

***STOP SAYING
"I DON'T HAVE TIME,"
YOU DO!***



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Stop Saying “I don’t have time,” you do!

The first thing you need to understand about productivity is that it is all about how well you utilize your time. “I don’t have time” has become a really common excuse. Well, here is a question for you, “where is your time?” No seriously, next time you are prompted to say that you don’t have time, ask yourself why. Try to do it audibly, so that it’s not just a thought in your head.

We all have some duties and responsibilities. You might have a family to take care of, or maybe your job binds you for 12 hours. But at least, when you ask yourself “why” exactly you don’t have time, you’ll have a clear picture of where all your time is going.



“My calendar is way overbooked and I’m three months behind in my work — I don’t have time to attend a time management seminar!”

The truth is, we are all in control of 100% of our time. Consider you were asked to attend a party by one friend and a movie by another friend. You have to call both of them back and let them know about your availability. You decide to go to the party because you have already seen the movie. So, here is what you would do (probably). You’ll call up the other friend and tell him, “Sorry man, I just don’t have the time.”

In reality, you decided to use your time elsewhere. The same is the case for the assignment, the project, and the homework that’s been sitting on your desk, waiting for you to “find the time.” Where your time is utilized is all a reflection of your priorities. You

might prioritize a party over a movie, doing your homework over both, or you might use it elsewhere, it is all up to you!

So, it's a matter of "I didn't make time" rather than "I don't have time." Deciding where you want to use your time is crucial for productivity. Let's just say you do have your plate full and are struggling with making time for important things. This eBook has some of the most widespread and effective time management and productivity techniques that are out there. Techniques that will help you **make time**.

The first one is a personal favorite and is used by people like Elon Musk.

1- Time Blocking

You have 24 hours in a day. Ideally, you should not sleep more than 8 hours if you want to get important stuff done. Right off the bat, you are left with 16 hours that you are completely free to use however you want — however you prioritize. You should be incredibly clear on one thing, if you don't control your time, it will inevitably control you.

Here is what you need to do. You need to make blocks of time out of those 16 hours that you have. This is essentially called time blocking, a technique developed around the time Benjamin Franklin was popular. Each block of time will be dedicated to doing something specific.

When you time block, you don't just say I'll do my chores, homework, and laundry, watch a movie on this day. You make fixed time slots. You will do chores from 7 am to 9 am, then homework from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm, and so on.

That's right, you will have fixed slots for each activity, and you'll follow this religiously. Time blocking is only as effective as your willingness to do the activities in the blocks you created for them. The important thing is that you plan a few days. You don't want to wake up every day and decide the blocks of that day, nope, that is a slippery slope to failure and wasting even more of your time.

Here is how Elon Musk does his time blocking. We all know that the man is a workhorse. He works 80 hours a week, splitting his time between his two businesses. He divides the whole day into some blocks of 5 minutes, and then a big chunk of time (90%) for design and engineering. In those 5 minute blocks, he attends all his business meetings, answers all his calls and reading, or any other activity that he planned (Oshin).

By allocating only a few blocks of his time to stuff that takes us all day to do, typically because we haven't decided when to do that stuff, he has a lot of time doing what he actually likes. But do you think he plans all those blocks when he wakes up? No. One simply can't. Here is what he does (actually his assistant), he dedicates a **block of time** in the week to planning all the activities of the week.

This is exactly what you need to do. Only when you dedicate specific blocks of time, on specific days, and for specific activities, can you unlock true productivity.

But, how to decide on how much time to give to each block? Glad you asked.

2- Parkinson's Law

One of the most important concepts that you will learn when planning your activities is Parkinson's Law, which beautifully states that (Wen):

"The amount of time a work consumes is the amount of time that you allocate to it."

That's common sense, you might say. But if you think closely, there is an incredible lesson to be learned from these incredibly simple words. First, let's look at an example. If someone is given a week for a task that would only take a few hours to finish, what exactly would you think will happen? Will he submit the work on the first day, saying he's done? Absolutely not.

What will end up happening is that he will unnecessarily stretch the task, putting it off to the last possible time. The reason is plainly simple. Whenever someone is given a task, he thinks in terms of "how much time do I have to get this done?" rather than "how much time do I need to get it done?"

So when you sit down to make blocks of time for activities, don't think that this item is due after 21 days, so I will do it on the 20th. Instead, think about the time required to do that task. If it takes a few hours, make a block of it in a day that has some hours free. Do it for every other task that you have and eventually you will have a well-planned and efficient schedule.

Another rule of thumb is to give yourself half of the time to complete the task. You might not be able to complete it, but you will surely make a lot of progress. This might sound counterintuitive because you want to fully complete the task in the given block of time.

But it's still better than giving yourself eight hours for a task that can be done in four. Just a little something to think about.

Up to the next question: you have your tasks set up and you have made blocks and all, but how do you prioritize the work?

3- Have a Daily Highlight

If you are investing your energy in making an efficient and effective schedule, this means that you already have too much on your plate. It can be hard choosing between two equally important tasks. So, what you can do is, simply do those equally important tasks on different days. Your daily highlight would be the most important task you need to get done on a given day.

Once you have a daily highlight for a given day, nothing should stop you from completing it. Only after you have done that, you can move on to the next task for that day. There is one more thing that needs to be mentioned here:

“Exactly how many tasks should you do in a single day?”

To answer that, something called **The Ivy League Method (The 6-List)** might come in handy. Just like the name suggests, you put no more than 6 items/tasks on any given day. Here is what the method looks like in action:

- a- Before you sleep, write down 5-6 most important tasks for the next day. Put your daily highlight on the top and other tasks in order of priority below it.
- b- Start your workday with the very first task, and don't start the next one until you have finished (a different concept from time blocking).
- c- Try to finish all tasks. In case there are a few tasks left, put those on your list right after the daily highlight. Your daily highlight always remains at the top
- d- Keep going until you have finished all 6 tasks. Repeat every day.

Just make sure that you are working on the tasks in sequence and not working on them in parallel. This method is quite different from time blocking, where you assign blocks of time for activities. In this method, you keep working on one task until it is done.

Here is when you do the Ivy League Method vs the time blocking method:

When you do similar activities every day, such as answering emails, booking appointments, etc. time blocking them will work much better. But if you have different

tasks for each day of the week, the Ivy League method might suit you better. In the end, do what works best for you.

Try to remember that you are not a machine, and new stuff comes up every day. Don't get disappointed if you cannot get all the planned stuff done in one day. A list is just to give you a road map so that you can do stuff more efficiently. It is not written in stone but on a piece of paper.

This brings us to the most important question that we will discuss in this eBook:

“How much should you rest?”

4- The Pomodoro Technique

Resting is as important as getting stuff done. Your brain isn't a machine, and the maximum time a human can [concentrate in one go is no more than 90 minutes](#) (Williams). Ninety minutes is a pretty long time, especially if you have been working with full concentration, and you must take a breather after that. One of the secrets to effective time management is working in focused work sessions, with many tiny breaks in between.

You start with an energy-filled work session of 25 minutes. You focus only on work during this time, and no matter how tempting that square-shaped tile in your office is, you must not look at it. After 25 minutes are up, you take a 5 minutes break. Surf your social media, go to the toilet, or chat with your favorite coworker, but don't work during that time.

Repeat this until you have completed 4 sessions, or what we call Pomodoro in reference to this technique, take a longer 25-30 minutes break. These frequent 25 minute sprints are at the core of the method, but there is more to the method:

a- If a project is highly time-consuming, and requires more than 4 pomodoros, it needs to be divided into small yet actionable steps. Dividing the task into work sessions will make sure that you are indeed making progress on your projects.

b- Tasks that do not require more than one pomodoro go together. You do one small task in one pomodoro, then have a 5-minute break, then do the second small task. Grouping small tasks together will ensure that you don't procrastinate too much.

c- Once a pomodoro has started, you must finish it! No emails, no calls, no talking to your work BFF, nothing. If you do remember something that you need to get to, keep a notepad on standby and write it down on it.

In the very likely event that you get interrupted, don't count that pomodoro. Start over, and complete the 25-minute pomodoro. Keep track of what activities count as a distraction or interruption and reflect on how to avoid them in the future. It is all about developing the habit to hyper-focus for a small duration of time so that you can get more stuff done in that small time. Simple, right?

One of the many questions that trouble the seekers of productivity is:

What activities should I do, and what should I avoid?

5- Hell Yeah! or No!

The title actually refers to a book by Derek Sivers, which you should seriously consider reading. It is a simple guide to everything that is worth doing. One of the key takeaways from that book will be mentioned here in this eBook, which is:

Your life is limited, so are your resources; and to use those resources on things that don't even bring you joy is a disservice to you, as well as the people around you (Yip).

Take a good read again. One of the many things that we forget when chasing a life of productivity is that do we even want to do those things? You would definitely be more productive at things that you love doing, rather than at things you don't.

In this rollercoaster of a world, you have unlimited options, and that is essentially a really good thing. However, it can get equally confusing to choose between those things. So Derek came up with a pretty simple and highly effective method to make life choices. Your level of enthusiasm and joy at the time of decision is a sure indicator of whether that thing is worth doing or not.

Even if you start doing things that you don't want to, there will come a time when you'll lose all motivation to see that thing through. Because we humans have a reserve of motivation, we have to carefully ration it until a given task is complete. Things that don't give us joy consume far more motivation than things that we joyfully do.

So, the next time you are perplexed by a decision, ask yourself this:

“Will this thing give me joy?”

There can only be one answer. Either, it is hell yeah, or it is hell no! The most beautiful part is, you'll know exactly which of these answers it is, right at the point of decision. It is important that you let your brain take its sweet time deciding. Carefully thinking about “why” this task will give you joy. You don't have to unwillingly force a task to be joyful, the answer to that “why” should be completely honest.

But what if you get assigned a task that you absolutely must do, and you don't find any joy in doing it?

6- Delegate what you can't do

No, it is not laziness to delegate the tasks that you don't enjoy doing. Think about it, wouldn't it be more productive to delegate the task to someone who actually enjoys doing it and is insanely good at it?

Sure, delegating can be a little expensive. So what you have to do is figure out the dollar value of your time. Imagine that your work is worth 30\$/hour. So anything that is worth less than that, you delegate to someone who is actually good at it and offers that work at, let's say 20\$/hour. While you use your time working on something that you are good at.

This will double your productivity, and in the end, you will always be making a profit, and saving a lot of your time. Many big companies delegate most of their work to other agencies because they know that the dollar worth of their time is actually much more than what they are paying. If you cannot delegate it to someone at a lower price, do it yourself.

Being productive is awesome, you get a lot of stuff done and everything feels nice. But keep one very important thing in mind:

7- Fulfillment is a choice

You can get a million things done in a day, but there will always be that one thing that you missed out on. Don't ever let your brain overshadow those million things by that one tiny email that you forgot to send. There is always a tomorrow, and being content is your choice. Here are some nice words for you:

“The bad news is time flies. The good news is, you are the pilot.” Micheal Altshuler

Try to not crowd your mornings with work emails and texts that you need to respond to. You have the entire day for that. Leave the mornings for yourself, you owe it to your productivity. The starting few minutes of your day sets the tone for the entire day. You surely don't want to read an angry email from your boss in those few minutes, do you?

Instead, tune into your favorite music, get in a little exercise to get the blood flowing, and munch on your favorite food. Your productivity will skyrocket if you are actually in the mood to do something when you get to work.

Final Thoughts:

Planning what you want to do will surely help you do it faster and on time. Our brains are programmed to be distracted, and it doesn't help when there are so many distractions out there. So, develop working in pomodoros, cut out everything else and hyper-focus on that one task. Make blocks of time and incorporate the pomodoro method in it, which will surely double your productivity.

But don't forget to take a breather once in a while, you don't want to exhaust yourself doing everything all at once. Try to build a routine, and follow that strictly. Use pen and paper to plan out everything, don't just let it be in the air. Thoughts will come and go, as we already discussed, our brain is designed to come up with ideas, not hold them.

Productivity isn't something one is born with, it's quite the opposite. You have to work on your habits, day after day. The most important thing is to enjoy what you are doing and be content with what you achieve in a day. If you are content with what you have done, you will surely have the motivation to do it again the next day, and the next, and days after that.

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