The Pomodoro Technique Summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *The Pomodoro Technique is the simplest way to productively manage your time with only two lists and a timer, by breaking down your workload into small, manageable chunks to stay fresh and focused throughout your day.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:

Francesco Cirillo is a German-Italian programmer and owner of an IT consultancy. Way back in college in the 1980's, he read a study that suggested chunking work into manageable 25 to 40 minute time blocks, to make work easier.

Based on this study, he created his own little time management system using his tomato-shaped timer, a pencil and two lists on paper.

But it wasn't until later that what's now the most widely used productivity technique in the world took the world by storm. Cirillo started sharing his technique openly in the 90's and published a book of the same name in 2006, where he describes it in detail.

Today, over 2 million people use *The Pomodoro Technique* in their lives, so it's likely worth for you to give it a try.

Here are the 3 biggest lessons from the book to get you started:

1. Chunk your work so you won't drown in it.
2. Use physical stimuli to develop flow and focus.
3. Commit to each Pomodoro as if you're getting married.

Ready to change the way you work? Let's go!

Lesson 1: Break your work down into small time blocks.

This is of course the underlying idea of the whole concept.

Cirillo suggests a 25-5 structure.

25 minutes of focused work on a single task are followed by a 5 minute break.

Focused means no interruptions, email, notifications, Amazon browsing, chitchat or coffee refill.

Similarly, break means break: Never check email or think about your work during breaks. Use them to get up, move around, drink some water, stretch, and get some fresh air.

Cirillo says 25 minutes are long enough to make substantial progress, but at the same time not too long to sit through. You can easily push back your urges to check email, knowing you can do so 20 minutes later.

On the other hand, the technique forces you to define your tasks well in advance, because you can't fit a mammoth project into 25 minutes.

This way it also takes away the frustration of chugging away for hours without seeming to get anywhere.

My friend Chris Winfield switched his entire workweek from 40 normal hours to 40 Pomodoros, simply because he gets more done with 40 focused 25-minute blocks than most people in their heavily distracted 40 hours at the office.

The most common objection is that people are afraid of not putting in enough time in total – but this focused time blocking works.

Sometimes, less is more.

Lesson 2: Use physical stimuli to develop flow and focus.

So what's the best way to implement the Pomodoro technique? After all, it's so dead simple, every smart and even dumb phone could be used to do it.

While there are hundreds of digital Pomodoro timers (I like this one, it tracks your Pomodoros), Cirillo says using a physical timer still works best.

Winding it up will strengthen your sense of commitment to the time block, while the ticking noise is a signal that it's time to be focused.

The ring upon hitting the 25 minute mark is then a signal to get out of your flow state and take a break.

Train your brain with these physical stimuli, and you'll make the Pomodoro technique a habit faster.

Lesson 3: Commit to each Pomodoro as if you're getting married.

With so many people successfully using the technique, it's highly likely to work for you too.

But it only does when you strictly adhere to the rules.

Cirillo says there are only complete Pomodori (the original, Italian plural form of the word).

No half Pomodori, no 80% ones, and no "let me check email I finished 60 seconds early" blocks (there's always more you can do, the least being a review of what you've done).

The only reason to stop a Pomodoro is when your house, pants, or butt are on fire.

Don't count half blocks and when you catch yourself watching a Youtube video, reset the timer to zero.

Why commit to each Pomodoro as if you're tying the knot?

To make it a true habit, ingrained deep down in your brain.

You eventually want your brain to default to the Pomodoro technique on autopilot, and committing big gets you there much faster.

The Pomodoro Technique Review

I'd known *The Pomodoro Technique* before, but only really started using it in 2015 and boy, has it been a game changer.

I love it so much I've written about it everywhere (here, here and here).

Am I a little proud a German came up with this? You bet! Not surprising though, given our obsession with efficiency.

The reason you get a week's workload done in 2-3 days with this technique is that at the workplace, we're interrupted every 8 minutes on average, but it takes us 23 minutes to get back to where we were before.

If you use the Pomodoro technique, you'll get 10x as much done as most of your friends. The rewards are going home early, having time for your own projects or spending more time with your family.

The summary on Blinkist is the perfect primer, because it adds some valuable structure around the technique itself, which I hadn't considered before.

The book is hard to get (and a bit expensive, I think) for a technique that's written about for free everywhere, so if you want to get the creator's original thoughts, the summary is perfect.

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- How many Pomodoros you should shoot for in a day
- More ideas for what to do when you finish a block early
- What to do in your breaks and why they are mandatory, not optional
- When to take a longer break
- The two lists Francesco uses to keep his Pomodoro buffer topped up
- Which two kinds of interruptions are your worst enemies
- How to deal with both of them

Who would I recommend The Pomodoro Technique summary to?

The 23 year old who's heard of the technique but hasn't tried it yet, the 57 year old manager, who likes to stay on top of the latest research, but wants to keep his working style old school and anyone who happens to have a timer sitting around at home.

Learn more about the author

Read the full book summary on Blinkist

Get the book on Amazon