

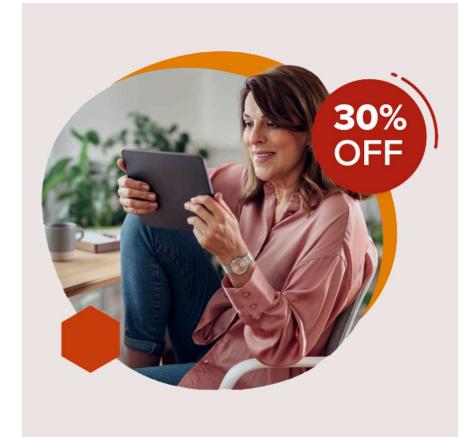


Article • 6 min read

What Is Time Management?

Working Smarter to Enhance Productivity

MTCT By the Mind Tools Content Team



Key Takeaways:

- Effective time management involves dedicating the right amounts of time to the most important things.
- It takes good decision making and careful organization, then strong self-management to put your plans into action.
- To improve your time management, develop your skills of prioritization, scheduling, goal setting, and concentration.
- There are also plenty of time-management tools available to help you use your time more efficiently, productively and enjoyably.

Do you ever feel like there's not enough time in the day?

We all get the same 24 hours – so why do some people seem to achieve more with their time than others? The answer: good time management.

Time management is the process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between different activities. Get it right, and you'll end up working smarter, not harder, to get more done in less time – even when time is tight and pressures are high.

The highest achievers manage their time exceptionally well. And by using Mind Tools' time-management resources, you too can make the most of your time – starting right now!

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When you know how to manage your time effectively, you can unlock many benefits. These include:

- Greater productivity and efficiency.
- Less stress.
- A better professional reputation.
- Increased chances of advancement.
- More opportunities to achieve your life and career goals.

Overall, you start feeling more in control, with the confidence to choose how best to use your time.

And by feeling happier, more relaxed, and better able to think, you're in a great place to help others reach their targets, too.

How to Improve Your Time-Management Skills

Start by assessing your existing approach. How good are you at organizing your time so that you get the important things done well? Can you balance your time between different activities? And when you do make time to do something, are you able to focus – and get it finished?

Our quiz, [How Good Is Your Time Management](#), will show you what you're getting right, as well as highlight where – and how – you can improve.

Tip:

Good time management takes a shift in focus from **activities** to **results**. Being busy isn't the same as being effective. In fact, for many people, the busier they are, the less they actually achieve.

General Time-Management Tools



management challenges, as well as ways to change key habits for the better.

[How to Be More Organized](#) explains why your environment needs to be as organized as your thinking! There are practical tips from highly organized people, plus ideas for using technology to take more control of your time.

And, since good time management relies on planning, recording and reflecting on your activities, we explain some of the best-known tools for doing this, including [Activity Logs](#), [To-Do Lists](#) and [Action Programs](#).

Prioritization

You can achieve more when you start dedicating time to the right things. But how do you know what those things are?

[Eisenhower's Urgent/Important Principle](#) is a way to distinguish between demands, so that you prioritize them wisely.

[The Action Priority Matrix](#) includes a downloadable worksheet for exploring how much time to give to different activities (if you should be doing them at all!).

And our article, [Managing Conflicting Priorities](#), explains what to do if priorities clash.

Scheduling

You may know what you need to do – but when should you do it? Timing is everything.

It pays to get tough tasks done while you're still feeling fresh, for example, as we explain in [Is This a "Morning" Task?](#)

And you can boost your efficiency, gain people's trust, and use adrenaline to your advantage, by reading [How to Meet a Deadline](#).

Goal Setting



[Treasure Mapping](#) is a powerful way to see your goals clearly – so that you're motivated to give them the time they need. [Personal Mission Statements](#) are also helpful for being organized and staying committed to your plans.

Concentration and Focus

It's no good just making the time to pursue your priorities. You have to use that time well, too. We have a collection of resources devoted to doing just that, including advice on [minimizing distractions](#), and getting into a focused state of "[flow](#)".

There's also detailed guidance on using your time well when you're [working from home](#), and when you're [doing your job on the move](#).

Help With Better Time Management

Even with the best intentions, and plenty of powerful tactics, it's all too easy to fall back into bad time-management habits. So Mind Tools offers a number of resources that will help you to stay on track.

[How to Stop Procrastinating](#), for example, explains why it's so tempting to put things off – and how to stop doing it.

[9 Ways to Use Your Dead Time Wisely](#) makes sure that you don't waste a moment.

And in [Self-Discipline](#) we explore the core skills you'll need to embed long-lasting time-management techniques.

Quick Tips for Time Management

The resources mentioned above cover a wide range of tried and true time management strategies. But if you need a few quick pointers, here's a list of 10 practical time management tips:



- **Use Tools and Apps:** Utilize productivity tools and apps to help manage your tasks, schedule your day, set reminders, etc.
- **Set SMART Goals:** Set goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This provides clear direction and makes tasks more manageable.
- **Time Blocking:** Dedicate specific blocks of time to different tasks or types of work throughout your day. This can help reduce context switching and improve focus.
- **Delegate When Possible:** If there are tasks that can be done by someone else, delegate them. This allows you to focus on the tasks that require your specific skillset.
- **Avoid Multitasking:** Multitasking often leads to mistakes and decreased productivity. Instead, focus on one task at a time until it's completed.
- **Create a Structured Daily Routine:** Having a set routine can help ensure that you're making the most of your day and not wasting time deciding what to do next.
- **Minimize Interruptions:** Try to create an environment where you're not constantly being interrupted. This might involve setting office hours, using "do not disturb" mode on your phone, or setting boundaries with colleagues.
- **Take Care of Your Health:** Remember to get regular exercise, eat healthily, and get plenty of sleep. These factors can have a significant impact on your energy levels and overall productivity.
- **Regularly Review and Reflect on Your Work:** Take time at the end of each week to review what you've accomplished and identify any challenges you faced. This can help you continually improve your productivity strategies and make necessary adjustments for the upcoming week. This process of self-reflection can help you identify time sinks, and efficiency gaps, or prioritize tasks better for future planning.

Remember, different strategies work for different people. It can be helpful to experiment with different approaches to see what works best for you.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is time management and why is it important? Time management is the process of organizing and planning how to allocate your time between different



How can I assess my current time management skills? Our quiz, [How Good Is Your Time Management](#), can provide insights into areas you excel in and where you may need improvement.

Is being busy the same as being productive? No. Good time management is about shifting focus from mere activities to actual results. It's possible to be busy and still not achieve meaningful outcomes.

What tools I can use to improve my time management? Some tools to help you manage your time better include Activity Logs, To-Do Lists, and Action Programs.

How do I prioritize tasks when everything seems important? Eisenhower's Urgent/Important Principle can help you to categorize and prioritize tasks based on their urgency and importance.

How can I minimize distractions and maintain focus? Create an environment free from unnecessary distractions. This might include setting boundaries with colleagues, using "do not disturb" modes on electronic devices, and committing to a single task rather than multitasking. It's also beneficial to understand your peak productivity times during the day and schedule challenging tasks accordingly.

Key Points

Time management means organizing your time intelligently – so that you use it more effectively.

The benefits of good time management include:

- Greater productivity.
- Less stress.
- More opportunities to do the things that matter.



- Be more organized.
- To prioritize better.
- To schedule tasks appropriately – and complete them in a focused and efficient way.

Our resources also explain how to use clear goals to guide your time management, helping you to stay motivated and disciplined.

And there's advice on overcoming common time-management challenges, so that you keep improving your approach – and using your time to the full!

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KR Kate Robinson

If you want to improve your time management skills, you can use an app that will help you with that. <https://kanbantool.com/> might be the right choice for that. You can test it for free so you don't have to spend money until you're sure it's something for you.

0 Reply · about 2 months

jr jim roger

Nice article thanks ,organizing our days or weeks based on main "priorities" can help us start building confidence by progressively achieving tasks that contribute to our long-term "main goals" of our situation. I share this app that has helped me with that.: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=fr.cfml.taskorganizer>

0 Reply · 3 months

AL Ana Lopes

Thank you very much for the article! I think good time management is not an easy thing. Day by day I try to learn, because only well organized people can obtain something. I was also thinking about kanbantool.com as digital tools and agendas are very helpful to organize daily tasks. Thank you for the article once again!

0 Reply · 4 months

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