracted world, with text messages, work chats, and smart device notifications all vying for attention as we attempt to get real, focused work done. it has also given rise to new time management strategies and techniques.

Prioritization Strategies:

1. **Use lists**

2. **Do the worst thing first**

3. **The Most Important Task Methodology (MIT)**

4. **The Eisenhower Decision Matrix (Urgent-Important Matrix)**

5. **The Ivy Lee Method**

6. **The 1-3-5 Rule**

7. **The ABCDE Method**

8. **Eat That Frog**

9. **Warren Buffet's 2-List Strategy (25-5 Rule)**

Time Management Strategies:

1. **The Pomodoro Technique**

2. **Time Blocking**

3. **The Rapid Planning Method (RPM)**

4. **The One-Minute Rule**

5. **Time Tracking**

6. **Getting Things Done (GTD)**

7. **168 Hours**

Prioritization Strategies

Many of the best time management strategies fall short in one way—they do not help you prioritize your work. And, a time management strategy is only effective if it helps you get the most important work off your plate. For this reason, we find it helpful to combine a task prioritization strategy with a time management strategy.

1. First, Use Lists

This is less a prioritization strategy and more a bit of friendly advice. Without a mega list (a brain dump of all the things you need to do), you may find you forget something important. There's no one right way to keep a list, except the one that works best for you. If you're a pen and paper person, use paper. If you prefer to work online, use an online tool or app. For my own to-do lists, I use Trello, a Bullet Journal, and Google Keep. Others I know use physical notecards, Google Task reminders, a notebook, or a to-do app like Todoist.

2. Do the worst thing first

No doubt you've heard about this prioritization strategy at some point in your life. The worst thing is often the thing you spend your whole day procrastinating around doing. If
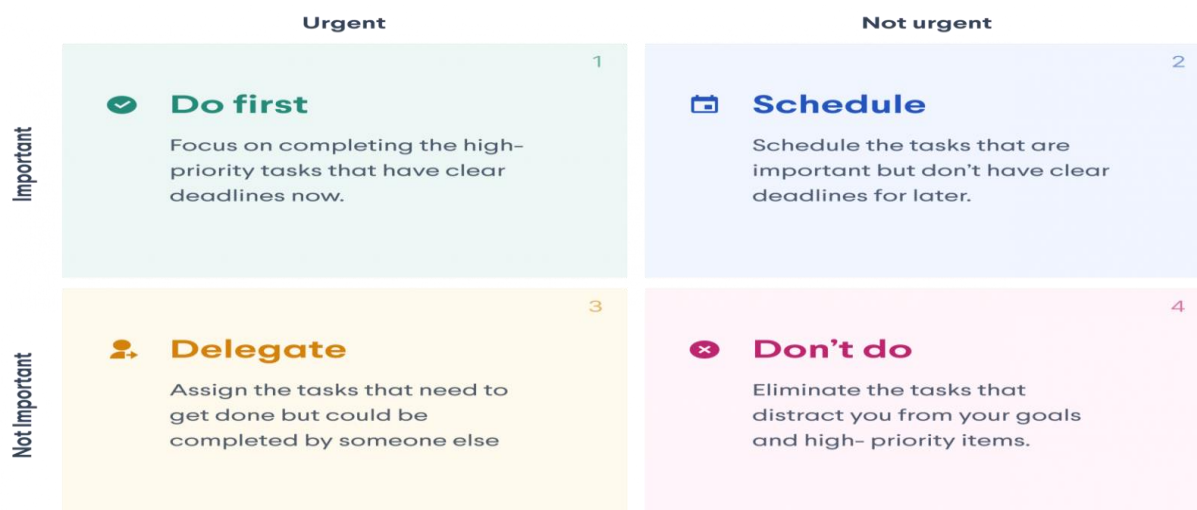
3. The Most Important Tasks Methodology (MIT)

The Most Important Tasks Methodology directs you to select one to three tasks that are essential, and then focus on those throughout the day, instead of a monstrous to-do list. The basic idea is that you don't do anything outside of those tasks until they're completed. While I certainly recommend keeping a general to-do list, I'd make sure to keep this one separate. Remember, that general to-do list is your brain dump so that you can focus on the Most Important Tasks!
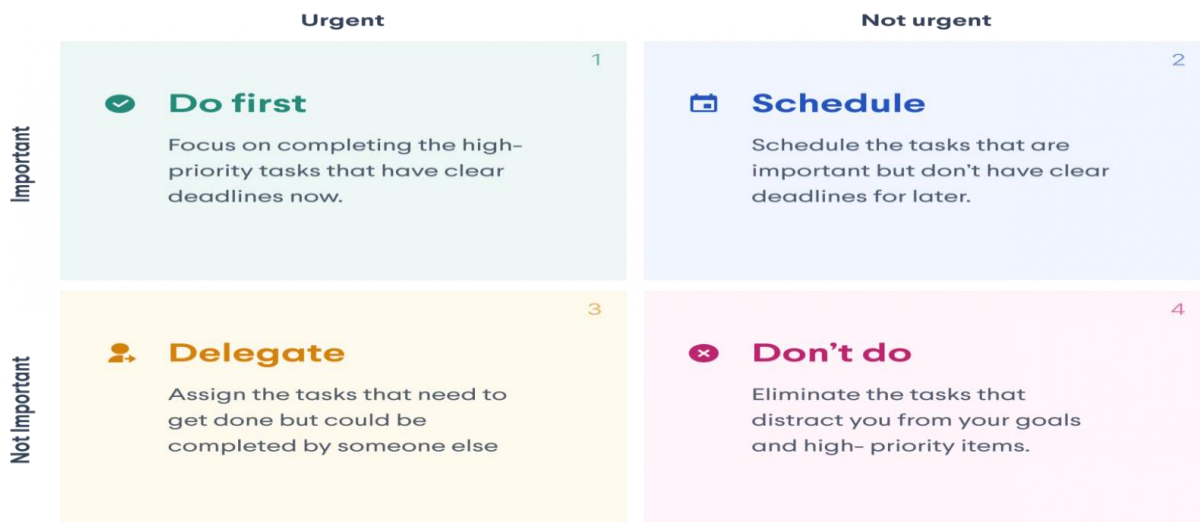
Kauffman also suggests taking advantage of "Parkinson's Law" by giving yourself an artificial deadline. For example, "I want to get all of my MITs done by 11 a.m.". Of course, make sure that the "deadline" is realistic. No sense in setting yourself up for failure.

The MIT prioritization strategy will help you focus and achieve results quickly.

4. The Eisenhower Decision Matrix (AKA: The Urgent-Important Matrix)

The Eisenhower Decision Matrix is a great way to figure out which tasks are most important, especially if you have a long list and don't know where to start. As the name suggests, the Eisenhower Decision Matrix is the brainchild of former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower. It's designed to help you determine the urgency of tasks by sorting them by Importance and Urgency. If you ever had to do a SWOT Analysis in school, this prioritization strategy will look familiar.

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	**✔ Do first** (1) Focus on completing the high-priority tasks that have clear deadlines now.	**▦ Schedule** (2) Schedule the tasks that are important but don't have clear deadlines for later.
Not Important	**👤 Delegate** (3) Assign the tasks that need to get done but could be completed by someone else	**✖ Don't do** (4) Eliminate the tasks that distract you from your goals and high– priority items.

It begins with drawing a cross on the page, and labeling that cross with four headings: important, less important, urgent, and less urgent. The placement of these labels does matter. Take a look at the diagram above to create your own Urgent-Important Matrix.

Each of the four quadrants also has a different name. The first quadrant is known as the "do first" sector with tasks that need to be done today, or tomorrow at the latest. When you work on these tasks it's a good idea to use a timer to help you focus.

The second quadrant is called the "schedule" sector as the tasks in it are important but less urgent. In this sector, it's a good idea to list the things you need to put in your calendar or schedule.

The third quadrant is the "delegate" sector and it includes all of the things that you can delegate because they are still urgent but less important. If you do delegate tasks it's a good idea to keep track of them in some fashion (perhaps calendar reminders?) so that you can check back in on their progress later.

And finally, the fourth quadrant is known as the "don't do" quadrant as it's there to help you eliminate the things you really don't need to do. For example, checking social media throughout the day, aimlessly browsing the web, and so on. The things that go in this quadrant are often the things that prevent you from dealing with the tasks in the other quadrant.

The nice thing about this strategy is that it will give you a birds-eye-view of what's on your plate, and some actionable methods for dealing with it. To help yourself out, try keeping the number of tasks in each quadrant to no more than eight.

5. The Ivy Lee Method

The Ivy Lee Method is a delightfully simple prioritization strategy with a fun story involving Ivy Lee himself, that illustrates just how effective it is. I won't spoil the story for you in the interest of time, but if you do get a chance, check it out on James Clear's website.

The gist of this strategy is that at the end of each workday you write down the six most important things that you need to accomplish by tomorrow. The catch? Only six things. No more.

Next, you prioritize those items in order of true importance. This might be a good opportunity to combine this method with the Urgent-Important Matrix, though you can of course use any method for ordering tasks by level of importance.

When you start working the next day, you work on the first task. Only when the first task is done do you move onto the second one. You work on the rest of the list in exactly the same way. If you end the day having completed all of the items on your list, you can either move on to the next day's items, or on to any other tasks you need to accomplish. Then, you rinse and repeat, setting aside time at the end of each day to write the next day's top 6 priorities.

The real benefit of this approach is its simplicity. It forces you to get to the core of what really matters, and it helps constrain you.

6. The 1-3-5 Rule

Alex Cavoulacos, founder of The Muse—a career site—is a big proponent of this prioritization strategy.

The gist of it is this: Begin each day by assuming you can only accomplish one big thing, three medium things, and five small things. Ideally, you'd create this list the night before so that you can hit the ground running. Alex recommends you tweak this "Rule" if you spend a lot of time in meetings or have other commitments. For example, maybe for you, it's the 1-2-3 Rule. Only you can know how much you can accomplish each day.

This strategy will help you focus, and give you a clear picture of what can and cannot be done if something else gets dropped in your lap. This way, you'll be able to report to your

manager and tell them which task will need to be set aside if you're to focus on the new one.

7. The ABCDE Method

The ABCDE Method is most often attributed to time management expert, Brian Tracy. However, this method is an extension of the more simplified ABC Method by Alan Lakein.

At its core, the ABCDE Method prompts you to assign a letter to each of the tasks on your plate. "A" tasks are the most important tasks—the things you must do, or there will be consequences, or that if you do, will have the greatest reward. If there is more than one "A" task on your list, use numbers to give them sub-ranks. For example, "A-1" is more important than "A-2," which is more important than "A-3," and so on. If possible, try to keep your "A" list short (one or two items are good), otherwise, you'll just end up with a regular old list!

"B" tasks are important too but they don't have the consequences and deadline that "A" tasks do. You should do these tasks only once you've completed the "A" tasks. "C" tasks are nice to do but don't have any consequences if you don't do them. Beware of these tasks as they may be the distractors! "D" tasks are the tasks that you can delegate to someone else so that you can work on the more important "A" tasks. Finally, "E" tasks are the tasks that really don't fit into the other categories. They're the ones you should remove from your list entirely.

8. Eat That Frog!

Eat That Frog is a natural follow-up to the ABCDE Method as it will help you decide on that "A" task. It's also a good mix of a prioritization strategy and a time management strategy.

Time management expert, Brian Tracey, is also credited for being the inventor of this technique. "Eat a live frog first thing in the morning and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day."

If you're prone to procrastination, have a hard time getting the most important things finished, or feel overwhelmed by your lengthy to-do list, this strategy might be right up your alley.

Here's how it works:

1. Begin each day by identifying your "frog"—the hardest or most important thing on your plate. You can only choose one frog. If you have two important frogs (tasks) eat the ugliest!

2. Eat your frog (AKA: Do it now). Don't save your frog for later or spend too much time thinking about it. Eat it now so that you don't put it off later when you're tired and struggling to concentrate.

3. Repeat this every day.

The best thing about this strategy is that it helps you get work done at the time you are most likely to be at peak productivity—the morning. Even if willpower rises and falls throughout the day, usually in the morning you are at a peak. Take advantage of it!

9. Warren Buffet's 2-list Strategy (25-5 Rule)

Many prioritization strategies are actually about choosing the "right" task to work on—usually the most important, urgent, or impactful task. Warren Buffet's 2-List Strategy (also known as the 25-5 Rule) takes this a step further by helping you determine your larger focus areas. You could use this strategy to work on day-to-day tasks, but you may find it works better for you paired with another prioritization strategy.

Here's how this big-picture prioritization strategy works:

1. Think of your top 25 career goals or top 25 tasks you want to accomplish this week. Write them down.

2. Circle the top five goals or tasks on your list. You should now have two lists. The 20 remaining goals or tasks, and the five circled goals or tasks.

3. The five you circled are the ones you should start working on now. The other 20 are the ones you should avoid working on at all costs!

This strategy works well because it helps you minimize context switching—distractedly switching between tasks—that sabotages your productivity.

Time Management Strategies

Once you have a handle on how to prioritize your work effectively, you'll want a strategy for helping you manage that work throughout the day. It's important to recognize that if you don't make a plan for getting things done, you're most likely going to be controlled by someone else's focus. Use one or more of these time management strategies in conjunction with your favorite prioritization strategy to get more productive.

1. Pomodoro Technique

Perhaps one of the best-known time management strategies, the Pomodoro Technique developed by Francesco Cirillo in the 1980s, is simple to learn and easy to implement. It can improve work and study habits, help cut down on interruptions, and improve work estimation efforts.

A pomodoro is a tomato-shaped timer. Of course, you don't need to actually buy the tomato timer; you can just use an app like HourStack, a stopwatch, or something else. A pomodoro is also the interval of time spent working. For example, each pomodoro is 25 minutes long.

The core process includes six steps:

1. Choose the task you want to work on—big, small, important, unimportant (this is not a prioritization strategy).

2. Set the pomodoro (timer) for 25 minutes.

3. Work on the task until the pomodoro (timer) rings.

4. When the pomodoro rings, put a checkmark next to the item.

5. Take a short break. If you can, get moving, grab a coffee, eating something healthy.

6. Continue the cycle. Every four pomodoros, take a longer break—something in the order of 20 or 30 minutes is good.

Eventually, the very act of setting a pomodoro will get you into that focus mode.

2. Time Blocking

Time blocking is a time management strategy that involves breaking your day up into distinct blocks of time. Within each of these blocks, you will work on a specific task. The length of each block of time is up to you, but it is best to put them on a calendar so that you can accurately track tasks against how much time you have in a day. To do this, some people use Google Calendar, others use a tool like HourStack that also includes in-built time tracking and integrations with to-do list apps.

Time blocking can help you focus and go deep on the work you need to do. It can also help to eliminate inefficient multitasking.

To start using this time management strategy, begin by making a list of all of the things you need to do. Now, prioritize that list. Next, open up your daily or weekly planner. Lastly, schedule your tasks or projects onto the planner. If you have a lot of really small tasks, you might try something called "batching." For example, instead of blocking off time to respond to each email in your inbox, dedicate a single block to replying to emails.

Some people like to work in five-minute blocks, others, in hour-long blocks, others still in four distinct blocks of time each day. The benefit of this strategy is its flexibility, as well as how easy it is to implement.

3. The Rapid Planning Method

Motivational speaker, Tony Robbins, is the designer of the Rapid Planning Method (also known as RPM).

It's a results-oriented planning system that helps you figure out and then focus on what you want. When you know what you want, or what the target is, it's easier to go after. This "knowing" gives you purpose and the drive to follow through and sets you on the path to creating a MAP (Massive Action Plan).

Tony Robbins says that RPM is actually a system of thinking and not a time management system. We decided to include it anyway as it offers you an innovative way of thinking about your to-do list.

RPM begins with three questions:

1. What is the result or outcome that you really want to achieve?

2. What is your purpose? (why do you want that result/outcome?)

3. What specific actions must you take to make it happen? (This is your MAP)

There are four steps to creating an RPM Plan:

Step 1: Begin by listing the things you want to accomplish.

Step 2: Start chunking those things you listed into groups. Perhaps there's one for work, one for personal, and one for family and friends. Divide that list further if you need to.

Step 3: Create your RPM blocks. Here's how: For each of the things you want to accomplish, create a table with three columns. The first column is a numbered list of the steps it will take to achieve your desired outcome. The second column is the result you'd like to achieve. The third column is a reminder of your purpose (your "why").

Step 4: Create a fun, empowering role or identity for each of the things you want to accomplish. For example, if you troubleshoot IT at work all day, and you'd like to accomplish setting up a server for the first time, you might call yourself a Tech Detective. You can have multiple personalities—in fact, it's encouraged!

4. The One-Minute Rule

When I was young I recall my father saying, "never touch the same paper twice." The one-minute rule isn't so different. The idea is simple: If you can complete a task in a minute or less, do it immediately. This might be responding to a quick email, requesting a refund, scheduling a task, or sending a tweet.

The strategy was coined by Gretchen Rubin, author of "The Happiness Project." She says it's a great way to keep small, nagging tasks under control, which ultimately makes her feel less overwhelmed. If you have a ton of small tasks or suffer from anxiety, this might be the strategy for you!

5. Time Tracking

While "tracking time" isn't a strategy with an elegant name, it is a technique you can use to get a sense of how long it takes you to do the things on your plate, focus for a targeted amount of time, or identify those activities that are wasting or misusing your time.

When you don't keep track of your time it's easy to feel like time is flying, especially if you operate more reactively, putting out fires and responding to others' needs.

Time tracking doesn't need to be complicated. In fact, you can start tracking your time in small increments just to get a sense of how you're doing. Maybe you do this every 15 minutes, or each hour. Do it for a few days and then see how you're stacking up. You can use a product like HourStack, or you can use pen and paper—whatever gets you actually doing it.

Once you have an idea of where your time is going you can start to think more objectively about how you want to use it moving forward. For example, if meetings are taking up a surprising number of hours, perhaps you can skip a few, or suggest an email update. You might also get a sense of the hours where you are most productive. Energy levels rise and fall throughout the day so use this to determine when you, personally, might be at your best.

Some options for time tracking tools include:

- A tool like HourStack with in-built timers on every task

- A pomodoro timer or kitchen timer

- The timer on your phone or watch

- An app that includes time tracking

Your gut instinct is not a timer, but it is a good place to get started, and a fun exercise to see how good you are at estimating how you spend your time. I suspect the reality will surprise you!

6. Getting Things Done (GTD)

Getting Things Done is a productivity and time management strategy created by David Allen, author of "Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity." It will help you eliminate chaos and give you the space to work both strategically and creatively.

As with many other time management strategies, step one is capturing all of the things that are taking up your attention or causing stress. Write them down so they're out of your head. Step two includes processing those tasks. Are they actionable? What next step should you take on them? Should they be put on hold? Put in the trash? Worked on immediately? Step three includes organizing them in the appropriate places—perhaps a weekly planner, a calendar reminder, a filing system, or several lists. Make sure you review these items frequently to keep them updated.

Now, as tasks enter your life or come in through the door you can add them to the GTD workflow: capture, clarify, organize, reflect, and engage. If a task takes no more than two minutes, do it! If it's not actionable, add it to a trash list, or a someday/maybe list. If the task does not take a single step to complete, plan the " task project." If it needs to be worked on at a later date, schedule it.

With these parameters in place, you can start working on each task, checking it off your list.

7. 168 Hours

Most of us are used to thinking about time in either 24-hour increments, or eight-hour increments. Very rarely do we plan in 168-hour slots of time—the number of hours in a week. This means, we often think we have less time than we do to accomplish things, or that we fall prey to the optimism bias) and set ourselves too many tasks to complete within 24 hours.

168 Hours is a time management strategy created by author and time management expert, Laura Vanderkam. Central to the idea is that you spend a week or two first tracking your time so that you can understand where it is going. You'll also want to identify your "core competencies"—the things you do best and that no one else could do better than you—for example, working on your relationship with your partner or kids. Once you've done these two things you can use what you have learned to build a more effective weekly schedule. It's really that simple. This is a great time management strategy to use in conjunction with something like time blocking.

The Pareto principle (the 80:20 Rule) in time management

n management theory, there is an important principle known as 80-20 rule or the Pareto principle. The idea was formulated by the Italian economist and sociologist Vilfredo Federico Pareto.

The principle states that, for many events, roughly 80 % of the effects come from 20 % of the causes. It's an uneven distribution that can be found in countless life and business situations.

Practical examples of the Pareto principle would be:

- 80 % of your sales come from 20 % of your clients.

- 80% of your profits comes from 20 % of your products or services.

- 80 % of decisions in a meeting are made in 20 % of the time.

- Fixing the top 20 % of the most reported bugs also eliminates 80 % of related errors and crashes.

- You wear 20 % of your clothes 80 % of the time and so on

The Pareto principle also has an important place in time manageme

The Pareto principle in time management states that **80 % of results will come from 20 % of your effort.** Consequently, being aware of the Pareto principle can mainly help us set the right priorities.

It can help us to focus on activities that will have the biggest impact in our business and personal lives.

What is the Eisenhower(Priority) Matrix?

The Eisenhower Matrix is a way to organize tasks by urgency and importance, so you can effectively prioritize your most important work.

Dwight D. Eisenhower—the 34th President of the United States and a five-star general during World War II—presented the idea that would later lead to the Eisenhower Matrix. In a 1954 speech, Eisenhower quoted an unnamed university president when he said, "I have two kinds of problems, the urgent and the important. The urgent are not important, and the important are never urgent."

The four quadrants of the Eisenhower Matrix

A long to-do list of tasks can feel overwhelming, but the goal of the Eisenhower Matrix is to go through these tasks one by one and separate them by quadrant. Once you can see your tasks in their designated categories, you'll be able to schedule them and accomplish your most important work.

Quadrant 1: Do

Quadrant one is the "do" quadrant, and this is where you'll place any tasks that are both urgent and important. When you see a task on your to-do list that must be done now, has clear consequences, and affects your long-term goals, place it in this quadrant.

There should be no question about which tasks fall into this quadrant, because these are the tasks that are at the front of your mind and are likely stressing you out the most.

Quadrant 2: Schedule

Quadrant two is the "schedule" quadrant, and this is where you'll place any tasks that are not urgent but are still important. Because these tasks affect your long-term goals but don't need to be done right away, you can schedule these tasks for later.

You'll tackle these tasks right after you tackle the tasks in quadrant one. You can use various time management tips to help you accomplish the tasks in this quadrant. Some helpful strategies may include the Pareto principle or the Pomodoro method.

Quadrant 3: Delegate

Quadrant three is the "delegate" quadrant, and this is where you'll place any tasks that are urgent but not important. These tasks must be completed now, but they don't affect your long-term goals.

Because you don't have a personal attachment to these tasks and they likely don't require your specific skill set to complete, you can delegate these tasks to other members of your team.

Quadrant 4: Delete

Once you've gone through your to-do list and added tasks to the first three quadrants, you'll notice that a handful of tasks are left over. The tasks left over are tasks that weren't urgent or important.

These unimportant, non-urgent distractions are simply getting in the way of you accomplishing your goals. Place these remaining items on your to-do list in the fourth quadrant, which is the "delete" quadrant.

Distractions and procrastination

Sometimes it can be difficult to get down to your studies because you have distractions to deal with, and you may find that you put off a study task. Distractions can be real (e.g. your child needs your attention), but they can also be displacement or replacement activities, or ways of procrastinating in disguise.

Some people say that they need the pressure of a tight deadline to get on with, say, writing an assignment. Ask yourself whether this way of working is really effective or whether it is disguised procrastination. You might find you produce better work under less stress.

Dealing with distractions

Set realistic goals for your study session, for example 'I'll read this section, or work for 40 minutes before I make that coffee', and aim to minimise real interruptions. Perhaps put your answer phone on and turn notifications off on our phone, or asking friends not to disturb you. Do a deal with yourself - 'Okay, I'll go to the pub with my friend tonight, but this means that I'll need to get up early on Sunday to study instead'. However, avoid taking on too many commitments - learn to politely say 'no'.

Remember that it's best to try and have short-term deadlines that you stick to for significant study activities, such as completing an assignment by the cut-off date. Try not to feel that you need to produce the perfect assignment or project and learn to prioritise your tasks.

And finally, just do it! You may find that the task doesn't take as long as you expected and you'll feel much better for getting it out of the way.

Distractions play a big role in affecting our daily productivity.

From checking social media to an unexpected chat with a colleague, we often don't realise the time we spend being distracted every day. This loss of focus interrupts workflow, creativity and productivity and, in turn, adds stress and pressure.

During the next few weeks of Covid-19 lockdown, take the time to recognise non-helpful behaviours and work on them. Creating new, more effective time management habits will allow you to take better control of your business and put you in a strong position for the future.

Here are some tricks and tips to remove everyday distractions and increase productivity.

- **Write your To-Do list the night before.** Then, when you sit down at your desk, you won't waste time trying to remember that 'thing you needed to do' the day before. Read through your list, make any necessary adjustments and get stuck in to your day!

- **Set specific times to read and respond to emails.** If you plan to spend significant time away from your email, a simple 'Out of Office' response will let people know when to expect your 'return'.

- **Set a time for social media.** If LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are part of your working life, create a social media plan each week or fortnight in advance, then schedule your posts accordingly. Set a time to review and always be aware of the distraction of mindless scrolling. That's for after work!

- **Clean out your feeds.** Our newsfeeds can easily become filled with distracting bits and pieces that waste time and don't provide value. If the posts are not relevant or doing you any good, unsubscribe.

- **Turn on 'Do Not Disturb' for your laptop/PC notifications.** This is handy to prevent random notifications popping up on your screen while you are focussed on a task or project.

- **Turn your phone on silent.** Or put it in a drawer. If you're following the Pomodoro Technique, you'll be taking a five minute break every 25 minutes, creating a perfect time to check your phone. Remember that, unless it is an emergency or important for work, there is no need to reply immediately to any calls, emails or social media comments. Do that in your set time.

- **Stay hydrated, take breaks and exercise regularly**. Maintaining good mental and physical health is incredibly important in maximising productivity – particularly during the current lockdown and restrictions we are currently experiencing. Drink water, stretch, get out for a short walk – it all adds up!

- **Learn how to say 'no'.** Saying 'yes' to everything is a sure-fire way to feel overwhelmed and stressed. If you struggle with saying 'no', plan ahead for conversations and try using scripts to make it easier.

- **Create a productive, non-distracting workspace.** This can be a challenge if you're currently working from home, (especially if you have kids home-schooling around you), but a de-cluttered, calm environment will assist your productivity, creativity and motivation.

Effective time management will have a significant impact on the daily practices and overall productivity of your business. Becoming aware of your behaviours and making simple changes to your routine and habits will help to remove distractions and foster greater focus, creativity and results. Implementing better time management strategies will help you get through the coming weeks, and also put your business in a strong position to kick-off once the current Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.