RECLAIM YOUR TIME

CHECKLIST



FOCUSING ON WHAT TRULY MATTERS

Reclaim Your Time Checklist

You can't manage time, but you can manage yourself by making better choices every day. With each choice you make, you can improve your life or make it more difficult. Proper goal setting is a major part of managing your time. However, it's critical not to confuse your end goal (the final result) with the steps designed to get you there. This checklist will run you through the simple tips and techniques to double your productivity.

Chapter 1: Get To Know Yourself

Everyone Has Strengths and Weaknesses

No one is equally good or bad at everything. But if you don't know what your weaknesses and strengths are, you could be blindsiding yourself. Becoming more self-aware is the first step to being more productive.

When you get to know yourself better, you can amplify your talents and minimize weaknesses. This will help you work at maximum efficiency without wasting time.

Determine What You Really Want

It's hard to be productive if you don't know what you want to achieve. What really matters to you? The answer is critical if you want to manage your time better. It's viewing the broad picture that is your life to get the most out of it.

What Are Your Daily Habits?

Nothing kills productivity and wastes time like bad habits. Bad habits can sabotage your life in the most spectacular way. Habits are the things we do every day routinely, without thinking. It's when we function on autopilot, such as brushing our teeth, driving to work, preparing dinner. Habits are the small things you do every day, and they can add up to the sum of your life.

Let's look at some time-killing bad habits:

1. Not planning each day. If you don't schedule your important tasks, you have no idea what you will be doing on any given day. Your day will be running you instead of the other way around.
2. It goes without saying that being disorganized wastes time.
3. Understand that procrastination is a choice. It's a bad habit, but you have the power to change it.
4. Many of us waste time resisting change.
5. Are you in the habit of seeing the glass as half-empty? Negativity doesn't only set the tone for the day, but it can truly determine your life.
6. When you carry the past into the present, you're toting a heavy load.
7. Distractions are an obvious time-killer.

Chapter 2: Define Your Goals

Many people enjoy being busy. A day filled with random activity gives it a purpose. They become bogged down with trivial minutiae, losing sight of their priorities and totally mismanaging their productivity. Stop and think about why you begin each task before you start. Have a purpose for everything you do. That ensures that every minute of your day will be well-spent. Being busy is not the same as being productive.

Define and prioritize your goals

Start by creating a list. Note down everything you need to do to be effective and productive at your job on a daily basis. That includes anything as mundane as filing away reports.

This list may include:

1. Increase profits by 15 percent by end of year.
2. Meet more people in the industry.
3. Meet and interact with more high-level management.
4. Develop a productivity strategy with your boss.

Make Each Day More Productive

Having goals is a necessary part of managing your time. But you need to take it to the next level and make sure each day is managed to the best of your ability. Don't wait until you're facing a crisis to begin managing your time. Proper time management is a lifestyle and the result of your daily habits. The most productive day is a day *without* a crisis.

When Goals Change

Even the best goals can change because ultimately, we can change with time. What seemed like a perfect plan two years ago may no longer be the best use of our time in the present.

Hard work is always necessary, and managing your time is the best way to get things done. But regardless of how productive you are, maybe the end result starts to look a little less attractive. This is the point where it may become necessary to reassess and readjust your goals. While you still want your career, perhaps such a mega-environment is not the place to achieve it.

Consider different paths to achieving your goal. Going out on your own and opening your own office may still involve a lot of time, but it's time that you'll be able to manage yourself. You get to decide what is important. This path could also provide you with more family time as your spouse spends some time at your side to help you grow.

Chapter 3: How Productive Is Your Environment?

Eliminate Distractions

Distractions are the modern-day Bonnie and Clyde. They rob of needed time. It's impossible to be productive when you allow yourself to be surrounded by distraction – and, yes, it *is* a choice. While there is little you can do when the boss appears at your office door, spend a day making a list of the things that eat away your time. Then, eliminate them.

Learn How to Focus

Focus is related to avoiding distractions, but it takes it several steps further. It's easy for our mind to wander, even if we aren't being continuously interrupted. We have a lot to do and developing a razor-sharp focus for the important tasks isn't always easy.

Focus means control. Control of your thoughts and actions. Proper focusing is a skill that can be learned and developed. Here

are some proven methods to hone your focus, manage your time more efficiently, and become more productive.

1. Meditation calms an out-of-control mind. The best and easiest form of meditation is simply to find a comfortable spot, close your eyes, and focus on your breathing as you slowly inhale and exhale.
2. Music is abstract, and it is thought that the very abstraction helps the mind stay in focus. It engages us on an emotional level, so our mind isn't racing like an out-of-control horse when we listen.
3. If you are worried about time management, you probably have big goals. And big goals can be intimidating
4. Take a break.

Chapter 4: Develop Your Skills

There are skills you need for your particular profession, and there are personal skills that will help you manage your time and productivity for any career or task.

The skills you use every day are reading, writing, and speaking. You learned all that in school, and you probably don't even think about how you approach these skills. However, by applying the right techniques, you can make the best use of your time.

Chapter 5: The People Around You Matter

The people around you can make a huge difference in how productive you are. As a matter of fact, the decision of who we spend time with is so important, it should be included in goal setting.

People Who Can Add to Your Life and Productivity

Productive people should be your role model. Collect as many as you can. Make it a habit to get to know people who manage their time successfully.

Surround Yourself with Success

When you are with productive people, you will automatically increase your own productivity. There is also a good chance that you'll be more productive while working less. Remember, it's all about better time management.

Productive people have learned how to be organized. If this is something with which you are struggling, what better way to learn than to observe an organized person in action?

Chapter 6: Personal Time Management

Everyone is concerned, and rightfully so, with managing work time. But, we all have a personal life. Personal time is a luxury, and the more organized we become, the richer we are. When we are struggling with a career, it is easy to let our personal life take second place. But with the right balance, you can have both. More importantly, you *need* both.

Make a schedule of your personal time, the way you would schedule your work routine.

1. Determine your priorities.
2. Once you have a schedule, think about how to free up that time.
3. Work on your personal schedule before going to sleep, as you would for your business schedule.
4. Running errands is considered one of the greatest personal time thieves. Make it a habit never to run the same errand twice in the same week.

5. Time is money, and sometimes, it is worth more than money. Having someone come in once a week to do the heavy chores can free up a weekend and be worth the expense.
6. Don’t be afraid to ask for help from family.
7. Spread out needed chores over a few days.
8. Planning ahead can give you the gift of time.
9. Make the most of your time.

Remember – People Matter

For more fulfilling personal time, we may need to rid our lives of a few toxic people. Gradually remove these people from your life, or limit the time you allocate to them. Making the most of your personal time can mean making difficult choices, but it may be necessary.

Re-Evaluate Your Personal Goals

How often, however, have you thought in terms of moving up in your personal life? It is easy to take our personal routine for granted. You may run and exercise, read, prepare nutritious meals, etc. But why settle for good when your personal life can get even better?

1. Let's say you run several times a week. Establish an even greater personal goal by training for a marathon. Block out a certain amount of time each time to achieve that goal. Taking the time to elevate personal goals can be life enhancing.
2. If you are already preparing good meals for yourself and your family, go a step further and invest in a gourmet cooking class. The time spent will enhance your enjoyment of food tremendously. Make the time to treat your personal goals seriously.
3. If you read, make your reading material count. Spend your reading time on quality classics that challenge your mind. When we get lost in the desire for a successful career, it's easy to lose sight of becoming a better, more effective person. Take the time to expand your personal goals for a more enjoyable personal life.

Chapter 7: Managing People Around You

Congratulations. You're the boss. It's an important career step, but the reality is, you are now responsible not only for managing your own time, but that of those people reporting to you. Regardless of how well you do your job, if your team isn't supportive, you are wasting time and manpower.

It's not surprising that studies have found that the most important thing to employees is job satisfaction. They need to know that what they do matters. If they feel unappreciated, they will not work at their full potential, which means they are just wasting time.

Chapter 8: Easy Tricks to Greater Time Management

Below are some time management apps that you might find useful. While technology can sometimes be a time robber, these apps are an excellent way to stay on top of your task – a type of electronic nagger.

1. FocusBooster: This app, available for $2.99 per month, helps divide your work into timed session. Set the alarm for half an hour and focus that time entirely on the task at hand. When the alarm sounds, take a five-minute break. You can track your sessions and determine how your time was spent.
2. SaneBox: Your email inbox can be your best friend or your worst enemy. For $7.00 a month, SaneBox sorts your email into folders and separates the important ones from the rest. It also provides a daily summary for your review.
3. 30/30: This is another app, a free one, that lets you divide your tasks into specific periods requiring your full concentration. Then it lets you take a break. Then you can return for another session.

4. Trello is a virtual to-do list that is broken into sections which shift into active, in progress, and finished as you work on a task. An excellent way for an entire team to keep track of any assignment. The cost is $12.50 annually.
5. Wunderlist is an app that creates to-do lists for your team, with reminders and completion dates. It costs $4.99 per month.
6. Todoist is a to-do list app that allows you to schedule and prioritize your tasks, along with dates of completion.