

Better time management

Quick tips

- Make an appointment with yourself by blocking out time in your diary for essential tasks – you're then less likely to be disturbed.
- Before you go to a meeting or phone someone, spend 2 or 3 minutes planning what you want from the interaction so you don't waste time or forget things.
- Night owl or early riser? Be aware of when you are at your most productive and aim to do the most challenging tasks then.
- Make a to-do list and re-organise it every day. Google for apps and online versions.
- Be clear about which of your tasks are essential AND urgent so you can prioritise.

5 steps to effective time management

1. **Set your ultimate goal:** For example it could be growing your business, getting a qualification or getting back into employment.
 - Break this down into the steps you need to take.
 - For each step, make a list of what you need to do.
 - Timetable into your calendar the hours/minutes you need for each item on your list.
2. **Track how you are spending your time now:**
 - Try making a brief note every hour about how you actually spent your time. Do this for at least a week.
 - Review your use of time and identify adjustments you can make to be more efficient.
3. **Make a Time Planner:**
 - Start with all your major deadlines both personal and work related for the next year.
 - Prioritise them starting with the things you absolutely must do.
 - Break down tasks involved in meeting each deadline into smaller steps.
 - Estimate how long each step should take, and add deadlines for each step.
 - Now enter all the activities, in order of priority, into your planner until you have either fitted them all in or you have run out of time spaces.
4. **Use small blocks of 'trapped' time to do something productive:**
 - Use the time spent waiting for the microwave, queuing or sitting on a bus to do some planning/thinking/problem-solving or re-jig your to do list.
5. **Be realistic!**
 - No plan will be perfect - learn from your good and bad experiences and use the knowledge to improve subsequent plans.
 - Deal immediately with time troubles you can control – lack of action can seriously demotivate.
 - If the problem is beyond your control, keep calm and get back on track as soon as possible. Give priority to whatever is both essential and urgent.