

How Good is Your Time Management?

"How Good Is Your Time Management?: Discover Time Management Tools That Can Help You Excel." From *MindTools.com*, www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_88.htm.

Instructions

For each statement, click the button in the column that best describes you. Please answer questions as you actually are (rather than how you think you should be), and don't worry if some questions seem to score in the 'wrong direction'. When you are finished, please click the 'Calculate My Total' button at the bottom of the test.

15 Statements to Answer	1 Not at All	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Very Often
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1 The tasks I work on are the ones with the highest priority.

2 I find myself completing tasks at the last minute, or asking for extensions.

3 I set aside time for planning and scheduling.

4 I know how much time I spend on each of the

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various task I do.

5I find myself dealing with interruptions.

6I use goal setting to decide what tasks and activities I should work on.

7I leave contingency time in my schedule to deal with "the unexpected"?

8I know whether the tasks I am working on are high, medium, or low value.

9When I am given a new

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assignment, I analyze it for importance and prioritize it accordingly.

10 I am stressed about deadlines and commitments.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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11 Distractions keep me from working on critical tasks.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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12 I have to take work home in order to get it done.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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13 I prioritize my To Do list or Action Program.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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14 I confirm my priorities with my boss.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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	1	2	3	4	5
15 Statements to Answer	Not at All	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

15 Before I take on a task, I check that the results will be worth the time put in.

Calculate My Total

Total = 0

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, and you'll most likely find that work becomes much less stressful.
46-75	You're managing your time very effectively!

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. Mind Tools has two great articles on goal setting that are must-reads for everyone.

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.

However, some jobs need you to be available for people when they need help – interruption is a natural and necessary part of life. Here, do what you sensibly can to minimize it, but make sure you don't scare people away from interrupting you when they should.

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.

Key Points

Time management is an essential skill that helps you keep your work under control, at the same time that it helps you keep stress to a minimum.

We would all love to have an extra couple of hours in every day. Seeing as that is impossible, we need to work smarter on things that have the highest priority, and then creating a schedule that reflects our work and personal priorities.

With this in place, we can work in a focused and effective way, and really start achieving those goals, dreams and ambitions we care so much about.