

PRIORITIZING YOUR DAY FOR OPTIMAL

Do you ever feel like you have too much to do and not enough time to do it? Maybe you don't know where to begin or maybe you lack the ability to prioritize what is urgent, important and



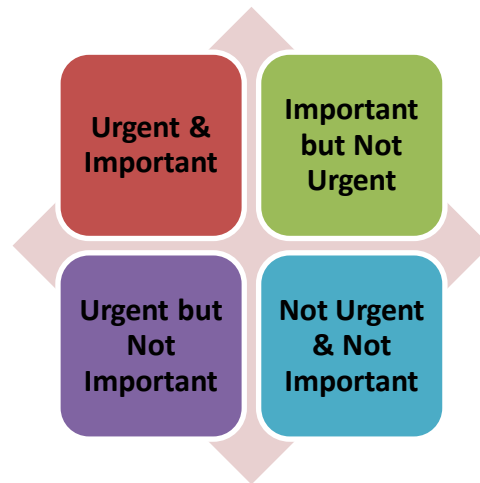
what can wait. This tip sheet is meant to help you get the ball rolling and decrease your stress while getting the most accomplished in the time you have available.

Here Are a Few Tips I Found Useful.

- 1. First Things First.** Stop and think about your personality. If you are fast paced, you may get a lot accomplished in a day but consider whether you are giving the proper attention and quality to the tasks. If you are the slow and steady type you may not have the same sense of urgency as your boss or coworkers. You may not like feeling rushed because it causes you to lose focus or miss important details. Do you have a tendency to be questioning and skeptical? This could add time in the decision making process because you don't want to hurry the process without giving it due diligence and proper thought. Are you a people person and need to build time into your day for relationships and conversation versus just completing tasks? Taking the time to reflect on your personality can help you how it impacts your ability to get things done. There isn't a right or wrong here - just an understanding of how you plan and manage your time and make decisions.
- 2. Make a List.** Write down all of the appointments and tasks you want to accomplish in the day/week. Lists are an important first step in prioritizing and managing your time. Do not neglect personal or family time – this is critical. Is going to the gym, meditation time, art time, game night, etc. important to you? If you leave these things out, you will begin to resent your life and blame your unhappiness on others when the reality is you only included “work” in your priority schedule. Don't forget time to plan, research, strategize...
- 3. Chunk Your Time** into 1-2 hour segments. Look at your calendar. Break your day into time to communicate (send emails, make phone calls); meeting time, project time, marketing, design and development, etc. Do NOT forget to eat during the day. Even if it's only 20 minutes, get away from your desk to do it. it's important to nourish your brain which

nourishes your thinking and creativity. Many people think they should be at their desk 24/7 and it's the worst thing you can do.

- 4. Prioritize the TOP 5 Things That Must Be Done.** List each task as Urgent and Important (1st priority-putting out the fire, calls from the boss – these are done immediately and personally); Urgent and Not important (2nd priority – working on a project, preparing for a seminar – given a deadline or end date); Important but Not Urgent (3rd priority – random interruptions – delegate) and Not Important and Not Urgent (4th priority – playing on the computer, gossiping- these can be dropped or skipped). This is the biggest problem many of us have. We should prioritize those things that are Urgent and Important but we often waste significant time on those things that we'd rather do or know how to do. Sometimes, our priorities do not match those of others we are working with or those of our families. A lot of stress can be alleviated by having these discussions.



- 5. Be Realistic.** Not everything is urgent and important so if you put something in that box, think through why you put it there. What might the outcome and the impact be if this is not prioritized?
- Consider what tasks can be delegated or removed from the list today. If you delegate, have you given the other person the information they need to do a good job? So often we delegate but fail to communicate effectively the priority, the importance, the timeline or provide the information needed to do the job well and then we blame the other person for not completing the task correctly. Or consider the fact that maybe you are afraid to delegate because you “think” only you can do the job well. And sometimes, low priority tasks take up more time than they should only because we like to do them. Hummm....

6. **Consider Which “Quick” Tasks can be accomplished during wait times or down times.** (while you are waiting at the doctor's office, at your child's soccer practice, etc)
7. **Social Media Overload.** Many time management experts say to check email once in the morning and once in the afternoon. It is very easy to get bogged down every time you see the little box pop up with “another” email or you hear that little ‘bing’ on your computer or phone with an email, instant message or post. Did you know that for every minute we get off task it takes twice as long to get back on task? Give yourself a “time” limit to devote to correspondence then when the time is up, get back to work. Answering correspondence whenever a message appears is not only the easiest way to get us off task, but is also creates procrastination on tasks that need our attention.
8. **Establish Weekly Goals.** While it’s important to have a “picture” of your daily priorities, it’s equally important to see how they impact the bigger picture. Break each goal into small attainable steps you can carry out each day. Post your weekly goals so you see them regularly to help you stay on task. It’s good for accountability. Reward yourself when you’ve stayed on track.
9. **Consider Your Biorhythms.** Are you a morning person or does your best work come later in the day? If you are a morning person, then focus on those high priority items first. If you are not a jump out of bed, hit the ground running person, then consider scheduling important meetings or calls a bit later in the morning or set the alarm earlier on those days you must be “on” early so you can bring your best to the table. The same goes for the evening. Know when you are at your best in terms of your energy level, your creativity and your thinking ability and schedule your important and urgent tasks for those times of the day.
10. **Schedule Time for Yourself and Your Family.** Some of us think our worth corresponds with the hours we put into the “office.” We blindly think that we are giving our best when research tells us the opposite. Time carved out to care for yourself and your family is very wise time. It allows us to unplug and decompress and it actually makes us smarter. Not to mention, a little ‘me’ time and family time sends the message that we care about those around us. When all your time is focused on work, it makes for a very lonely life.



11. **Learn How to Say “No”.** There will be many things we want to do and make a part of in our lives but the reality is we cannot be everything to everyone. While we may want to support a nonprofit

or take on an extra job at work, before you say yes, hit the PAUSE button and ask yourself a few questions: Why do I want to do this? How is it going to help me/benefit me/make me better? What is the time commitment and can I do a quality job? Can I help in another way or at another time?



12. Emergencies Don't Ask If You Have Time. Whether it is a task or relational, emergencies seldom come when we have the "time" for them. They have a mind of their own and it never fails, they arrive at the least opportune time. It is then when our stress level goes from 0-60 in a flash because we have not managed our time effectively. We suddenly we find ourselves behind the infamous eight ball and our stress is through the roof. That stress shows itself to others often hurting those we care most about not to mention potential clients or customer. We fail to correspond with people in a timely fashion. We forget to follow through with something we promised. We get defensive and our tone sends a whole new message. Ouch!

The Bottom Line is This: We all have the same number of hours in a day. It's how we use them that allow us to get the most and give the most. When you include these tips into your life, you will feel more in charge of your time, lessen your stress and increase your appreciation of the world around you. Who wouldn't what that???

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