

## How to Be more Productive at Work

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Majority people have the bad habits that interfere with workplace productivity and are rather reactive than proactive, putting out fires instead of making progress towards our goals. Being more productive at work is not rocket science, but it does require being more deliberate about how you manage your time. There are two ways increase your output--either put in more hours or work smarter.

### **Be Optimistic**

In a Maastricht University study (January 2013) of optimism and performance in call centres, results showed that optimists in the tested group made more sales and achieved more bonuses. More specifically, it was only dispositional optimists who showed greater success. The study authors define dispositional optimism as generally expecting good outcomes over bad ones in life.

### **Set goals**

Sometimes, looking at our goals can be overwhelming. Seeing that many big projects on our calendar can be stressful, but if you break it up into smaller tasks, you will feel more in control and will be much more productive. This will keep you on track in your day-to-day and make the bigger projects seem less daunting.

### **Be accountable**

If it's weekly check-in with a co-worker or setting your deadlines and revealing them to others, answering to someone else will always push you to do the job.

### **Take care of the biggest tasks when you're most alert**

Often we all put aside big goals because we're not sure that we'll reach them, so by the time we get to them, we are too burnt out of our day to give it the attention it deserves. That's how things end up running over extra days and making it seem like productivity is gone.

### **Track and limit how much time you're spending on tasks**

You might think that you are pretty good at assessing how much time you spend on different tasks. However, some research suggests that only about 17 per cent of people can estimate the passage of time accurately. A tool like Rescue Time can help by letting you know exactly how much time you spend on daily tasks, including social media, email, word processing, and apps.

### **Watch out for emails**

An email that is open all the time is too tempting. Even if you don't respond to email as it comes in, the pinging notifications are often distracting enough to weaken your resolve and break your focus. Master your email by designating specific times for it, otherwise, it will master you.

### **Quit multitasking**

You may feel you get more done when multitasking, but countless studies have proven that people's productivity diminishes when they engage in this activity. People who are regularly bombarded with several streams of electronic information do not pay attention, control their memory or switch from one job to another as well as those who prefer to complete one task at a time, a group of Stanford researchers has found (2009).

A study out of the University of Sussex in the UK indicates that multitasking may be physically harming your brain. The study found that participants addicted to using multiple devices simultaneously had a lower grey-matter density in a brain area called the anterior cingulate cortex, which is linked to emotional control and decision-making,

Multitasking reduces creativity, causes a higher ratio of mistakes and makes it harder to remember important details. We recommend that you work on one activity at a time and nothing else.

### **Know how to deal with interruptions.**

We all face interruptions, but understanding how to manage them when they happen is what distinguishes the successful people from everyone else.

You do not always have as much control over your day as you'd like. What often happens is your workday becomes a series of interruptions, making it impossible to stay productive because you constantly have to deal with them.

Interruptions range from minor irritations (such as an unwelcome phone call) to serious problems. These can involve significant changes in life such as getting married, giving birth or leaving a career.

If those interruptions occur, dropping out of your routine is easy. If you're struggling to complete your tasks for a day or falling off your whole workout schedule, interruptions always make it hard to keep track.

Here are a few ways to manage them;

- Rediscover your motivation.
- Accept the fact that interruptions will happen
- Give yourself a break

### **Use of productivity tools**

There are several tools you can use to reduce the amount of time you spend in front of a computer e.g. rescue time (a time-management program that monitors what you do on a computer and provides a daily report of your productivity).

However, getting enough sleep and making exercise part of your routine are just two of the things you need to do every day to be at your best and most productive. Take time for yourself and do whatever (healthy) thing recharges and refreshes you because being healthy is the most important factor.

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