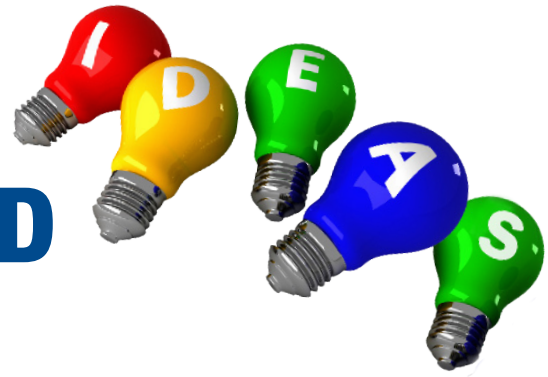


# 10 TIPS FOR MANAGING TIME AND PRIORITIZING TASKS



- 1. Know yourself.** Keep a detailed log of how your time is spent. Identify what tasks take the most time, when you're most productive, and common time wasters.
- 2. Avoid multitasking.** [Studies](#) suggest that we can only focus on one project at a time and only for 40-90 minutes. [Multitasking](#) is a myth. Strive to "chunk" your time; trying to get everything done at once can result in nothing getting done at all.
- 3. Set goals and reward yourself.** Set [SMART](#) goals; break down each large goal into [key tasks and smaller "to-do" items](#). To stay engaged, celebrate each milestone as it is achieved.
- 4. Use a prioritizing formula.** A structured format can help with important decisions concerning how to spend your time / what tasks to do first. [Sample formats](#) include Deadline/Payoff, Paired Comparison, Importance/Time, and Richard Bolles' Prioritizing Grid (discussed in [That Elusive Work-Life Balance](#)).
- 5. Invest time in scheduling.** Use calendars, task reminders, and/or [Gantt charts](#) to schedule your time. Chunk smaller or similar tasks together, but remember to build in some wiggle room, leave time for [interruptions](#), and schedule regular breaks.
- 6. Be clear and concise when communicating.** Use e-mail subject line, to, and cc fields effectively (i.e., *subject line* links to email purpose, *to* notes key recipients(s), *cc* reserved for FYI). Ensure any requests for action are clearly stated, addressed to specific individuals, and include due dates. Leave clear and concise voice mails; don't assume someone has your phone number. Develop [appropriate/effective](#) agendas to guide meetings.
- 7. Make effective use of technology.** With such a wide range of technologies available pick something that will work for you – not what's "hot" today. Invest the time to fully understand every technology you use. Remember, low-tech solutions (e.g., tickler file) can sometimes work the best so don't rule those out.
- 8. Avoid management by crisis.** If you're always fighting fires, you're not productive. Plan your time and tasks effectively; don't ignore upcoming deadlines as they tend to "sneak" up. Remember – stress and emotions interfere with productivity and impact decision-making capabilities, so ask for help if you get overwhelmed and/or feel unable to cope.
- 9. Delegate effectively.** Only pass items on to someone who understands the task specifications/deadline and has the skills/capacity to complete it effectively. Build in some extra time to monitor progress and review the product.
- 10. Learn to say no.** If you can't complete a task, it's alright to say no. Be sure to provide a reason and work together to find solution (e.g., shifting priorities, delegating tasks, getting more resources).



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