

Time Management Checklist

Here are 50 time-tested ways of improving your personal productivity, extracted from Barbara Hemphill's books and training programs.

Check off those ideas that make sense to you, and yet are currently not being practiced.

- 1. Put your personal and organizational goals in writing.
- 2. Every week do something that brings you closer to your annual goals.
- 3. Schedule appointments with yourself to complete priority work.
- 4. Schedule more time for tasks than you think it will take.
- 5. Set priorities according to importance, not urgency.
- 6. Make notes while you are talking on the telephone.
- 7. Use a *Delegation Record* or *Assignment Record* to keep track of assignments to others.
- 8. Develop the "do it now" habit. Don't procrastinate.
- 9. Have meetings start on time, end on time and have a timed agenda.
- 10. Take advantage of commute time, travel time and waiting time to get things done.
- 11. Toss out as much correspondence and paperwork as possible.
- 12. Don't write when a telephone call will do.
- 13. Make minor decisions quickly.
- 14. Set deadlines on all tasks you delegate.
- 15. Be time conscious rather than a perfectionist. Let the amount of time spent on a task be proportionate to the value of the outcome.
- 16. Hold meetings only when absolutely necessary, and keep them brief.
- 17. Keep telephone conversations brief; discuss the business up front.
- 18. Write brief letters, reports and e-mail. Encourage brevity in others.
- 19. When a crisis occurs, immediately determine how to stop a recurrence.

- 20. Say “no” more often. Have as much respect for your own time as you have for other people’s time.
- 21. Don’t keep shuffling papers; handle each item only once whenever possible. Do it, scrap it, file it, delegate it or schedule a time to do it later.
- 22. Use a follow-up file to hold paperwork relating to scheduled tasks.
- 23. Use a Participant’s Action Sheet at meetings to record notes and make them run effectively.
- 24. Take advantage of timesaving technology such as handheld computers, business card scanners, remote access software and Paper Tiger software.
- 25. Don’t allow upward delegation. Ask for solutions, not problems.
- 26. Start earlier in the morning. Utilize your prime time for priorities.
- 27. Don’t keep magazines. Tear out or photocopy relevant articles.
- 28. Plan as far in advance as feasible.
- 29. Record the whole year’s schedule of meetings, events etc. into your planner.
- 30. Always carry a small scratch pad, pocket recorder or handheld computer to record notes and capture ideas.
- 31. Use the same planner for home and office. Schedule time for family events as well as work.
- 32. Be in control of your own life; don’t let others’ lack of planning become your crisis.
- 33. Have set times each day to review your e-mail. Assign a time limit.
- 34. Always take a few minutes after each meeting to evaluate how it went.
- 35. If someone calls for an appointment, try to settle the matter right then on the telephone.
- 36. When leaving a message for someone to call you back, indicate a convenient time to call.
- 37. If the person you’re calling is not in, try to get the information you need from someone else.
- 38. Record the time you must leave the office when traveling to a distant meeting.
- 39. If items dropped in your in-basket distract you, move the basket from your desk.

- 40. When away on a business trip, have someone else sort and dispense with most of your mail.
- 41. To reduce interruptions during the day, hold brief stand-up meetings with your staff each morning.
- 42. When filing paperwork, record a throw out date on it to make subsequent purging easier.
- 43. Schedule specific amounts of time to review and dispense with your mail and voice mail.
- 44. Hold brief breakfast meetings when most people are mentally alert and have a full day to take action.
- 45. Capture ideas when listening to cassette tapes by dictating into a pocket recorder.
- 46. Use checklists for recurring events such as meetings, sales calls, and business trips.
- 47. Spend time each week on time investments—those activities that will help you free up more time.
- 48. When putting something in your follow-up file, make a corresponding note in your planner that tells you it's there.
- 49. Recognize you can't do everything. Work on the 20% of the activities that produce 80% of your results.
- 50. Manage stress by putting life in perspective, and not taking yourself too seriously.

_____ Total ideas checked

Choose three of the most useful ideas and put them into practice. Once they have been integrated into your lifestyle, choose three more and work on those. Introduce changes gradually. Getting organized and gaining control of your time is a process, not a one-time event.

	Date put into practice	Results after 4 weeks
1.		
2.		
3.		