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How to Get 40 Hours of Work Done in 16.7 ¹

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If you're anything like I used to be, you work a lot – 60, 80, or even 100 hours a week. You let your work be a big part of how you define yourself. You wear those insane hours like a badge of honor, though in 100 years, or even next year, nobody will remember how many hours you worked this week, nor care. ³

So why do we do it? Looking back to when I worked like that, I realize I used my work to try and fill a void in myself. The problem was that this void was like a black hole. No matter how many hours I worked, it never seemed to fill it up. If anything, it made me feel worse.

One day I'd had enough. Truth be told, I'd had way more than enough. I stopped and reevaluated my life, trying to figure out what was important to me, and what wasn't. I realized that while work was important, because I want to feel productive, it was just one important thing, and not the most important one at that. What's more, I realized that working on things I didn't love was detrimental to my well-being. ²

That's when I decided I had to make a big change...

Free Bonus: [Click here to get access to a free 32-page eBook](#) that will show you exactly how to how to save 23.3 hours EACH week (includes worksheets, tools and other goodies).

Searching for the Way

I've been on a journey to make that change for ten months now. Since work is important to me, I had to figure out how to work smarter, not harder. I had to optimize my work process, doing more in less time. Of course, I also had to find work I enjoyed, that fulfilled me, rather than work that drained me. By doing this, I have more time to improve myself, be with friends and family, and truly be healthy on all levels – mind, body, and soul.

I love to read. I especially love to read things that help me improve myself. The change I embarked on gave me the perfect excuse to go on a reading binge! I read every book I could find on the subject of working smarter. I read a ton of blog posts on the same topic. Some of what I read actually made the *4 Hour Workweek* sound like a lot of work.

Then, I took the things that made the most sense to me, and implemented them. Some were complete disasters. Some worked partially, but clearly weren't for me. Then, I noticed that several different solutions each had a piece of the puzzle. I took those parts that worked for me, and combined them into my own system. **Slowly but surely, I developed a formula that would forever change how I work.**

Enter the Pomodoro



Over the years I'd heard about a time management system called the Pomodoro Technique. It seemed too simplistic, but as they say, the simplest things often work best. I read [the 2006 paper](#) written by its creator, Francesco Cirilio, which explained the

technique and as importantly, the psychology behind it. This revolutionary time management system is deceptively simple to learn, but life-changing when applied correctly. The [Pomodoro Technique](#) can be broken down into the following four basic principles.

1. Work with time, not against it: Many of us live as if time is our enemy. We race the clock to finish assignments and meet deadlines. The Pomodoro Technique teaches us to work with time, instead of struggling against it.

2. Eliminate burnout: Taking short, scheduled breaks while working eliminates the “running on fumes” feeling you get when you push yourself too hard. It’s impossible to overwork when you stick to the system.

3. Manage distractions: Phone calls, emails, Facebook messages, or suddenly realizing you need to change the oil in your car – distractions constantly bombard us. Usually, these distractions can wait. The Pomodoro Technique helps you log your distractions, and prioritize them for later.

4. Create a better work/life balance: Most of us are far too intimately acquainted with the guilt that comes from procrastination. If we haven’t had a productive day, we can’t seem to enjoy our free time. As a Pomodoro Master, you create an effective timetable and achieve your high-priority tasks, so you truly enjoy your time off.

“All this is great,” you may think, “but what do I actually do?”

It’s Simple:

- 1) Choose a task;
- 2) Set a timer for 25 minutes;
- 3) Work on your task until the timer rings, then put a checkmark on a tracker;
- 4) Take a five minute break (you just completed your first Pomodoro!); then

5) Repeat steps 1-4 three more times, followed by a 15 minute break.

Simple, But...

Now, you're probably thinking "*Twenty five minutes of work? That's nothing! This is gonna be easy!*" Not so fast... That's **25 minutes of steady, focused work on ONE task**. No multitasking. No emails. No phone calls. No checking Facebook. **Nothing!** No distractions allowed!

For me, this took some getting used to, and required some tools and hacks. Here's what I used:

1) A kitchen timer (or an app);

2) Airplane mode (the most important function on any mobile phone!);

3) A quiet place to work and/or a good pair of headphones or earplugs;

4) Pen and paper (for those Pomodoro checkmarks);

5) Five minutes each morning to plan out the day's tasks; and

6) 30 minutes at the end of each week to review the past week and plan for the next.

Finding the Magic Combination

Like most things in my life, I learned through experimentation, experiencing a lot of pain and frustration but ultimately [growth](#).

At first, I thought I could do 16 Pomodoros each day, no problem. I was used to working so much, that less than seven hours of work seemed like nothing. The first day I completed 12 Pomodoros. I got a ton done, but still felt like a failure because I fell short of my goal. I felt tired and miserable.

Over the following days, I tried cutting back on my target number. When it worked, I got a ton of stuff done and felt amazingly productive. I knew I was onto something good. Other days, I did too little or too much, felt like crap and was convinced this was the dumbest system in the world.

One day, I just ignored the system altogether and went back to multitasking. I was unfocused, unproductive, and frustrated. I gritted my teeth and kept doing things my old way for a few more days. What I found was that I got things done, but my productivity simply couldn't compare to when it all clicked with the Pomodoros.

Sanity returned. I began experimenting with smaller numbers of Pomodoros, starting with five per day, gradually working my way up to eight. My goal was eight Pomodoros each weekday, for a total of 40 per week. This worked, sort of, but as they say, life happens. Some days I had so many meetings to attend, or my daughter had a recital at school which I didn't want to miss, and I just couldn't find fit in eight Pomodoros. It became clear that 40 was my magic weekly number, but I needed to be less rigid with how I approached my work-week.

The math was straightforward: *40 Pomodoros = 1,000 minutes of work* (plus 350 minutes of breaks) each week. This averages out to about **16.7 hours of work each week**. That's it!

However, when I had too much going on, or felt physically or mentally off, I couldn't fit in eight Pomodoros. I'd fall behind, and next day I'd try to cram in 14, leaving me exhausted and not very happy with the quality of my work. I realized I had to step back and rethink my week, paying attention to my moods. To refocus on [what was right](#) for me. The Pomodoro Technique was great, but something was missing to make it really work for me.

The Psychology of Motivation



In a perfect world, I'd have eight high-value tasks identified at the start of each workday. I'd prioritize these, and knock them off one by one, from most important to least. I'd be equally enthusiastic and motivated about each one, wouldn't be interrupted, and would finish my day's work in less than three hours. Sounds great, right? Unfortunately, as the TV ad says, we live nowhere near perfect.

The reality is that I'm a human being, living in a world full of other humans. I have emotions I don't control, and I often get tired. Some tasks I simply don't feel like doing, even though I know they're important, and possibly urgent. To make this work long-term, I had to face these things and learn to accept them, working with, rather than against them.

My energy level and attitude affect my work and output, so I had to stay present to how I was feeling, and master myself. Reading a useful blog post, I found [questions like these](#) especially helpful:

- My physical energy – *how healthy am I?*
- My emotional energy – *how happy am I?*
- My mental energy – *how well can I focus on something?*
- My spiritual energy – *why am I doing this? What is my purpose?*

These questions helped me take into account my mood and energy when prioritizing tasks. As a result, I no longer did anything just because I felt I had to. When my physical energy was low, I'd work on my health and wellness. When my emotional energy was low, I'd find something that made me happy, like spending time with my wife and

daughter.

A Seven-Day Workweek

Remember where I started all this – working crazy hours, evenings, and weekends? When I decided to change, I swore to myself I'd never work on weekends, holidays, vacations, or even after 5 PM. Great, right? Well, I'm happy to report I've broken all of these promises, and *that's actually a good thing*.

On those days when I couldn't finish eight Pomodoros by 5 PM, I'd feel stressed. I'd feel like a failure. Suddenly I realized my view of the work week was too limiting. Why did I make those commitments to myself, limiting when I could work? I did it because I was coming from an unfulfilling work life, working too many hours, and for the wrong reasons. Then, I transitioned from just working, to working on things that fulfilled me. What's more, I gave myself the freedom to do non-work stuff, such as attending my daughter's recital during what most people consider work hours. This made it easy to shift my mindset about when I could or couldn't work.

The final piece to my puzzle was moving from a five-day work-week, where I had to stop by 5 PM, to a seven-day work-week, where I could work when it suited me. This took me from 40-45 hours available to get my 40 Pomodoros in, to having 168 hours each week. Since I only need **16.7 hours net**, that means **I only work 10% of my time**. What a difference!

What?! I'm Supposed to Do Everything in Just 16.7 Hours a Week?!

You're probably thinking, "*I work more than that in two days and you're trying to tell me that's all I need to work in an entire week?*" YES! That's exactly what I'm telling you. And NO, you'll probably still 'work' more than 16.7 hours a week. I 'work' 35-40 hours a week, but I spend at least 20-25 of those hours on calls, meetings, networking on- and offline, and other less-focused tasks. These are important, but I don't count them as work time. I

truly **work** 16.7 hours each week, and I get about five times more done in those few hours than in the other 25 hours.

There's no avoiding it. [Life happens](#). As long as humans are involved, and especially if you live in modern society with its 24/7 connectedness, it's next to impossible to have a perfect working environment. However, you can work smarter without having to work harder.

Are you up for it?

Action Idea: Start with trying 1 Pomodoro today. Twenty-five minutes of concentrated work on one task. Start with one and work up from there.

Want to go further?

Ready to save 23.3 hours each week and get MORE accomplished?

Of course you are...and I want to make it as easy as possible for you.

Click the image below and enter your email to get access to my 32-page eBook.

This guide explains my simple system in detail and includes worksheets, tools and resources that you can print out and use.

Click the image below to download the eBook now.