

Time Tracking for Tech Projects



Topics

The Importance of Time Tracking

Building the Habit

Time Reporting

Time Management with Pomodoro

The Importance of Time Tracking



The Importance of Time Tracking

In many jobs time tracking means punching in and out on time for a day of work and little else.

When working on technology projects time tracking is about collecting accurate data on the time it takes for a team or an individual to complete a given **task** or **set of tasks**.

This data is used when billing clients and for estimations in future project proposals.

The Importance of Time Tracking

Time tracking data should never be used for micromanaging employees.

Time tracking data is sometimes used to identify problems in productivity but typically these problems are **owned by the whole team** and are not attributed to a single person's work ethic or skill level.

Deadlines are usually set based on the estimates provided by you, the developer.

The Importance of Time Tracking

When working on multiple contracts highly accurate time tracking becomes absolutely essential.

Your time may be billed to the client in **15-minute intervals**.

Time spent on training, or in some meetings may be considered non-billable. This is time for which your employer must pay you out of their own pockets.

The Importance of Time Tracking

Developing software requires focus. **Multitasking is to be avoided.**

Over-reporting can happen when you provide too much detail and under-reporting is when you provide too little.

New habits are hard to build. At first time tracking may feel like a hindrance but over time it will feel more natural.

Time tracking should be done as you work, and not estimated at the end of each day.

Building the Habit



Building the Habit

Select Task → Estimate → Track → Compare → Repeat

Select Task

Work assignments typically come in the form of Kanban cards, technical issue tickets, or work items.

Some tasks may be bundled together. In this case select the task that you find hardest or are least comfortable with to do first.

This will foster 'fast failure' which is **good** even though it sounds bad.

Estimate

Learning how to estimate time is difficult for beginners.

At first you can take your best guess, then double that amount of time 'just in case'.

As you gain experience your estimates will become more accurate.

Be sure to write down each estimate **before** you start a task.

Track

As you begin work on your task note the time (to the nearest quarter-hour) or start a timer.

You can use apps, stop watches, spreadsheets, or just a pen and a notebook.

[Harvest](#), [TickSpot](#), [Trello](#), [KanbanFlow](#) and many other apps are available for you to try.

Do not switch tasks until your task is complete!

Compare

After your task is completed note the time (to the nearest quarter-hour) or end your timer.

Compare your actual time to your estimated time and reflect on the steps you took to complete your task.

Do not judge yourself harshly. The goal is to increase the accuracy of estimates, not to work fast.

Repeat

Use what you learned in the previous task when selecting and estimating your next task.

Continue repeating until all tasks are complete or until the work day is done.

Stay focused on one task at a time. Learning to 'stick-with-it' is one of the best habits a new developer can develop.

Time Reporting



Time Reporting

At least once every two weeks you will be asked to report your hours on a timesheet - usually using a tool like PeopleSoft, Jira, or Quickbooks.

Reporting your time accurately and on-time is extremely important.

Late time reports are quite serious as they often have a negative impact on your company's ability to collect money from the client.

Time Reporting

Each client or project may be assigned a time code.

You must tally the total hours spent on each time code for each day.

You must also tally non-billable time as per your company's policy.



Review/Adjust Time for Pat Provider


Enter the time worked, then click the 'Save' button to save your changes. When finished entering time, click the 'Review and Submit' button to submit the timesheet for approval.

Timesheet Name SMP0000341 **Timesheet ID** SMP0000341
Date Range 01/21/2007 to 01/27/2007 **Timesheet Status** Approved
Business Unit US001 **Time Template** Weekly, no Overtime
Time Category Status System Generated
Comments

Report Time for Work Order

Work Order Name PROJECT BLUE SKY **Work Order ID** DMO00000070000
Job Title Project Worker

Report Time for Work Order [Personalize](#)  

01/21/07 - 01/27/07									
Line	Line Status	Sun 21	Mon 22	Tue 23	Wed 24	Thu 25	Fri 26	Sat 27	Hours
1	 Approved	<input type="text"/>	8.00	8.00	10.00	7.00	7.00	<input type="text"/>	40.00

Review Time Category

[Return to: Maintain Timesheets](#)

Time Management with Pomodoro



Pomodoro



Pomodoro

1. Decide on the task to be done.
2. Set the pomodoro timer (25 min).
3. Work on the task.
4. End work when the timer rings.
Put a checkmark on a piece of paper.
5. If you have fewer than four checkmarks, take a 3–5 min break and then return to step 2.
6. After four pomodoros, take a longer break (15–30 minutes), reset your checkmark count to zero, then go to step 1.

Pomodoro

Every evening before you leave the office choose 3-5 things you must accomplish the next day and rank them according to priority.

The next morning start work on the highest-priority task.

Block out 2-3 hours and then iterate through the 6 steps until task is done.

Do not start any other task until task #1 is completed.

If you become distracted then reset the timer.

Pomodoro

5 minute break after every full pomodoro

15 - 20 minute break after every 4 full pomodoros

If you finish a task before a pomodoro is complete then you can review/edit your work or plan your next task but you must finish the pomodoro.

Pomodoro

If you are interrupted during a task try

Inform → Negotiate → Schedule → Call Back:

Politely **informing** the person interrupting you that you are busy.

Negotiating a new time to deal with the interruption.

Add the interruption to your **schedule**.

Calling back at the agreed upon time.

Review

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Quiz

Quiz:

<https://forms.gle/naoetkZ56eKo9wkz5>

Recommended Reading

To learn more about The Pomodoro Technique, take a look at the following resources:

- [Official Website](#)
- [Nöteberg, S. \(December 2009\). *Pomodoro Technique Illustrated*. Pragmatic Bookshelf.](#)