

Company Intranet Blog

Work smarter, not harder - 8 tips to help you manage your time more effectively



With the modern-day distractions we encounter all day long — from the constant ping of our e-mail inbox to instant messages — it's amazing we get anything done! These endless interruptions cost us time, contribute to poor productivity and lead to unnecessary stress.

The problem most of us face daily is feeling that there's too much work

to do and not enough time to do it. As a result, we may procrastinate or spend our time talking about how little time we have. But the truth is, we all have time. It's how we spend it that matters.

What is time management?

Time management isn't about squeezing as many tasks into your day as possible. It's about simplifying how you work, and exercising conscious control over the amount of time you spend on specific activities, to increase your effectiveness, efficiency and productivity. Planning for the future, setting goals, prioritizing tasks and monitoring where your time goes are crucial skills involved in managing your time. Learning these skills can help you better utilize your working hours, curb procrastination, and help you become a more productive employee. Conversely, failing to master these skills can lead to missed deadlines, inefficient work flow, poor work quality and higher job-related stress levels.

While you can't create more hours in your day, you can learn how to use those hours wisely by adopting and fine-tuning a few simple time-management skills. Here are 8 tips to help get you on track:

Time management tips

1. **Prioritize.** Eighty percent of your accomplishments come from 20 percent of your efforts. So think strategically: which 20 percent of your work is the most valuable—to you and to Sentry? Don't waste time perfecting every project when you could spend the time more effectively on something else.
2. **Is it urgent or important?** Learn to differentiate between the important and the urgent. What's important is not always urgent. What's urgent is not always important. The golden rule of time

management is to complete the most important tasks first. Once you're done, the day has already been a success.

3. **Recognize procrastination.** Procrastination is a time sucker, but it's not always easy to spot. Something that feels important when you're doing it (such as checking email or taking phone calls) can actually turn into a crutch for procrastinators. Remember, just because you're "doing things" doesn't mean you're "getting things done." Staying busy does not equal productivity.
4. **Write your to-do list at night.** Before you leave the office or shut down your laptop for the evening, jot down your assignments for the following day. This gives you time to think about your priorities overnight, so you can hit the ground running when you start your day. If you start working on your to-do list when you come in the next morning, you're already wasting precious time that you could be using to tackle those to-dos.
5. **Focus.** Are you multi-tasking so much that you're not getting anything done? If so, focus on just one key task at a time. Close out anything you aren't using that's taking away your attention, and devote your entire focus to the task at hand.
6. **Do a time audit.** Perform a time audit for one week, and take inventory of how you spend your time. Identify areas where you are wasting time, and make adjustments to free up time for more important tasks.
7. **Batch similar tasks together.** Categorize your work into core groups, and batch all the related tasks together so there's synergy. Different tasks demand different types of thinking, so it makes sense to allow your mind to continue to flow within its current zone rather than switching to something that requires you to re-orient.
8. **Take breaks.** Don't dismiss breaks as "wasting time." Breaks provide valuable down-time, which will enable you to think creatively and work effectively. If it's hard for you to stop working, then schedule breaks for yourself, or set an alarm as a reminder. Experts recommend at least a five minute break every hour or two. Go for a quick walk or grab a cup of coffee. And make sure to eat lunch! You won't produce top quality work if you're hungry.

To learn more and get additional time management tips, [review log on instructions](#), and login [to ADP TotalSource University](#) to view the "Time Management: Getting Out From Under the Avalanche of To-Dos" webinar that is available to all employees.