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10 Steps To Better Time Management & Improving Self Discipline

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10 Steps To Better Time Management & Improving Self Discipline

All of us have got 24 hours a day to manage our activities. However, successful people are those who make use of these 24 hours effectively.

Prioritisation and self-discipline are the two main factors that you have to follow all through your life if you want to manage your time effectively.

In this report we are going to cover ten effective tips that will help you imbibe these two qualities in your everyday life so that you can improve your time management and your overall quality of life. When you manage your time well, you can be relieved of stress and tension. Bid goodbye to last-minute tensions, by following these easy but powerful tips.

Prioritising Work

The key to managing time better is to prioritise your work. It not only helps you to make use of your time productively but it also helps in improving your self-discipline.

In your lives (personal and professional), you will always face two types of activities – the important ones and the unimportant ones. The key is to identify the difference between the two and spend your time/energy in the right direction to achieve your goals. You have to make a list of “to-do” things on a daily/weekly/monthly basis, as per your requirement to identify the tasks that have to be completed urgently.

One of the best things that come out of this prioritisation activity is that you begin to say no to activities that aren't important or worthy of your time. Learning to say “no” is a huge talent and most of the people fail in managing their time properly because they still haven't learnt the technique of saying no, without sounding too rude.

Dissection of time

Reflecting on how you spend your time on a daily basis is a very important tip that you should follow to manage your time more effectively than ever.

How many hours are you spending at work? Which is your most and least productive time? How often do you take breaks? How many hours have you worked effectively in a day?

These are some of the questions that you should analyse to know if you have been spending your energies in the right direction. When you know how well (or how badly!) you have spent your day, it will give you an idea of time management. After all, what can be a better teacher than your own experiences? While we do say that there is no use crying over spilt milk, we also stress upon dissection of the time that you have spent already, because this is an important yardstick for you to measure your performance for the next day.

While dissecting, you may have found that you have wasted a lot of time on a Monday, in checking and clearing emails. So, you

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can correct this when you start work on the following day. Mail-clearing can be pushed to the bucket-list titled “not important”, and you may only read those emails that are related to your urgent/important deliverables for that day.

Resist Temptations

If you want to inculcate self-discipline in your lives, it is very important to exercise self-control over your likes and dislikes. If you want to manage your 24 hours effectively and make the most out of your day, you have to get rid of your temptation to wake up late.

If you have been getting up at 8 AM every day, you should try to build resolve for you to wake up at 6 AM the next day onwards. This way, you will get an additional 2 hours to spend on yourself. You can use this time to do some mental conditioning exercises such as yoga and meditation to keep yourself rejuvenated and efficient throughout the day.

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Yes, it can be very difficult for you in the initial stages to resist all your temptations. Don't be too harsh on yourself. For example, you may treat yourself to a cheat meal once or twice a week in the initial stages of losing weight before you go on to reduce it and completely avoid it later.

Do A SWOT Analysis Of Yourself

To manage your time effectively, you should do a detailed SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of yourself.

Knowing your capabilities and your limitations are very important for setting reasonable goals and meeting them within the expected deadlines.

This analysis will also help you identify the challenges that are in front of you. Yes, your life is going at a mad pace, indeed.

Nevertheless, if you can derive a method to this madness, it will help you to manage your time effectively so that you can spend

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more time on activities that are important, productive and deserving.

Once you identify your areas of improvement, you should look for ways and means to improve that. For example, if you find that you aren't able to focus well on your major goal, you should take the help of apps or tools that help you break down the main goal into smaller goals and also help you track your progress at regular intervals.

Breakdown Your Goals

To plan your time effectively, you need to plan your activities properly. When you look at a big goal, it may seem daunting to you at first, but you will be surprised to note that the process gets simpler when you break down this big goal.

Write down a list of small sub-goals that you need to achieve and the timeline by when you need to achieve them. As you keep meeting these sub-goals one by one, you will eventually reach

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the big goal, without any hassles and by overcoming all the obstacles. Your major goal may be to lose about 20kgs in a year.

This may be quite intimidating for you. However, when you break down it to about 3kgs a month, one hour of physical exercises every day and a strict diet control at least four times a week, the goal looks more achievable for you, isn't it? You always need to understand that life is never complicated; it is we who make it complex and unreasonable, at times.

Healthy And Structured Lifestyle

You need to maintain a proper structure in your life and follow the structure at all times, come what may if you want to perfect the art of time management.

Time can be managed well only by those who are self-disciplined and have an undying passion for chasing their dreams. You can manage your 24 hours effectively every single day, only when you are physically and mentally fit.

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You should eat and sleep on time regularly to maintain a healthy style. You have to make sure that you eat a balanced diet so that your body gets the required energy to stay fresh and fit for a long time.

When your mind is fresh, you feel relaxed, and it helps you plan your work well. You need to indulge in one hour of physical activity every day as it not only helps you to tone up your physique but also helps you in mental relaxation.

In a nutshell, you need a structure in your haphazard lives and watch all your goals fall in place! Health is wealth, isn't it? Therefore, take care of your health and lead a healthy lifestyle always, if you want to manage your time in a disciplined and effective way. Good and healthy food, regular physical activities and mental relaxation are the three main elements that you should maintain in your life always to achieve self-discipline.

Use Tools, Apps And Other Resources

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To err is human, to forgive is divine! No, we are not talking about any divine intervention here! As human beings, we are all bound to make mistakes at some point in our lives while chalking out our goals and achieving them.

Since we are living in a technology-dominated era, it only makes sense to make maximum use of it. Today, there are several tools (supported on various mobile platforms), physical resources (such as planners, diaries, etc.) and websites that help you in framing goals and achieving them successfully, thanks to effective time management. They also keep track of your progress and intimate you of the same, so that you can know if you are lagging behind and make amends, when needed.

These resources also help you to set goals that are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound). These goals are in line with your requirements and they are quite feasible, so that you aren't too overwhelmed by them. They are set with a reasonable time-frame in mind. These apps collect a lot of information from you before helping you decide these goals for you.

Clean The Clutter

One of the best ways to manage time effectively is to keep the area around you clutter-free. When you are in a clean zone, you are encouraged to work hard and effectively. For example, when you are working on an important deliverable at office, the first step you have to do is to create folders in your mailbox and move irrelevant emails.

You should have only your project-related emails in your inbox so that you can refer to them easily. When you have to look for that one important email amidst 50-60 unnecessary emails, you end up wasting your valuable time.

What are the tasks required to be performed for the project on that particular day? Out of these, which ones are urgent? Should they be done by yourself or can it be delegated to your team members? These are some of the questions that you should ponder about before you start work.

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All of these questions will not only give you a clean ambience to work in, but will also make you more disciplined than ever to approach a task with a lot of clarity in your minds.

Don't Put Off Things

Never leave that till tomorrow which you can do today, said Benjamin Franklin. The biggest enemy of effective time management is procrastination.

Instead of being too hard on yourself, analyse what makes you procrastinate something frequently. Is the goal too challenging or complex for you? Don't you feel motivated enough to carry out the task that you had set your mind to do on that day? Are you too tired to finish off the activity for that day?

There could be many reasons on why you want to put off the task until later. You should first do a self-analysis to understand what tempts you to put off a task and then act on that particular reason so that you never procrastinate again in the future.

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If the goal is too complex for you, you can follow one of the steps that we mentioned above – breakdown the big goal into smaller and easier sub-goals so that it becomes easier for you. If you don't seem to have enough time to do all the tasks that you had thought of, on the same day, you may try to prioritise your tasks better so that you don't spend your time and energy on tasks that don't deserve them.

Let Bygones Be Bygones

You may not always fulfil your goals the way you want. Most of the times, you may take a longer timeframe than planned to achieve a target that you had intended to achieve. During times like this, you should never lose heart. Failures are the stepping stones to success.

Learn from your mistakes, and more importantly, you should let bygones be bygones. Never carry any negative feelings from your past failures and never let them affect your present or your future. Draw inspiration from your efforts and aim to better your previous target, when you try again.

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Remember, you are your only competition! When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Be that tough person and work towards your goals, single-mindedly, without any hangover of guilt, depression or frustration. Make a new start with a positive frame of mind, and we are sure these tips will take you closer to achieving your goals in life.