

## Time Management Article

Do you ever find yourself wishing there were more hours in the day? Is overtime becoming the norm for you? Do you wish you had more time to spend doing the things that you really want to do?

Most likely you answered yes to one or more of these questions and feel like you are not really where you want to be in life. Maybe work is not going how you would like. Or you could be feeling guilty because you are not spending enough time at home with your family.

However, don't worry just yet. There is a solution to this problem and it is far easier than you might think. It only takes a few small adjustments in the way you use your time to change your life forever. This is not only about managing your time effectively, it can change your life fundamentally and for the better.

This time management article shows you the importance of managing yourself

There are 24 hours in the day. This is something that will not change and we can do nothing about it. While you may not be able to control this, you can manage yourself. Once you realize this you have taken the first step towards effective time management. You must look at the things that are important to you in life and devote your time to these. Everything else should be eliminated from your life.

Managing your time effectively will bring about some dramatic improvements in your life, but you must be prepared to make some fundamental changes. Because of this, you need to take one step at a time. If you bite off more than you can chew at the beginning there is a chance you may fail.

Time management article helping you to know yourself

To take the first step in effective time management you need to know yourself. As we grow older it is easy to lose track of the things that really matter to us in life. It is amazing that we can let this happen to us, but it happens all too easily.

Therefore, the first thing you need to do before you even begin to manage your time is to get in touch with what you really want from life. This is where you find your vision. Remember a time earlier in your life when you felt anything was possible. How did you envisage your life at that time? This could help you to get in touch with your vision. It is likely that some of your priorities will have changed since then, but many will have remained the same.

Think about how you would like your life to be at home and at your work. Also consider your potential and what you think you can really achieve in life. This is your vision.

Where are you now?

If you followed the steps above you should be able to picture your ideal life accurately. The next step is tricky. I want you to compare this vision of your ideal life to your life as it really is now. For most people, the difference between the two can be quite daunting.

Don't worry if this is the case as bridging the gap between your ideal reality and your life now is much easier than you would expect. You may think of effective time management as a tool that will help you to get you to meetings on time. Not so. Effective time management is much more about you and how you choose to spend your time.

Living your life and spending your time the way you want to will involve a few changes - some big, some small. An example of a minor change would be eating healthier. Quitting your job and starting a business, that is a big change. There is a big difference between the two, but both goals are attainable. You need to examine how you spend your time each day and make the necessary changes to achieve your goals.

Planning your day.

You should start by picking two things you want to achieve, one big and one small. Once you have chosen, you should decide on one small step you can take towards achieving each of these tomorrow. If you can complete the one step towards achieving each goal then you have made an excellent start.

This is just one very small step on the way to effective time management but should show you that if you go at your own pace that it is far from impossible. However, you must be much more meticulous in planning your days so that you complete everything you need to do while only spending time on the things that really matter to you.

This is where a time plan comes in. You need to have a very clear idea of what needs to be done, how long it will take, and when it is going to be done. If it is your first time using a time plan you may want to keep a time log for a week or two first. With a time log you write down in detail how you spend your time. Do this for a few days and you will get a clear idea of how you spend your days and how long various tasks take you. When you know how long each task will take, you can plan your day much more accurately.

The 4 Ds of time management

Now you can move onto looking more closely at the things you need to do each day and deciding how to handle them. For this you will need the four Ds of self-management. These are:

\* Do it - Get it done, the sooner the better. \* Delegate it - This task doesn't suit you, get someone else to do it. \* Dump it - Not important. Forget about it. \* Defer it - Something for the 'to do' pile. Come back to it later.

You should be able to file any task that arises in your average day under one of the four Ds.

Time wasters

Now let's look at time wasters. Time wasters can destroy any attempt at effective time management if they are not identified and eliminated. The biggest problem is that they are often

very hard to identify because they can be very trivial.

These are some time wasters to watch out for:

- \* Lack of or poor planning - File things properly, write down appointments, that kind of thing. Basically, you need to be organized to use your time effectively.

- \* Procrastination - Many people keep deferring things when they are best done immediately. Don't fall into this trap.

- \* Not delegating - You can't do it all yourself. Do the things that you are good at and enjoy. Someone else can do the rest.

- \* Interruptions - Set up your workspace so that there are no distractions that will disrupt your workflow.

These and other time wasters are probably eating into your time, so try to identify them and get rid of them.

Hopefully, this will help you get started in managing your time more effectively. Breaking old habits isn't easy so take the changes you need to make one step at a time. As you continue on the journey to effective time management you will find yourself more fulfilled and with more time on your hands for the things that matter to you.

# Importance of Time Management

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## Do We Value It?

What is the importance of time management? The paradox of time is that, for many of us, it's the least considered, worst managed, and yet most valuable resource we have.

The problem with our use of time seems to be that far too many of us neither value time, nor use it properly. Perhaps what really matters then, is considering how we use our time, then choosing to use it more effectively.

Continuing our different perspectives on time management, the importance of time management discusses ways to help you release more time. Time that can then be invested in activities of real value.

There are some good reasons why we need to guard our time, here are three factors that stress the importance of time management:

- You can't buy it. In the sense that time is distributed equally to all, each of us gets 24 hours a day.
- You can't stop it. Time marches on, you can't hold time up to take a bit longer.
- You can't save it. Time can't be saved to be used up at another time when you might feel you need it more.

But you can live it. Eleanor Roosevelt is reputed to have once said:

**“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift; that's why they call it the present.”**

To live well we should make the most of our time.

## Valuing Time

Can you place a value on time? In our article [What is Time Management?](#), we discussed Richard Koch's approach to time management. He argues that if the majority of our time is spent in low-

quality activity, then speeding things up, or being more efficient with our use of time doesn't really help us. In fact, they can become more the problem than the solution!

So perhaps the question we need to ask is: what value do you get out of your time? To be clearer about the importance of time management think about this. It's an interesting summary of typical use of time in any given day. If you were asked to guess, how much free time do you think you have for yourself each day? Lets assume that for basic needs we use:

- 8 hours to sleep;
- 2 hours to eat, (including cooking) and;
- 1 hour personal hygiene (including getting dressed, washing etc.).

That's used 11 hours already. What about work? If we assume what are probably very conservative figures:

- 8 hours a day working (if only!);
- 1 hour's travelling (on average);

That's another 9 hours. Add this to the 11 hours already used and the total is 20 hours.

**That leaves you with only 4 hours to do the things you like – to take it easy, to meet friends, exercise, indulge in leisure or personal growth, to spend time with the family.**

So, if you don't particularly like or enjoy your work, you're not left with much time to do the things you do enjoy. And this picture could well be worse if you consider two other things...

## **Hidden Effects of Time**

Give some thought to productivity and leisure. First productivity. Remember Richard Koch's point that not all time is of equal value. It's not just time that's important it's *what you do with your time*.

Consider the workplace for example. London School of Economics (LSE) Professor, John Van Reenen, compared UK productivity with that of the US. He provocatively made the point that: "Joe Doe in the US could take Thursday and Friday off and still produce as much as poor John Bull in the UK toiling away throughout the working week."

Whether or not you agree with Van Reenen's statement, the issue is that long hour cultures are not *necessarily* productive cultures. Often the activity is just busyness, as discussed in our article: time management at work. In this article we ask: "should we be re-assessing the value of the time we spend at work".

Secondly, and perhaps of more concern, is our use of leisure time, particularly our use of television. In: Bowling Alone, Robert Putnam summarises the position. "Most studies estimate that the average American now watches roughly four hours per day, very nearly the highest anywhere in the world."

Relate that to our earlier calculations, and it seems some of us may be spending all of our free time just watching TV! For both work and leisure we should make sure the benefits of time management are thought through, made visible and realised. Time is simply too important to waste.

### **The Importance of Time Management: Take the Time to....**

There is an abundance of advice to help us manage time. Every week new lists, suggestions and formulae appear in books and all over the internet. Here we offer some advice based on older prose. Hopefully this will inspire you to think again about the importance of time management and ensure you invest your time in valuable activities.

What value do you place on your time? What are you going to do with all this free time you'll be creating? Freeing time is crucial, time to focus on results and worthwhile work. The real importance of time management though, is that it frees you to do more of what you want to do. How might you use some of that freed up time? Here are some wonderfully expressed suggestions from an old Irish text:

**“Take the time to work, for it is the price of success.**

Take the time to think, it is the source of strength.

Take the time to play, it is the secret of youth.

Take the time to read, it is the seed of wisdom.

Take the time to be friendly, for it brings happiness.

Take the time to dream, for it will carry you to the stars.

Take the time to love, it is the joy of life.

Take the time to be content, it is the music of the soul.”

So take the time to assess the importance of time management in your life. Plan to regularly do things in each of these eight areas. At work and in your own time, take the time...