



Pomodoro Technique

The **Pomodoro Technique** is a time management method developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s.^[1] It uses a kitchen timer to break work into intervals, typically 25 minutes in length, separated by short breaks. Each interval is known as a *pomodoro*, from the Italian word for tomato, after the tomato-shaped kitchen timer Cirillo used as a university student.^{[2][1]}

Apps and websites providing timers and instructions have widely popularized the technique. Closely related to concepts such as timeboxing and iterative and incremental development used in software design, the method has been adopted in pair programming contexts.^[3]



A pomodoro kitchen timer

Description

The original technique has six steps:^[4]

1. Decide on the task to be done.
2. Set the Pomodoro timer (typically for 25 minutes).^[1]
3. Work on the task.
4. End work when the timer rings and take a short break (typically 5–10 minutes).^[5]
5. Go back to Step 2 and repeat until you complete four pomodori.
6. After four pomodori are done, take a long break (typically 20 to 30 minutes) instead of a short break. Once the long break is finished, return to step 2.

For the purposes of the technique, a *pomodoro* is an interval of work time.^[1]

A goal of the technique is to reduce the effect of internal and external interruptions on focus and flow. A pomodoro is indivisible; when interrupted during a Pomodoro, either the other activity must be recorded and postponed (using the *inform – negotiate – schedule – call back* strategy^[6]) or the pomodoro must be abandoned.^{[1][4][7]}

After task completion in a Pomodoro, any remaining time should be devoted to activities, for example:

1. Review the work you just completed (optional)
2. Review the activities from a learning point of view (ex: What learning objective did you accomplish? What learning outcome did you accomplish? Did you fulfill your learning target, objective, or outcome for the task?)
3. Review the list of upcoming tasks for the next planned pomodoro time blocks, and start reflecting on or updating them.

Cirillo suggests:

Specific cases should be handled with common sense: If you finish a task while the Pomodoro is still ticking, the following rule applies: If a Pomodoro begins, it has to ring. It's a good idea to take advantage of the opportunity for overlearning, using the remaining portion of the Pomodoro to review or repeat what you've done, make small improvements, and note what you've learned until the Pomodoro rings.^[1]

The stages of planning, tracking, recording, processing and visualizing are fundamental to the technique.^[1] In the planning phase, tasks are prioritized by recording them in a "To Do Today" list, enabling users to estimate the effort they will require. As pomodori are completed, they are recorded, adding to a sense of accomplishment and providing raw data for subsequent self-observation and improvement.^[1]

Tools

The creator and his proponents encourage a low-tech approach, using a mechanical timer, paper, and pencil. The physical act of winding the timer confirms the user's determination to start the task; ticking externalizes the desire to complete the task; ringing announces a break. Flow and focus become associated with these physical stimuli.^{[1][8]}

The technique has inspired application software for several platforms, with various programs available.^{[9][10]}

See also

- Body doubling
- Incremental reading
- Life hacking
- Procrastination

References

1. Cirillo, Francesco, *The Pomodoro Technique* (<https://web.archive.org/web/20230331051358/https://francescocirillo.com/products/the-pomodoro-technique>), archived from the original (<https://francescocirillo.com/products/the-pomodoro-technique>) on 31 March 2023
2. Cummings, Tucker (31 January 2011). "The Pomodoro Technique: Is It Right For You?" (<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/the-pomodoro-technique-is-it-right-for-you.html>). *Lifehack*. Retrieved 30 December 2018.
3. Olsen, Patricia R.; Remsik, Jim (19 September 2009). "For Writing Software, a Buddy System" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/20/jobs/20pre.html>). *The New York Times*.
4. Nöteberg, Staffan (2010). *Pomodoro Technique Illustrated*. Raleigh, N.C: Pragmatic Bookshelf. ISBN 978-1-934356-50-0.
5. Cirillo, Francesco. "Get Started" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180203215030/https://cirillocompany.de/pages/pomodoro-technique>). *The Pomodoro Technique*. Archived from the original (<https://cirillocompany.de/pages/pomodoro-technique/>) on 3 February 2018. Retrieved 6 January 2016. "4. When the Pomodoro Rings, Put a Checkmark on a Paper"

Click the "how" link and see step 4. Presumably, the piece of paper can be one's task list or similar. In any case, four check marks indicate a longer break (step 6).

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