

MAKING YOUR TIME COUNT

Self-Paced Guide



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How will this Reference Help?

This reference will help you to manage your time so that you can achieve any goals you set for yourself. You'll learn to feel relaxed and focused as you achieve those goals.

The relaxed part is vital. No one ever feels they have enough time. This leads to stress. When you relax more, you achieve more; because you focus on whatever you happen to be working on.

If you don't relax, you may be productive in the short term when you force yourself to get things done, but you can't keep it up. Straining to achieve is a habit, a bad one, and it can be broken. You need to eliminate unproductive stress, because if you live in a constant state of stress you'll shut down the creative side of yourself.

Creativity is vital for effective time management and achievement. In this guide you will find lots of techniques to enhance your creativity. As you begin to take control of your life, you'll be amazed at how much more you're getting done, at how confident you feel, and above all, how much fun you're having.

This guide will help you to;

- focus, so you get more done in less time;
- automatically divide tasks into the urgent and the important, and to prioritise effectively;
- practise relaxation on a daily basis until it becomes a habit; and
- determine your values, so you can set appropriate goals.

You already know how to manage your time and how to achieve. Everything you have achieved so far has been a result of using your time to achieve your goals. However, that time management, goal setting and achievement process has been unconscious. You did it, but you don't know how. You'll learn to bring the process out into the open, so you can use it effectively to manage your time, and your life.

Continued on next page

How will this Reference Help?, Continued

To complete this learning effectively you need to follow the instructions in this Reference Guide. Each section will help you achieve one or more of the learning outcomes.

There are a number of activities to help you develop the skills and knowledge required to manage your time effectively. They may ask you to answer questions, discuss issues with others or find additional information.

As you follow the sections, you will notice a number of icon prompts. Each icon signals different types of activities that you may or may not wish to do.



TIP



HINT



ACTIVITY

As you progress through this guide you may wish to refer to your manager for assistance or information. Your manager is there to support your learning.

MANAGING YOURSELF

What is Stressing You?

Successful time management gives you time to live your life. One of the biggest barriers to managing your time is the way you think. If you can change the way you think about time, you can change what you do, and manage your time more effectively.



ACTIVITY

What's stressing you? Make a list, write it down.

List everything that is stressing you, from the weather to your job, your relationships, and your health.

Although these may all be problems, they're made worse by the way you think about them. Worrying about a problem without doing anything about it is wasted effort. Some problems have no solutions. You will recognise the problems you can't fix. Accept that, and fix the problems you can.

How to Beat the 'Musts' and 'Shoulds'



From now on, whenever you use 'must' or 'should' in a sentence, you could try to examine the sentence carefully. It could be muddled thinking. How often do you use 'must' or 'should'?



TIP

Make a list of all the 'musts' and 'shoulds' that you are thinking of.

Eg.

- I must finish that report before lunch
- I must get the order out to the customer this afternoon
- I shouldn't be broke, I should have enough money for a holiday

No matter how long your list is you can eliminate 90% of the stress you feel by changing the way you think.

When you start thinking in 'musts' and 'shoulds', then DO.

- You think: *I should spend more time with the kids.*
You DO: Schedule a trip out to the video store with the kids, pick a movie and watch it with them.
 - You think: *I should work on the sales figures.*
You DO: Open the file, work on it **now**, even if it's for five minutes.
-

Taking action untangles your thoughts; if you practise this simple think and do exercise daily, you'll be amazed at how your life will change. Unfortunately our 'musts' and 'shoulds' are so much a part of us that often we don't realise what is happening.



HINT

Get ready for tomorrow tonight. Just before you leave work for the day, clear the top of your desk, and take out the file or documents that contains the most important work you need to do tomorrow. Leave it on your desk, so you can focus on it as soon as you come in tomorrow morning.

Think DO



ACTIVITY

Ask yourself: *What must I do today?* Put the answer in the 'Think' column. Then ask: *What can I do about it immediately?* Put the answer in the 'DO' column, and go ahead and do it.

Think	DO

Managing your time can only be done in the present moment. You can plan what you'll do tomorrow, but if time management is a problem for you, chances are you're adept at making plans, and feeling a lovely glow of accomplishment. However, you may not be working on those plans.

Keep this sheet handy and use it in real time. Make your 'shoulds' and 'musts' work for you.

Actions and Emotions

Your actions are fuelled by emotions, and some of your time-management problems may be due to the fact that negative emotions stop you doing what you would like to do. For example, you may want to apply for another position in the organisation with more challenges and team work, but you never send through your expression of interest. You can use the Think and DO grid here too, to find out what is holding you back.

Example;

Think	DO
I need a change because my role has become routine and dull. I'd like a position which used more of my abilities but I'd need to do more study and my friends would become annoyed for I would be spending less time with them.	I make excuses not to explore new roles in the organisation even though I could find a new role where training was included in the package.



ACTIVITY

Can you see that your actions are the result of the way you think?

Create some examples for yourself of how your thoughts are holding you back. How could you change your thoughts, and what fresh action could you take?

Think	DO

Continued on next page

Actions and Emotions, Continued

When you have 50 email messages to read and answer, a report to get out by 3pm, an 11.30am presentation to an important supplier plus a dinner party in the evening, it can all be too much. Your mind starts to run about and there's a horrible feeling in the pit of your stomach. You feel trapped, your heart starts to pound and you don't know how you're going to get through it all. You don't even know where to start. When you do start, you make mistakes. You are stressed.

It's important to realise that the stress is something you brought on by the way you think about everything you 'have' to do. Research into productivity reveals that the best mental state for productivity is a relaxed alertness.

The best way to achieve this state of relaxed alertness is to work on your relaxation and concentration skills. If you've been stressed for years, neither of these states will be easy to achieve, but don't let that faze you. Trying is what's important; you'll get there with practice.



HINT

Try this to relax sometimes when you are feeling frazzled; Sit in a straight backed chair with your feet flat on the floor. Rest your hands on your thighs. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath through your nose, expanding your abdomen as you do so, to draw the breath deeply into your lungs. As you pull the breath in, imagine you're drawing in a deep blue colour.

When you have drawn in as much blue as you can, exhale slowly.

Take another deep breath, visualising the air as a peaceful blue again. The blue is drawn deeply into your body, filling you with peace. Exhale.

Take a third deep breath of peaceful blue, exhale slowly.

Take a moment to enjoy the sensations of relaxation.

When ready, take your time to bring your mind back to yourself, and slowly open your eyes.

Continued on next page

Actions and Emotions, Continued

Why concentration? For practicality. If your mind normally jumps with thoughts, its impossible for you to work to your potential. Practising relaxation and focus develops your mind.

Remember as you practise, that if you find focusing on one thing and one thing only terribly difficult, then think of how much effort you are wasting when you are working. Whether you are compiling a report, giving a presentation, or reading material for review, if you can't focus on what you are doing, you will take longer to accomplish each task, and you won't perform at peak efficiency.

You practice concentration as you practise anything else, but first you need to be totally relaxed.

What you are trying to do is quiet your internal chatter, and get into a state of flow. How do you do this? You do what you are doing. If you are reading, you focus on what you are reading. When other thoughts come into your mind, gently bring yourself back to your reading. Concentration is primarily a matter of trust. Be gentle with yourself. Relax.



HINT

Evaluate how long you think a task or project will take you, then slash the time by half. Try to make your new deadline; you will be amazed how often you do without any problems.

We all carry on a constant inner monologue with ourselves. We can make good use of this in our efforts to manage our time effectively. One way is with the use of affirmations.

Initially, just become aware of your interior verbalising. Then, if you have trouble getting on with a task (for example, if you need to complete a report for next week, but find yourself opening the file and then reading your e-mail instead) this is a good time to get to know your chatterbox self.

Continued on next page

Actions and Emotions, Continued



TIP

When you find you are having one of these moments, either on your computer or on a piece of paper, write;

What's bugging me at the moment is...

Just write whatever comes. Write for five minutes, without stopping. If you find yourself thinking '*This is stupid, I don't know what to write*', then write that. Write down whatever comes. You will be surprised at what comes out.

You don't have to do anything with these efforts. Discard them if you like. Immediately go on with whatever task you were avoiding. You'll find that you complete it in record time.

The hardest thing about this technique is remembering to use it.



HINT

Try not to be influenced by negative opinions of others. Negativity will slow you down, and will make you less effective. If one of your colleagues is persistently negative, speak to them about it and try to help them look at things in a more positive light or not share their negative thoughts with you.

RETHINKING TIME MANAGEMENT

Myth and Reality

What is time?

Consider the following statements;

- Time is constant
- We only have 24 hours in one day
- We cannot control time
- Time is a reference point only, a measurement of activity

These are all statements of fact.

Therefore, if time cannot be controlled and is constant, the only factor that can change is YOU.

Managing your time successfully is about living in the present moment. You can think about successes and failures of the past, but you can't alter them. The past is gone. You can plan for the future, but you can't live in the future. If you hope for a happy future, make the most of each moment, relishing it as fully as you can.

Are you a victim of time?

Do you sometimes feel;

- Frustrated?
- Panicky?
- Out of control?

These are all common feelings when we begin to feel like victims of time.

In order to overcome these feelings we need to not only relax, but also need to understand the basic principle of Time Management which is 'Time Management is really self management'.

Self Management



ACTIVITY

Complete the following questionnaire;

1. Are you often interrupted by people, phone calls, your own thoughts?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 2. Do you often run out of time?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 3. Do you prepare for meetings?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 4. Do you miss deadlines?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 5. Can you find any piece of paper on your desk within one minute?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 6. Do you avoid certain tasks until they become emergencies or crises?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 7. Do you know your daily goal(s) when you start work each day?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 8. Do you often reach your goal(s) by the end of the day?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 9. Are there things on your desk that you haven't looked at for over a week?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 10. Do you monitor yourself to ensure all tasks are completed on time?
☐ Yes ☐ No
-

Targeting Time Problems



ACTIVITY

Review your answers to the previous questionnaire. What areas are troubling you and what are you already achieving.

List them in the table below;

Strengths	Opportunities



HINT

Focus on the present moment. The easiest way to do so is to use your body. When you realise that you're worrying about the past or thinking about the future, bring your mind back to the present moment.

One such way is to tighten the muscles in your feet, scrunching up your toes, then stretch your toes out and press your feet firmly on the floor. As you scrunch your toes, say to yourself; dig in!

Immediately make an effort to concentrate on whatever task you're working on, don't let your thoughts drift.

Knowing Where Your Time Goes



ACTIVITY

This activity will help you to focus on time management issues that relate to you.

Identify problems that you encounter when trying to manage time. Write these issues in the space provided below.

Where does my time go?



TIP

Don't allow your colleagues to come to you with problems without also presenting a solution, preferably with one preferred solution – if they have to think of a solution, you'll find that they will usually implement the solution without bothering you about it.

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Knowing Where Your Time Goes, Continued



ACTIVITY

Where does your time go?

Did you identify any of the following? Read through the list and mark any of those items that cause you issues that you didn't identify in the previous activity.

1. Communication problems you encounter at work such as;
 - Unproductive phone calls
 - Too much idle talk
 - Listening inactively
 - Conflict
 - Unclear task parameters
 - Meeting agendas circulated too close to the meeting or not at all
2. Other problems you have getting your work done such as;
 - Indecision and procrastination
 - Over commitment
 - Making hasty decisions
 - Reluctance to say 'no'
 - Unfinished tasks
 - Problem focused
 - Inability to gain cooperation from others
 - Anxiety
 - Lack of confidence
 - Tendency to shuffle papers
 - Too many interruptions

What problems do you encounter if you;

- Don't plan and schedule
- Don't prioritise
- Don't set goals
- Have fuzzy objectives
- Don't plan each day
- Have flexible or non-existent deadlines
- Are uncertain about responsibility
- Have poorly coordinated tasks
- Don't have quiet time
- Are filing too much, throwing away too little
- Have a disorganised desk
- Have unnecessary meetings
- Have uncontrolled meetings
- Don't delegate

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Knowing Where Your Time Goes, Continued

Knowing where your time is going helps you to make room in your life for the things which are important to you. You'll be amazed at how much 'hidden' time is available to you.

A lot of spare time is hidden in your everyday routine. For example, you may be in the habit of grocery shopping three or more times a week. When you add up the hours you spend cruising the supermarket, you're amazed that you spend four hours every week. Using lists and only shopping once a week saves two hours. Let's say you watch the evening news every day. There goes at least three hours a week. You decide that you can listen to the radio news on the way home. The extra hours you have available each week gives you ample time to do a class or visit a friend three times a week.

Keeping a time log every day for a week is the ideal. Keeping it everyday for three days is useful. If you're resistant to the whole idea of a time log and feel that you 'don't have time for that', just keep it for one day. You may find that you learn so much that you're inspired to keep it for another couple of days.

Make sure you record everything that happens during the day, as it happens. That way you'll get an accurate record of the number of interruptions and unplanned tasks in your day.

You can do an analysis either when you've finished for the day, or when you've completed a set number of days.

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Knowing Where Your Time Goes, Continued



ACTIVITY

Your time log. Keep it simple. Just take an A4 sheet, head it with the day's date and rule a small column down the left side. Jot down the time you usually wake up, say 6am. Continue down the column with the time in 15-minute intervals. Eg. 6.15, 6.30, 6.45, etc. Stop at the time you usually go to bed.

Rule a second line down the middle of the page. Head the second column 'Activity'; the third column is for your 'Time Analysis'. You will do the analysis at the end of the day. However, this column is also a good place to jot down any ideas you may have, or your feelings.

Here is an example;

Date:		
Time	Activity	Time Analysis
6.00	Woke up made coffee	
6.15	Sit ups	
6.30	Showered & dressed	
6.45	Made lunch	

Time log analysis – what to check.

- List all the activities over the days you kept the log. Add up the time you spent on those activities. How many interruptions were there? What were they? How much time was taken up by interruptions?
- How many meetings did you attend? Did the meetings accomplish anything worthwhile?
- How much time did you spend handling crises? How could you avoid those crises in future?

Your time log will also tell you what (or who) steals your time. If you usually think of time thieves as people – your colleagues, boss – you'll be fascinated to discover that you steal time from yourself.

Without keeping a time log, you tend to underestimate how long something takes. For instance, you might spend the morning returning phone calls, and attend a meeting. Suddenly it's lunchtime. Without your time log, you estimate that you spend around five to ten minutes on each phone call. Using your time log, you'll see that 20 minutes was the average time per call.

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Knowing Where Your Time Goes, Continued

Whatever work you do, your time at work is divided into three areas;

- Doing the work required by your position – the work covered in your job description;
- Special projects – usually originated by your manager, or work group;
- Projects you take on yourself.

If your time log shows that you never have time to complete special projects, that to do the work that would further your career means that you need to work late or on weekends, you need to look at ways of freeing blocks of time for yourself.



HINT

Implementing quiet time may help. Pick a half hour to hour, early in the morning if possible. Find a quiet area away from your desk, possibly in a meeting room, and work specifically on projects which are individually important.



TIP

Initiate! You'll be able to do most of your work without authorisation. If you've been in the habit of asking permission before you take on a project, consider just telling your manager and other members of your work group what you're looking to work on. Send them an e-mail outlining the project, and giving start and completion dates. If they have a problem or further information to help what you're doing, they'll let you know.

YOU ARE IN CONTROL!

Becoming Organised

The basis of successful time management is believing that you are in control of your time. You may feel that everyone else is in control except you, and this is usually because you haven't developed an organised system for managing priorities. You try to deal with tasks as they come to you. Inevitably you become stressed and frustrated.

A simple four-step plan to becoming organised;

1. Determine your goals and objectives in all areas of your life.
2. Develop a step-by-step plan for reaching those goals
3. Work your plans creatively. Change your plans as and when necessary. Be prepared to change your goals if they are no longer motivating or appropriate.
4. Use quiet times – your relaxation sessions – to develop your intuition and creatively solve any problems as they come up.

If you are feeling way out of control, that your life is running away with you – or worse, you're so stressed you're burning out – the following Time Tamers are methods you can use to get back in control.



TIME TAMER 1 – You can stand anything for five minutes

You've been handed a project or task which scares you to death. You've never done this before, and you don't even know where to start. You've been putting off starting for so long that the deadline is staring you in the face.

Commit yourself to working on this project for five minutes. At the end of five minutes, you can forget about it. Set your timer, and start. It doesn't matter what you do; make a couple of phone calls, make a few notes, write the first sentence of the report. At the end of five minutes, stop.

A funny thing happens when you only have to stand the pain for five minutes; you'll often find that you've broken through the inactivity, and you complete the project without further trauma.

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Becoming Organised, Continued



TIME TAMER 2 – Start anywhere and keep going

You've been off sick, or on holidays, and you come back to bedlam. A mountain of work has piled up. There's so much to do, it all should have been done yesterday, so there's no way of assigning priorities.

When this happens, don't worry. Just grab the nearest thing and get on with it. Then go on to the next thing and the next.



TIME TAMER 3 – The thousand mile journey

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, right? This Time Tamer works on any project which seems so complex and difficult that you can't get started.

For instance, say you know you need a further qualification to get ahead in your career. However, if you study part-time, it will take you five years to complete the requirements. Use a project map, and map out all the steps you need to take to complete the courses necessary, setting them in a time frame. Doesn't that look more manageable? The mere fact that you've planned the project in time makes it seem more doable.

However, don't stop there. Start working on your project today. The key to success with the thousand-mile-journey Time Tamer is to put everything in writing. Make lists. The first process you have to go through is enrolling.

So you make your list;

1. Look up the school or institution's phone number and call, asking for an enrolment application
2. Go to the library and get out some books relevant to the courses you're taking
3. Fill out the enrolment application.

Keep making lists, and keep pressing ahead through your project map. You'll get there!

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Becoming Organised, Continued



TIME TAMER 4 – Pros and cons

This Time Tamer is for making fast decisions.

Just draw a line down the centre of a sheet of paper, and head one side pro, and the other con.

Fill in both sides.

However, you can also use the 'pros' and 'cons' method if you've been putting off doing a task. On the 'cons' side, put down all the reasons you're procrastinating. On the 'pros' side, put all the benefits you'll get from completing the task.



TIME TAMER 5 – Out of the blue

This Time Tamer is for handling interruptions.

Interruptions such as phone calls and unplanned visitors can be very frustrating when you have results to achieve.

The best way to handle interruptions is to make a decision immediately about what you will do about the interruption.

When interrupted you can choose from four options in terms of the result you wish to achieve. The fifth **D** is not an option.

1. **D**o it
2. **D**elegate it
3. **D**elay it
4. **D**rop it
5. **D**ecide

Until you decide on some firm course of action you will neither achieve your task nor resolve your interruption. Deciding what to do lets you take charge rather than allowing interruptions to take charge of you.

This technique can also be used with e-mail and paperwork.

Do or Die!

You probably have a 'to do' list, either in a paper form or on your computer. However, the chances are that as determined as you are to complete the tasks, fewer than half of them get done. The rest are either forgotten, or are moved along from one day to the next.

Shortly, you'll work on a way you can prioritise your tasks, and make a more effective use of your task list. For the moment however you'll make a new task list, just for today, and you'll make a commitment to it. Call it your 'Daily task list'. You can keep it anywhere you like, but the most effective method is to keep it on a small card or notepad. You can prop it up next to your computer, and when you're on the move you can put it in your pocket or handbag.

Your daily task list consists of five tasks, no more. Resist the temptation to load the list with tasks. This isn't an ordinary 'to do' list. You'll work with this list in your relaxation sessions, by visualising sitting down and seeing yourself complete the tasks, feeling happy and confident, this will give you the motivation to do everything on the list.

The commitment you make to your daily task list is this; every task on the list will be done TODAY. No excuses, none. You can break your leg and end up in traction, but you must still complete every task on your daily task list.

Obviously, since this is a serious commitment, don't put anything on the daily task list that you can't do because you haven't done the preparation, or because you won't have time, or because you don't want to do it. When the item goes on the daily task list, it gets done.

Either last thing before you finish your work for the day, or the first thing in the morning, compile your daily task list for the day/next day. If you consistently find that you are not completing all the tasks you set for yourself, then do all the tasks on your daily task list the first thing in the morning, and work on them until you finish.

If you start work on a task and find yourself reading your e-mail or making phone calls, remember, take out a sheet of paper and write down "What's bugging me is...".

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Do or Die!, Continued



TIP

Don't put major tasks on the daily task list. For example, 'write sales report'. Any task which takes longer than an hour is best divided into smaller segments. You could make a task of gathering figures for the sales report.

If you can't complete a task because it would take too long and you wouldn't be able to complete other tasks, then put a box around the task, rather than drawing a line through it. This is a reminder to include that task on tomorrow's daily task list.



HINT

Make it a rule not to work on a single project for longer than a couple of hours. Your energy flags, you feel bored, and you'll get less done than you could. Keep a mix of projects going.

The Base of your Control

Your schedule. The basis of managing time is managing yourself. This means discipline, firstly in designing a schedule, and then in following it.

Why a schedule? The most expensive education in the world and the most winning personality won't guarantee your success unless you manage your time effectively moment by moment. We can only be successful a minute and an hour at a time. The more successful hours you have, the more successful days you will log up. With enough successful days, a successful life becomes inevitable.

Often, we fail to manage our time because we've tried schedules, become frustrated with them and given up on systematic scheduling. Invariably, we've given up too fast. You have more control than you think. When you realise that you can choose to control most of the events of your life by following an effective schedule, you are on the way to successful self management.

If you haven't been in the habit of scheduling your days, the first couple of days will be the hardest. However, once you have a couple of successes, you'll feel good, and you will want to feel good again, so you will keep working your schedule. If you do this, you cannot fail.

An effective schedule allows for downtime, and it schedules everything, even the unexpected. How do you schedule the unexpected? Your time log will give you a reasonable idea of the number of interruptions – phone calls, drop in visitors – you can expect in a typical day. Say it amounts to an hour over the course of a working day. Just add an extra hour in 15 minute periods during the day. This will give you breathing room.

It's especially important to schedule personal chores, such as picking up the mail or going to the bank. If you don't schedule these into your day, you'll over schedule. You'll be in the middle of working out the monthly reports when you should have been to the bank.

Whatever system you decide to use, think of your schedule in terms of weekly blocks. This lets you insert all the personal chores you know you'll need to accomplish next week at the close of the current week. You can also insert block of time for lengthy tasks, like preparing a presentation or working on a project.

Continued on next page

The Base of your Control, Continued



HINT

You control you! Successfully managing time means that you control the events in your life. You plan the events, set them into a schedule, and then you follow the schedule.

Some events you can't control. We can't control the seasons. We can't control accidents. We all have periods in our life when we feel we are visited by one catastrophe after another. If you've ever been through a bad period in your life, you know that the best you can do is to cope.

However, except for periods of crisis, you can create a schedule, and stick to it. Your schedule can be as simple or as complex as you like. Some of us like to see exactly what we're doing; we like the busy feeling of a crammed schedule. Others feel stifled when too much of time is accounted for. Take your own natural inclinations into account, but don't allow yourself to be ruled by them.



TIP

Make it a habit to consolidate your schedule by grouping similar tasks together. Start making all your phone calls at a specific time each morning. If you need to visit suppliers, meet with clients or view premises, then you could make all your visits or meetings in the west of the city on one afternoon and all your southern visits another morning.

Your daily task list is also part of your schedule. Some days, you won't need to insert any additional tasks; you'll find that your task list is full. If this happens, make sure you haven't over-committed yourself. If necessary, reprioritise and move tasks onto the following day, or the following week.

Continued on next page

The Base of your Control, Continued



ACTIVITY

Each day we may be faced with the situation where we need to decide which tasks are top priorities and which can wait until later.

This can be difficult, but prioritising can help.

Refer to your task list and use the following scale to rate each task.

	Urgent	Important	Urgent x Important
Very	1	1	1
Less	2	2	4
Not	3	3	9

Each task will have a level of urgency and a level of importance in relation to the goal. Complete the following to determine these;

- Assess each task by giving two scores; one for urgency and one for importance.
 - Multiply the scores for each task.
 - Rearrange your list so the tasks with the lowest total go to the top of the list.
 - Re-rate any activities that have the same score.
-

PLANNING & GOAL SETTING

Effective Goal Setting

If you find it hard to set goals, you're not alone.

The big decision. You need to decide specifically what you want – and when you want it. Unfortunately, merely deciding that you want to be successful isn't enough. You have to narrow it down. What does 'successful' mean to you? Does successful mean a house in a nice suburb that's paid off, with a late model car? Or does it mean running your own business? You also need a time frame. Will you achieve your success in five years, twenty years or next year?

Start thinking of what you want in different areas of your life. Some areas to think about include;

- Finances
- Health
- Career
- Family
- Social life.

The goals must be **your** goals. The 'shoulds' come into the goal-setting process. Separate what you want from what you 'should' want. It's hard to get excited about a house in the suburbs when what you want is an apartment in the city.

You're going to work hard for your goals, so they should be you all steamed up, otherwise you're going to run out of enthusiasm on the way. If a goal is something you truly want, and if just thinking about it gets you all excited, then that's a goal you're going to get.

Many of us hesitate about setting a goal. It seems so final. Somehow, deciding on what you want and then working for it has no spontaneity. How can you decide on how you want to spend the next five years of your life when you can't decide on what you want for lunch?

Usually if you have this attitude, it means we've never thought too much about what we really want. The best way to set goals is to spend as much time thinking about a goal we want as we spend deciding on where we're going to go for our next holiday.

Continued on next page

Effective Goal Setting, Continued

Goal setting is critical if you are to achieve your desired results.

People who achieve the goals they set themselves have defined them in terms of desired results, not as activities.

Many of us think of goals as things TO DO and not as the END PRODUCTS of the things we do.

Goals are desired end products, achieved through directed activities that are carried out in a given time frame.

Let's look at the company vision as an example;

“David Jones will bring the best branded department store shopping experience to everyone we serve, every time.”

This is the desired result. To achieve that desired result the company needs to undertake certain activities along the way.

In some cases, to achieve a goal, a number of steps will need to be taken. These are called sub-goals or other desired results.



TIP

Schedule time to review your goals. When you begin achieving, your life will change and you will find new aims and challenges.

The SMART Criteria

Effective goal setting means getting results!

But how can we be SURE that goal setting will achieve the desired result?

Goals can be evaluated using the **SMART** criteria

Specific

Once the desired goal is identified it must be defined in specific terms.

Measurable

The goal must be measurable in terms of quality and/or quantity.

Achievable

The goal must be achievable with the available resources such as staff, budget and equipment.

Realistic

The goal needs to be realistic – does past experience demonstrate that this goal can be achieved.

Timely

Can the required activities be carried out in the time available?

That's the **SMART** way to work!

Sub-goals. These are minor goals that are developed relating to the main result. They need to be accomplished in order to achieve the main goal.

Define sub-goals in the same way that you define your overall goal.

Continued on next page

The SMART Criteria, Continued

Evaluate all goals using the SMART criteria and include the element of monitoring.

Monitoring your activity is an important part of goal setting. Monitoring activities each day gives you the chance to correct any errors or oversights immediately, before they get out of hand. This means that you don't waste time on activities that are too far off the track.

Setting goals give you several important advantages;

- Keeps you focused on the end result and avoids confusion
 - Ensures activity is productive
 - Ensures you are achieving the result and have a chance to see where your individual activities are directed.
-



ACTIVITY

Write down an important work related goal. Express the goal using the SMART criteria.

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The goal should also address the following issues;

- Final result or end product (not an activity)
 - Sub-goals
 - Activities needed to achieve sub-goals
 - Resources needed
-

Planning to Achieve your Goals

When you start to schedule your time and to work towards your goals, be flexible. Some days you won't be able to get it together. You'll miss the train, bus or plane; you'll forget an important meeting. The conference presentation you thought was due next month is due next week...and your schedule goes out the window.

As difficult as it may be, try to get back to your schedule as soon as possible. When something comes up and you need to make changes, make them as soon as possible.

Look at your diary first thing in the morning even before you get to work, while you are having your first cup of coffee. Your subconscious mind has been busy while you slept. You'll often find ideas popping into your head. Don't discount any of these ideas. Write them down.

When you come back from lunch, check your diary again. This is a good time to look back through your diary to check for forgotten items; calls you meant to make, appointments you need to set up. Aim to spend at least five minutes with your diary.

You can evaluate the day, and plan the following day, when you are ready to leave work for home. Leave yourself 10 minutes to think over the day, and record changes in your schedule, as well as to record reminders to yourself.



HINT

The number of goals you choose to work on at a time depends on the time you have available. There's no rush. An active goal should be worked on once a day if possible, or at least once a week.

You'll often find that you can work on several goals concurrently. A goal to improve your income can become a sub-goal of either getting a bonus, or achieving a promotion.

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Planning to Achieve your Goals, Continued

Your day includes two kinds of tasks, the important and the urgent. Important tasks are those, which will take you to your goals. However these tasks are rarely urgent – not the first time they come up.

Urgent tasks are surprises. They're those tasks that need to be done because something went wrong, because new information has developed, because needs have changed or because they are overdue – among other reasons.

If you rarely have time to work on the important tasks in your schedule because they've been crowded out by the urgent, you need to rethink your priorities.

Each task on your daily task list should be assigned a priority. Use whichever code you feel comfortable with. Make sure you do all the high priority tasks as early in the day as possible.



TIP

If each day is a struggle as you put out bushfires (of urgent tasks), study them.

At the end of the day, when you take a moment to think about how the day went, and are planning what you'll do tomorrow, jot down how many urgent tasks disrupted your day. Just write a brief description of them in a list.

At the end of the week, look at your lists of urgent tasks for each day. Is there a pattern to anything? Are any of the tasks linked? The object of this is not to assign blame, not even to you. It's to be able to make corrections in your procedures.

When you have information, you can act on it. If you never take the time to assemble the information, you'll have to keep reacting rather than acting.

Your Comfort Zone

Your comfort zone includes every area which feels safe for you; all the thoughts, emotions and actions you feel comfortable with. As you focus on using your time effectively, you will move out of your former comfort zone without being aware that you're doing it.

However, change is threatening. What sometimes happens is that the person who is changing rapidly suddenly realises their comfort zone has been expanded, and begins to feel insecure. If this happens to you, you'll know it's just your comfort zone trying to contract back to its former shape. The best way to counteract this is to get into a routine of deliberately doing things which you don't like to do.

You will find that, as with most unpleasant things, your initial discomfort is self-limiting. After you've done one task a day for a week to expand your comfort zone, you won't feel the same reluctance. In fact, you'll start looking for new experiences, new ways to do what you formerly avoided.



TIP

If you want to expand your comfort zone into areas which are totally intimidating because you have no prior experience, start out small. Do some research.

The more familiarity you have with the area, the more you'll feel as though you know how to do it. Then, on your first few attempts, break the task down.

MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Do it now! – The Avoider

Procrastination is one of the main barriers to effective time management, and it comes in many forms. One of the most common is avoidance. If you don't like a task, you will try to avoid doing it. The problem is that every job, no matter how much you love it, has duties and requirements, which you may not enjoy as much as others+.

If you're an avoider, then you probably avoided the first task when you created your task list. However, if you commit to doing your daily task list – picking the most unpleasant task on the list and doing it first – it will do more to improve your time management skills than anything else.

The difference between successful people and unsuccessful people is that successful people do what the unsuccessful don't do. They get comfortable with discomfort.

Handling discomfort is much the same as handling fear. You feel the discomfort, but you do the task anyway. Five minutes or less into the task, you're surprised that you don't feel uncomfortable any more. When you complete the task, you feel euphoric.



HINT

Design a system of rewards for yourself. The rewards you give yourself can be minor.

The point of the rewards system is that while we berate ourselves and feel guilty when we mess up, we don't usually acknowledge our achievements.

How to let it Go – The Perfectionist

Perfectionists procrastinate. For a perfectionist, the weather must be fine, their bio-rhythms must be in tune and their favourite football team must have won the game before they can act. If you're a perfectionist, you don't want to send the proposal, you're waiting for some additional research. You won't okay the new layout, it will have to be redone as the fixture is the wrong shade of blue. You collect specifications for a new product from five suppliers and you still can't decide. You need to be guaranteed the results will be as you want them to be before you are ready to act.

In a world where margins are becoming slimmer, you can't afford perfectionism. Usually it's more important that things get done, rather than that they get done perfectly. Your concern for perfectionism always results in increased time for the project, and that means less productivity.

Perfectionism is related to a fear of failure. We all suffer from this to a degree. However, if you've crossed the line to where it affects your performance, you know it's harming you.

The perfectionist lives by rigidly observing the 'shoulds' and 'musts', which the perfectionist believes will guarantee success.

Perfectionists are not good at handling failure. They believe that the anxiety, anger and depression they feel are not only permanent, but also justified. They criticise themselves endlessly, wallowing in bad feelings. When their depression causes them to perform even more badly, they berate themselves even more, and become even more negative.

Six secrets to stifling perfectionism;

1. Write out your 'shoulds', and challenge each one with a 'why'?
 2. Write a memo to yourself telling yourself that mistakes are the way you learn.
 3. Work out how much the extra time spent on a project that you're trying to make perfect is costing you.
 4. If your motto is 'If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well', make a list of tasks which aren't worth doing well.
 5. Make a list of reasons you can't do a job perfectly, but well enough. Eg. Illness
 6. On your next task, set out to bulldoze your way through it concentrating on your performance, rather than your feelings.
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How to let it Go – The Perfectionist, Continued



ACTIVITY

Find a task which makes you anxious. Set realistic goals for achieving the task, taking your usual ability into account, and allowing for the possibility of errors.

Create a project map.

Work your way through the project map. If you suspect you're making mistakes, keep going. Your objective is to keep working your way through concentrating on your performance, rather than making it perfect, and to complete the task.



TIP

In times of change, focus on your goals. They can become your guiding light through the situation.

How to get Going – The Procrastinator

The dedicated procrastinator knows that avoidance and refusing to move outside of the comfort zone are just scratching the surface of all the ways in which procrastination manifests itself.

The big problem with procrastination is that the dedicated practitioner is adept at rationalisation.

Which do you do?

- I don't have the right equipment, information, contacts or personality
- I don't have the time, money or energy;
- I'm too old, too young, too uneducated or too busy;
- This person hates me, he/she makes trouble for me at work.

Fear of success is subtle. Usually it's a subconscious fear we're not consciously aware of. This makes it all the more dangerous.

Although fear of failure and fear of success may seem diametrically opposed, in reality they are the same. They are a fear of the unknown. The fearful person believes that they don't deserve a good outcome.

You may fear success because you aren't sure how your friends and family will take it. There may be voices in your subconscious telling you that you don't deserve success.

It's vital that you bring your fears about success into full consciousness so that you can deal with them.



TIP

If you suspect that you're procrastinating on a goal because you're frightened, ask yourself the following questions;

1. Write down all the reasons you want to achieve the goal. How will the achievement benefit you?
 2. Can you think of any problems you'd have as a result of achieving the goal?
 3. If you don't achieve the goal, what problems would you have then?
 4. Any goal worth pursuing requires that we stretch our comfort zone. What do you refuse to do in going for this goal, even if it means you might fail?
 5. Ask yourself how you could overcome the fears you have about attaining this goal.
-

Get Assertive

Assertive doesn't mean dominating, aggressive, or even pushy. It does mean that you know what you want to achieve, and are confident enough to ask for help in getting it. It means being pro-active, and initiating projects. It means being open to constant learning, and doing that learning yourself, for yourself. It means realising that even if you work for someone else, you are in business for yourself.

Learning new skills will challenge you to expand your comfort zone.

The magic word – No. The problem with refusing tasks at work is that the person you refuse may well be your manager. Can you say 'no' to your manager? In a perfect world, your manager and other colleagues would have a clear understanding of which tasks have already been assigned to you, and would also know that assigning you yet more work means that you'll have to skimp on something else. However, this rarely happens. In fact, if you are good at what you do, chances are even more work will be piled on you.

The best protection you have against being overwhelmed, is an up-to-date schedule. Show your manager your schedule, and point to a time when you'll be able to take on the new task. Of course you have to be flexible. If your manager is willing to have you put off something else to get to the new task, let him/her make the decision on what you should defer.

Effective Delegation

Delegation will save you more time than any other technique. If you're hesitant to delegate, do you believe that there is only one way to do it? Your way?

Delegating means having a clear idea of what your goals and responsibilities are, and you should have a better idea of both. You may have already delegated some tasks and projects. Your challenge? Delegate more!

Successful delegating doesn't mean dumping the routine tasks that you hate onto someone else. When you delegate, hand over some of the fun stuff as well.

You should delegate everything that you do so well that you could do it in your sleep, and that isn't providing a learning experience for you any longer. When you handover the project, don't hand over a long list of ways and means. Just hand the project to the delegate, and trust them to handle it in their own way. When you delegate, you hand over responsibility to another person, along with the authority to make their own decisions.

Delegation will take you out of your comfort zone. Be prepared to deal with the issues that come up, using techniques already described.

Effective delegation is a skill. You need to practise, and not expect too much at the outset. There will be problems. You will make mistakes. Those to whom you delegate will make mistakes. However, in terms of getting things done, the more you can delegate, the more freedom you will have.



HINT

Rules of Delegation;

1. Do only what you alone can do, delegate everything else.
 2. Delegate the task, the authority and the responsibility.
 3. You can delegate portions of tasks or projects.
 4. Be specific about the time schedule for the task or project. Give your delegates enough time.
 5. Gauge a delegates' interest. Little interest usually leads to unsuccessful outcomes.
 6. Put it in writing.
 7. Increased delegation means more time spent in planning and coordination.
 8. Be available but don't hover.
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Getting Organised

How you go about getting yourself organised depends on the kind of makeup you have. The most important thing to know is whether you are left or right-brain dominant. Are you logical or creative? Although most of us combine traits, we all tend to be mainly one or the other.

Whatever your innate style is, work with that. If you're by nature a creative, right-brained dominant person, and are surrounded by clutter, it's best to accept that side of yourself, and to decide that you can be messy, but organised as well.



HINT

How to handle all that paper;

1. Set up a system of two trays on your desk. One tray contains material you need to file or input, and the other tray contains work that you will handle today. The key to this system is to be religious about emptying the tray that holds the fileable material.
 2. You should throw out 80% of the paper that crosses your desk. Keep a large recyclable box and waste basket near.
 3. Have a system for material which you need to send to someone else – try this, put it into an envelope immediately and place it in a pile. When you take a break, mail the envelopes.
 4. Keep a shelf for your 'to be read' pile. Ideally this shelf should not be in your line of sight as you can convince yourself that you should be reading the latest BRW rather than working on the monthly budget.
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The 80/20 Rule

Pareto's Principle, also known as the 80/20 rule, tells us that in any group of items, only a small proportion of the whole is significant. You can apply the rule to almost anything. Twenty per cent of the tasks you do are the most important. Twenty per cent of your suppliers give you 80 per cent of your sales. Your productivity will be highest for a couple of hours each day. You will never eliminate the less significant majority, but if you're aware of the rule, you can use it to your advantage.



HINT

To help you achieve your goal of working on high-value items, and bearing the 80/20 rule in mind, you'll save time by;

1. Working out what brings results.
 2. When you've decided where the high returns are, prioritise everything, whether it is goals or tasks.
 3. Eliminate procrastination on high-value items.
 4. Spend at least an hour a day working on high value tasks.
 5. Say 'no' more often.
 6. Leave yourself time to plan, don't fill your schedule.
 7. Take note of crises. Who or what caused them and how can they be avoided in future.
 8. If you're a perfectionist, be aware of this, and force yourself to let go of tasks when they are 80% right.
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REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

What have you learnt?

As well as being aware of where your time goes and how to manage this more effectively, for positive time management you need to know and use all of the activities and techniques until they become your normal way of doing things.

Over the coming weeks, notice the ways you have changed what you do because of the learning activities you have completed in this Reference Guide.

To assist you in your reviewing your learning, compare your performance against the learning outcomes;

- Stating the fundamental principle of time management
 - Explaining the importance of focusing on results
 - Making decisions about the activities necessary to achieve results
 - Setting goals that satisfy the SMART criteria
 - Developing sub-goals that contribute to your goals
 - Developing strategies to enable you to overcome procrastination
 - Developing a daily planning system
 - Demonstrating techniques to prioritise tasks
 - Assessing tasks in order to delegate effectively
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CONGRATULATIONS on making your time count!
