

10 Steps to Better

Many of us have heard “we all have 24 hours in a day,” when we bemoan not having enough time to get everything done. And you may know of at least one person who seems to accomplish many tasks in a day’s time. Would you like to be one of those people? Here are 10 tips to improving your time management.



Time Management



1. • Create and follow a schedule. This cannot be stressed enough. To create a successful working schedule, first write down on a paper 15- or 30-minute time slots for the hours of the day you will be awake. Then take the activities that you must do each day at specific times, such as going to work, eating, military responsibilities, etc. Allow for adequate time for these essentials, especially if you must commute.

Then figure out the activities that you want to do, but that aren't absolutely required and begin to fill in the spaces. Be sure to leave time for yourself in the schedule. Also try to only schedule 80 percent of each day. The extra 20 percent is useful in the event of emergencies or unexpected changes in your schedule.

If your schedule works, continue to follow it. If you find that it needs to be tweaked, make the necessary changes so it works according to your lifestyle. You don't need to follow your schedule 100 percent of the time. You also may want to make allowances for unexpected activities that aren't reflected in your schedule. A schedule is meant to be a framework and flexible enough so you can comfortably manage your time, but still free up enough time for you to enjoy life and work towards your goals.

2. • Make lists. Create lists of things to do and purchase. For instance, you'll want to keep a list of people to call, errands to run, and items to buy. Buy a folder for your lists and carry it with you at all times. You may find unexpected time in your schedule to make calls, for instance, but if you don't have your list handy, you may forget whom you needed or wanted to call.

3. • Use one calendar and use it daily. When an appointment is made, be sure to write it on your calendar. Check your calendar daily.

4. • Consider using a daily planner to keep your schedule handy. These are good for keeping your lists and phone book readily accessible. Accessing this frequently will help keep you on track.

5. Group similar tasks together. For instance, if you have down time in your schedule, such as waiting in a doctor's office, then try to use that time to make necessary phone calls or read or write letters/memos. Also, set aside a specific time each week in your schedule to run errands, pay bills, grocery shop, wash your car, etc.



6. Reserve 10-20 minutes each day to schedule your next day. This goes for home and work life. This will help you collect your thoughts and be ready for each new day.

7. Create a place for everything at work and at home. If you get in the habit of putting your belongings, such as your keys, in one place each day, you'll save time



8. When handling paperwork, handle each item once. If you are sorting paperwork, separate it into Immediate Action Needed, Pending, To File, To Pass On and To Read Later folders. Allocate time in your schedule to review these folders during your week. Obviously, the Immediate Action will need to be looked at right away.

The Pending folder is for items that need to be handled, but are lacking sufficient information to be completed. Look through the Pending folder at least once each day to make sure steps are being taken to complete the items. The To Pass On folder is for those items that you need to give to someone else. The To Read file is for those items that you need or want to read, but aren't timely, such as brochures, articles, etc.

9. Throw away unwanted, unneeded materials immediately. Reducing clutter improves overall time management because time is not wasted rifling through a pile of unwanted papers each time you are looking for one thing.

It is also beneficial because important paperwork will not be lost in the shuffle.



10. Be sure to include short-term and long-term goals in your daily planning. To make it simpler, break down each large goal into easy-to-accomplish steps. Keep a log of these and schedule time each week to be able to check off one step each week, if possible.

For instance,

if you want to work towards a college degree, some of the necessary steps would be:

1. Research military benefits on the Internet

- 2.** Make necessary calls to apply for your college benefits
- 3.** Gather necessary paper-work to apply for those benefits
- 4.** Apply for military benefits
- 5.** Research scholarships, grants and/or loans, if necessary
- 6.** Make any calls associated with applying for other sources of college income
- 7.** Apply for those other sources of college funding
- 8.** Research military-friendly colleges
- 9.** Pick a college
- 10.** Call for any other information needed to apply to that college
- 11.** Choose a degree program
- 12.** Sign up for college classes
- 13.** Buy your books