

How Good is Your Time Management?

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.

Question	Not at all	Rarely	Some times	Often	Very Often
1 Are the tasks you work on during the day the ones with the highest priority?	<input type="radio"/>				
2 Do you find yourself completing tasks at the last minute, or asking for extensions?	<input type="radio"/>				
3 Do you set aside time for planning and scheduling?	<input type="radio"/>				
4 Do you know how much time you are spending on the various jobs you do?	<input type="radio"/>				
5 How often do you find yourself dealing with interruptions?	<input type="radio"/>				
6 Do you use goal setting to decide what tasks and activities you should work on?	<input type="radio"/>				
7 Do you leave contingency time in your schedule to deal with "the unexpected"?	<input type="radio"/>				
8 Do you know whether the tasks you are working on are high, medium, or low value?	<input type="radio"/>				
9 When you are given a new assignment, do you analyze it for importance and prioritize it accordingly?	<input type="radio"/>				
10 Are you stressed about deadlines and commitments?	<input type="radio"/>				
11 Do distractions often keep you from working on critical tasks?	<input type="radio"/>				
12 Do you find you have to take work home, in order to get it done?	<input type="radio"/>				
13 Do you prioritize your "To Do" list or Action Program?	<input type="radio"/>				
14 Do you regularly confirm your priorities with your boss?	<input type="radio"/>				
15 Before you take on a task, do you check that the results will be worth the time put in?	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>Total of weighted scores (see instructions):</p>					<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Total = 0</div>

Score Interpretation

Score	Comment
46-75	You're managing your time very effectively! Still, check the sections below to see if there's anything you can tweak to make this even better.
31-45	You're good at some things, but there's room for improvement elsewhere. Focus on the serious issues below , and you'll most likely find that work becomes much less stressful.
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. Start below !

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.

that appears.

Goal Setting

(Questions 6, 10, 14, 15)

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, 9, 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, 10, 12)

"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, 12)

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.