# 10 Quick Tips to Improve Your Productivity at Work

Productivity advice can be so general sometimes. "Keep your inbox empty." Or "You can't multitask." But productivity is hardly a one-size-fits-all concept. The best way to work depends on the person, it depends on the task, and it depends on the situation surrounding both. Even the tips in this eBook may be inappropriate for your own productivity or it may clash with your style. Nevertheless, here are some ways to maximize your productivity in a tailored way.
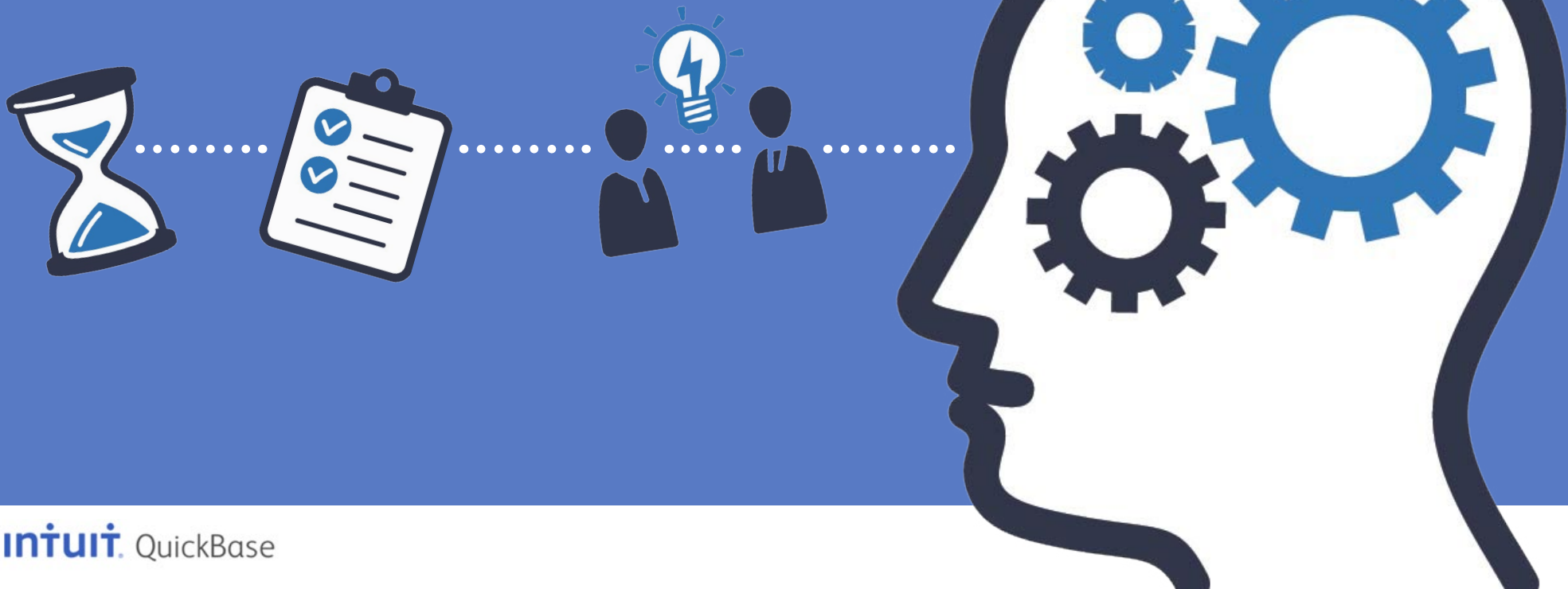
Starting the day off right
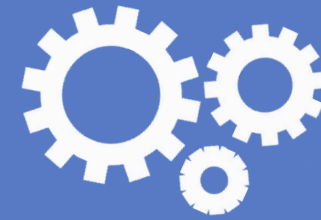
1. Focus mentally

No time for a 30 minute yoga class before work? Is your commute more like the Indy 500 or bumper to bumper traffic for an hour, stressing you out? **Close your eyes and take some deep breaths before you turn on your computer.** Tweet

2. Prioritze the day's work

It's easy to respond quickly to that first urgent e-mail, and next thing you know it's two hours later and you haven't gotten anything done. **Sit down with your to-do list and map out what you need to do that day, and in what order.** Becoming familiar with your peak productivity time should help you plan. Leave yourself some free time in case anything urgent comes up out of the blue, but try to stick to your schedule as much as possible – especially in the morning. You can reward yourself with mindless Internet surfing later when the work is done!

Next, post these three priorities up where you can see them. Vagueness is not motivating, but a consistent reminder about your priorities creates focus, momentum, and vision. If these are not at the top of your mind when you begin your day, you're much more likely to waste time, be less productive, and deliver mediocre results. Tweet

3. Clear your desk = productivity booster

A disorganized workspace is a disorganized brain, so **clear your desk of anything that doesn't pertain directly to the day's activities.** Doing so each morning will prevent things from piling up and ensure that you don't miss an important note or assignment left by your co-worker or manager. 🐦 **Tweet**

Personal Productivity

4. Be considerate of tasks or projects involving others

If the project you are working on needs the input or approval of someone else, bump it up to the top of your list. You never know how long it might take them or where it fits on their priority list. Plan for it to take longer. Also, it's rude to send a message at 4:30 that says, "Hey, can you review this by the end of the day?" 🐦 **Tweet**

5. Know when and how to singletask

When you need to finish up an urgent project or you need to focus your attention on something important, create an environment where you are able to do that and only that. Close your door, shut down your email, don't take Facebook breaks, and allow yourself to get into the flow of your work, the state where you are fully immersed in your work and are enjoying what you are doing. Focusing your attention on just one project will allow you do give it your best self. 🐦 **Tweet**

6. Become aware of what works and what doesn't

Do a self-assessment and then ask yourself the following reflective questions to get to the bottom of your productive (or nonproductive) habits:

- **Schedules -** What does a typical Monday look like? What does a typical Friday look like? How much can I expect to get done during each? Am I more productive in the mornings or in the afternoons? When should I schedule my singletasking time?

- **Email -** How often do I really need to check my email? Do I miss important pieces of data if I only check it once a day? Is checking it once per half hour something that benefits me?

- **Interruptions -** How do interruptions affect my day? Are interruptions welcome? Are interruptions draining? How long does it take me to get back on track after something diverts my attention? **Tweet**
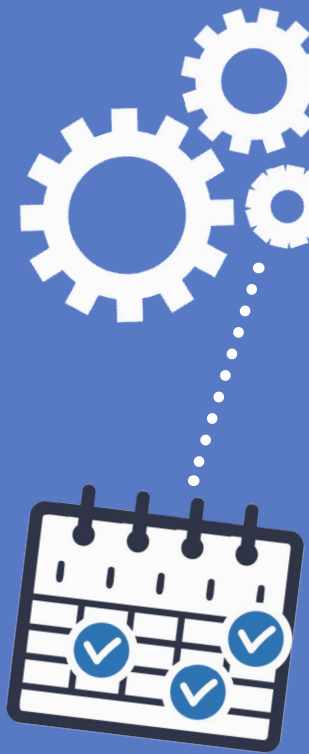
7. Unnecessary Meetings and Inefficient Spreadsheet-driven Processes = Lost Productivity

As someone with an eye toward improving productivity and adding to the bottom line at your organization, why not try a Do-It-Yourself, web-based database solution like QuickBase to improve your team's productivity and collaboration? It will also reduce your need for so many meetings and the pain associated with emailing around spreadsheets. **Tweet**

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Stress & Productivity

8. Got stress?
If you're like 75% of other Americans, you've experienced moderate to high levels of stress in the past month, and often lie awake at night because of it.

In her book, "Success Under Stress: Powerful Tools for Staying Calm, Confident, and Productive When the Pressure's On," Sharon Melnick, PhD writes that every challenge, can be divided into the 50% you can control and the 50% you cannot.

The key to having success under stress is controlling what you CAN control. You can practice this by dividing every challenge into two parts: the aspects of the situation that you can control, such as how you communicate, and the aspects that you can't control, such as other people's reactions. Then, make sure that you are effective in what you are doing before you ever allow yourself to lose time and focus in frustration over what is not in your control.

Scientists estimate we have about 60,000 thoughts a day. That self-talk you have all day long is like listening to a mental iPod. What tunes are playing on your mental iPod throughout the day? If they are tunes that are bringing you down or focusing on what's bad about your situation, you can always be a better DJ of your own mental iPod. **Tweet**

9. Clarity is a time management tool

What is the best work to be accomplished by you versus other people? Spend as much time as possible doing that skill, and require yourself to delegate, outsource, barter, or eliminate as many other tasks as possible.

Second, be clear about the objectives your work serves. If you work in an organization, make sure that the work you do aligns with the strategic objectives of your group and the company's future directions. Always ask your manager for that larger context and check in to make sure your work is on track. If you work for yourself, rather than going to random networking events or trying to get your social media messages anywhere and everywhere – spare yourself this "spray and pray" marketing in favor of real clarity.

Third, answer in three seconds this question: "What are the top one or two efforts that either add the most value to your organization or do more than any other effort to bring in new business?" Instead of getting caught up in the day-to-day, think through the work you have to do until the point of clarity. Let your clarity help you be intentional about what you spend your time on. **Tweet**
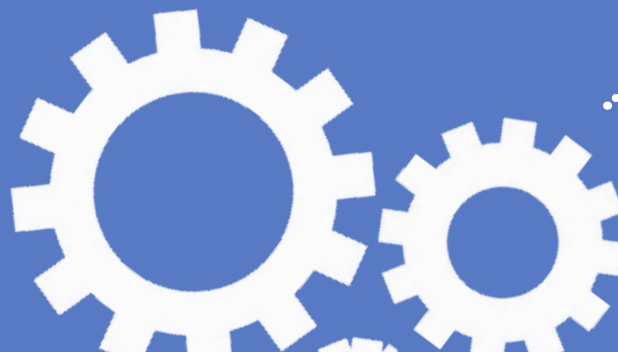
10. Set your degree of availablity

We can't help having our attention immediately drawn to an incoming text or email notification. And I mean that literally – our brains are wired to deflect our attention to it. But even if we don't have free will, we still have "free won't." We have the ability to stop ourselves from responding to that interruption. Decide what degree of availability seems right for you – have pre-set criteria which interruptions and communications you will respond to, and then filter out all other communications as often as you can. **Tweet**

Indentify your weekly goal

What are your three most important tasks?

- ◆ Identify your job purpose: Name the top three priorities for you right now at work.

- ◆ Identify your weekly purpose: Set a goal for the top two things to get done this week.

- ◆ Identify your daily purpose: Remember that your inbox is not your to-do list.

Being busy does not equate to being productive nor does it mean you are delivering value. Stop reacting to the work people throw at you. Become proactive about your daily activities. What are the activities and tasks that–done consistently–will, over time, take you to your goals? That is the work to fit in to your busy schedule and organize the rest of your day around.

About QuickBase

Designed with the business user in mind, Intuit's QuickBase is the fastest, easiest and most flexible way to help teams work together.

QuickBase provides one platform from which workgroups can easily create unlimited applications to automate business processes and improve communication and collaboration online. QuickBase online database applications solve critical business problems and help improve productivity and efficiency because they are tailored by the user to match the exact workflow and unique needs of their team - something complex point solutions or generic spreadsheets simply can't match.

Used by more than half of the Fortune 100, QuickBase is the only proven team collaboration platform that's perfect for business users - regardless of size, location or industry - while delivering the visibility and control IT executives need to manage enterprise-wide deployments in large companies.