

How Good Is Your Time Management?

Instructions

For each statement, tick the column that best describes you being

1 = Not at all

2 = Rarely

3 = Sometimes

4 = Often

5 = Very often

Answer the questions as you actually are, rather than how you think you should be. When you are finished, score yourself:

Question	Rating				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. The tasks I work on are with the highest priority					
2. I find myself completing tasks before deadlines and not having to ask for extensions					
3. I set aside time for planning and scheduling					
4. I know how much time I spend on each of the various tasks I do.					
5. I find myself good at dealing with interruptions					
6. I use goal setting to decide what tasks and activities I should work on.					
7. I leave contingency time in my schedule to deal with the unexpected					
8. I know whether the tasks I am working on are high, medium, or low value.					
9. When I am given a new assignment, I analyse it for importance and prioritize it accordingly					
10. I find myself sticking to deadlines and commitments					
11. I do not get distracted when I'm working on critical tasks					
12. I finish all my work in the office and leave it there					
13. I prioritize my to do list or action programme					
14. I confirm my priorities with my boss					
15. Before, I take on my task, I check that the results will be worth the time to put it.					

COMPUTING YOUR SCORE

Map your scores below and add them all up.

QUESTION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TOTAL
RATING																

Score Interpretation

Score	Comment
15-30	Ouch. The good news is that you've got a great opportunity to improve your effectiveness at work, and your long term success! However, to realize this, you've got to fundamentally improve your time management skills.
31-45	You're good at some things, but there's room for improvement elsewhere. Focus on the serious issues below, and you'll most likely find that work becomes much less stressful.
46-75	You're managing your time very effectively! Still, check the sections below to see if there's anything you can tweak to make this even better.

As you answered the questions, you probably had some insight into areas where your time management could use a pick-me-up. The following is a quick summary of the main areas of time management that were explored in the quiz, and a guide to the specific tools you can use for each.

Goal Setting

(Questions 6, 10)

To start managing time effectively, you need to set goals. When you know where you're going, you can then figure out what exactly needs to be done, in what order. Without proper goal setting, you'll fritter your time away on a confusion of conflicting priorities.

People tend to neglect goal setting because it requires time and effort. What they fail to consider is that a little time and effort put in now saves an enormous amount of time, effort

and frustration in the future. If you are serious about time management, we suggest you start with Personal Goal Setting,

Prioritization

(Questions 1, 4, 8, 13, 14, 15)

Prioritizing what needs to be done is especially important. Without it, you may work very hard, but you won't be achieving the results you desire because what you are working on is not of strategic importance.

Most people have a "to-do" list of some sort. The problem with many of these lists is they are just a collection of things that need to get done. There is no rhyme or reason to the list and, because of this, the work they do is just as unstructured. So how do you work on To Do List tasks – top down, bottom up, easiest to hardest?

To work efficiently you need to work on the most important, highest value tasks. This way you won't get caught scrambling to get something critical done as the deadline approaches.

Managing Interruptions

(Questions 5, 9, 11, 12)

Having a plan and knowing how to prioritize it is one thing. The next issue is knowing what to do to minimize the interruptions you face during your day. It is widely recognized that managers get very little uninterrupted time to work on their priority tasks. There are phone calls, information requests, questions from employees, and a whole host of events that crop up unexpectedly. Some do need to be dealt with immediately, but others need to be managed.

Procrastination

(Questions 2)

"I'll get to it later" has led to the downfall of many a good employee. After too many "laters" the work piles up so high that any task seems insurmountable. Procrastination is as tempting as it is deadly. The best way to beat it is to recognize that you do indeed procrastinate. Then you need to figure out why. Perhaps you are afraid of failing? (And some people are actually afraid of success!)

Once you know why you procrastinate then you can plan to get out of the habit. Reward yourself for getting jobs done, and remind yourself regularly of the horrible consequences of not doing those boring tasks!

Scheduling

(Questions 3, 7)

Much of time management comes down to effective scheduling of your time. When you know what your goals and priorities are, you then need to know how to go about creating a schedule that keeps you on track, and protects you from stress.

This means understanding the factors that affect the time you have available for work. You not only have to schedule priority tasks, you have to leave room for interruptions, and contingency time for those unexpected events that otherwise wreak chaos with your schedule. By creating a robust schedule that reflects your priorities and well as supports your personal goals, you have a winning combination: One that will allow you to control your time and keep your life in balance.