



Time Management Strategies and Tactics: A Workbook

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Introduction

You've picked up a workbook on time management, so it's clear that you want to improve in this area. What are you motivated by?

- Being your personal best, in every area of your life
- Achieving your full potential – in your professional and personal life
- Having more freedom and being able to spend your time as you choose
- Improving your life balance and the quality of your life

Time management is often a top priority of people when they come to me for coaching. You may be asking yourself “How do I get it all done?” and “Do I even *want* to get it all done?”

Everybody can increase their mastery of time management skills – if they're willing to do a little work.

In this workbook, we'll be taking things step by step. Each day, you'll have some ideas to read, and a simple exercise to try out. Don't be tempted to do too much at once: remember that consistent effort over time produces a steady stream of accomplishments. We are pursuing progress, not perfection.

Monday: Time Management Basics

If you only implement these five tips from this workbook, you'll find that your days go much more smoothly, and that you're much more effective.

- **Confirm all appointments** to avoid dead time.
- **The 80/20 rule always applies.** Which two to four of your activities produce the greatest results? Which eight to ten produce minimal results?
- **Think geographically** and avoid excessive travel time between appointments. Use drive time to learn or use a Bluetooth device to talk with key people. How else can you think geographically?
- **Plan the next day in advance** before you leave your office. This doesn't have to take long: your plan could be as simple as writing down three must-do items for the following day.
- **Handle papers that cross your desk only once.** Review your mail next to a trash can. The same goes for email: engage with each message just once, and take the appropriate action.

Exercise:

Start keeping a time log for the week. We'll be coming back to this at the end of the week.

Time	Activities	Time	Activities
8:00 a.m.		12.45	
8:15		1.00	
8:30		1.15	
8:45		1.30	
9.00		1.45	
9.15		2.00	
9.30		2.15	
9.45		2.30	
10.00		2.45	
10.15		3.00	
10.30		3.15	
10.45		3.30	
11.00		3.45	
11.15		4.00	
11.30		4.15	
11.45		4.30	
12.00		4.45	
12.15 p.m.		5.00	
12.30		5.15	

Tuesday: Dealing With Calls and Meetings

If you think back to your physics lessons, you'll remember that something in motion tends to stay in motion – but something that starts and stops loses its momentum.

This is exactly what happens to you when your work day is constantly interrupted by calls and meetings.

- **Structure your telephone time.** Set up times to accept, initiate, and return calls. The best time to accept incoming calls is just prior to lunch or at the end of the workday. The other person will not want to waste time. Initiate or return calls early in the morning, just before or after lunch, or at the end of the day to contact difficult-to-reach individuals.

Consider scheduling all, if not most of your important calls. Consider a phone call a mini-meeting, so be prepared with an agenda and all you will need to be successful.

- **Scheduling meetings with yourself is a good way to accomplish key objectives.** How can this help you be more effective with your use of time?
- **Improve your communication skills** so you reduce the need to repeat yourself.

- **Cut your appointment time by one third.** Each one-hour meeting will now be only forty minutes. Schedule phone meetings that will last only five to fifteen minutes. You will be surprised by the fact that you can actually accomplish your objectives in this limited time.

List two to three current meetings in which you will try this strategy.

- **Conduct “standing meetings.”** When someone enters your office, consider conducting your meeting in a standing position. This will let the person know that you have very limited time. Also, consider conducting a “walking meeting,” in which issues are discussed while walking.
- **Produce greater results through others** by mastering your Leadership, Management, and Coaching skills.

Exercise

Keep a daily Meeting/Call log to determine the number, nature, duration, and relative value of your meetings and calls. Determine which meetings require more or less effort and perhaps which meetings could be stopped entirely.

	With – Name(s)	Topic / Subject	Duration	Value (high = 5, low = 1)
#1				
#2				
#3				
#4				
#5				
#6				

Wednesday: Your Natural Rhythm

Healthy habits, such as eating right and exercising regularly, are associated with increased energy, improved performance, and satisfaction. However busy you are, you need to make time to take care of your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energy levels.

We're living in a marathon society – we run, and run, and run, and we deplete our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energy levels. We need to give ourselves time to re-energize so that we can exert ourselves during our times of greatest productivity.

- **Scheduling down time in your day** helps to recover your mental and physical energy.
- **Work with your body's natural biological rhythm.** Are you a night owl or a morning person? If you wear out in the mid-afternoon, consider a quick nap to recharge your battery. Have an air mattress in your office.
- **Get plenty of sleep and exercise, and eat quality foods.** Develop a project action plan with a scoreboard to track your results.
- **Adequate sleep** promotes innovative thinking and greater flexibility in decision-making.

- **Create a new daily routine** – 90% of all human behavior is habitual. *“If you keep doing what you are doing, you will keep getting what you are getting.” “When patterns are broken new worlds will emerge.”*
- **Brain dump:** write down *everything* that you need to do on a sheet of paper. Once it’s out there, you can start dealing with it and get away from overwhelm.
- **Use a contact/time management system** like Outlook, ACT, Franklin, or Goldmine to organize your activities and keep your mind free to think creatively. What are some ways you currently use these systems to save time?

Exercise:

Identify your “flow” activities, ones which make you feel fully engaged and involved. These are activities that often apply the use of your strengths and unique abilities.

Typical flow activities include art, painting, writing, running, yoga and meditation.

Thursday: Motivation

During your day, you may find your motivation flagging. Today, consider these ways to increase your enthusiasm and energy for your work:

- **“Eat That Frog”** (*Brian Tracy*) – do the most unpleasant task first.
- **Use the power of momentum.** Objects in motion stay in motion. Starting and stopping often breaks up your momentum. Grouping “like activities” back to back takes advantage of momentum. (*Strategic Coach, Dan Sullivan*)
- **Striving for progress versus “perfection”** is a way to free up tremendous time and energy. What does this statement mean to you?
- **Eat your “elephant” one bite at a time.** Break up your big projects into little projects.
- **Rewarding yourself for reaching a particular goal** will help reinforce the behaviors you are developing.
- **Prioritize and stay focused.** What one or two items on your list must absolutely be finished? What are your priorities today, this week, and this month at home and at work?

- **Hire a business, personal, or technology coach** to help you put the necessary support structures in place to create new sustainable habits.
- **Stephen Covey uses the phrase, “Sharpen the Saw”** as a way of investing in the preparatory activities necessary to be most effective. Training, planning, and organizing are examples of ways to sharpen the saw. What are some others?
- **Be prepared to stop.** Consider what you’ve already invested against what you stand to gain by continuing.
- **Live life at your own pace.** Define success for yourself, not by others’ definitions. Do what you love and time will fly by.

Exercise:

Complete the core value questions in the appendix and identify the 10 to 15 key themes that are most important.

From these core values create a two to three sentence Life Vision Statement using these values as building blocks. This statement can then be displayed at work and at home and provide a contextual guide to your daily efforts.

Below is a copy of my Life Vision Statement as an example:

My Life Vision is a healthy, peaceful, beautiful world of extraordinary relationships, great accomplishments, and integrity.

An exciting world of respect, dignity, leadership, courage, and honor; where all people generously and passionately contribute their best to one another.

Barry Demp

Friday: Setting Limits Around Your Work

Effective boundaries and limits are crucial for good time-management. It's Friday, and you may have a lot to complete before the weekend. These tips should help – not just today, but every day:

- **Reduce interruptions by creating stronger boundaries.** What are your ideas regarding the establishment of boundaries?
- **Be aware of what you promise.** Under-promise and over-deliver.
- **Don't take work home.** Staying a little later or arriving earlier is better. Set time limits for yourself.
- **Consider delegating more tasks to co-workers or family members.** Jobs that you are currently doing may actually be developmental opportunities for others. Select at least two items at work and one item at home that you will delegate. Next week, select more.
- **Consider effectiveness over efficiency.** Whom do you know that gets greater results in 8 hours than others do in 10 or 12? Discover your strengths and abilities, and play to these.

- **Set artificial deadlines for yourself.** “The task expands to fit the time available.” Look at how much you can accomplish when you’re preparing to go on vacation.
- **Limit interruptions and distractions by communicating new guidelines for gaining your attention.** Appropriately using a closed door and/or a “do not disturb” button on the phone or simply scheduling your open-door times work well. What are some other ways you can limit such interruptions?
- **Learn the difference between the “urgent” and the “important”** and make time for the latter. What are two or three important areas of your life that you never seem to have time for?
- **Determine your hourly value** to achieve your annual income goals.
- **Break projects down** into monthly, weekly, daily, and hourly income goals.
- **Write down your plans, goals, and ideas.** Without a clear direction, reaching your destination is difficult. People who have concrete, specific goals are more confident and more likely to feel in control in their lives.
- **Avoid the money trap.** Make sure how you “spend” your time is worth the investment.

Exercise:

Reduce information overload. Over the course of a week eliminate or reduce your level of information overload by 25-33%.

Places to look include: TV, Internet browsing, e-mail, magazine and print media, the news, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and blogs.

Saturday: Your Personal Life

There are 168 hours in a week. Assuming we work, have commute time, and need to sleep, that leaves us with somewhere around 70 hours – perhaps 7 or 8 hours on workdays and 16 hours on Saturdays and Sundays – that are up for grabs.

Make the most of your personal life:

- **Get rid of toxic people in your life.** They drain you and waste your time. Who are the toxic people in your life? How could you limit their impact on your time?
- **Consider a news and media fast.** Stop reading the newspaper and watching the news for at least a week and see what happens. Important news still will find its way to you. What else can you eliminate from your daily life that would not be missed?
- **Learn to say “NO” in an appropriate way.** You may be pleasing others at your own expense.
- **Discard some of the stuff in your life.** Stuff has to be maintained, and this takes time. What stuff in your life requires too much maintenance?

- **Let others work for you.** If your time is worth \$250 per hour, how many services could you hire out for just one hour of your time?

Buy prepared food, have supplies delivered, shop via catalog, pay bills online, stop doing errands, have someone “clean out” your junk mail and your spam e-mail, hire a housecleaner, a driver, and a personal organizer, etc. Choose one or two and put this support structure into place by the end of the week.

- **Have a family meeting to discuss roles and responsibilities around the home.** Distribute duties accordingly.
- **Work on your relationship skills.** Great relationship skills produce great results. Can you prove this?

Exercise:

Select 5-10 activities that occur during these semi-free hours that are fulfilling and consider doing more of them. Select 5-10 activities that you find very undesirable or even hate and reduce or eliminate them.

Pay close attention to your progress and be sure to discuss these intentions with those around you.

Sunday: Taking Time Management Further

Sunday is traditionally a day for rest and reflection. Today, take the opportunity to recharge your batteries and reflect on your life. Good time management isn't just about getting things done well (being efficient) it's about choosing to have a meaningful and fulfilling life (being effective).

Here are some ideas to consider and reflect upon:

- Let your actions spring from your personal goals and values.
- Be masterful at your business - be the best, keep learning.
- In your projects, involve people that have ideas and perspectives different from your own.
- People who keep a journal are one-third more likely to feel a sense of progress in their lives.
- Have a role model, mentor, or coach to support your success journey.
- Learn from the best. Seek an internship or learning experience from someone more masterful than you.

- Optimistic people usually achieve far more and are more satisfied with life. Develop a half-full point of view.
- Take greater time when you speak. People who speak slowly are considered more knowledgeable than people who speak more quickly.
- Teams work best when you tap into the perceived self-interest of each member.
- Confidence is associated with persistent effort and therefore a greater likelihood of success.
- Look for the lessons to be learned when things don't go your way. Taking more risks opens up greater possibilities and more opportunities.
- Learn to "read" a room; notice what is present and what is missing in the events and people you observe.
- Surround yourself with people smarter than you and let them lead wherever possible.
- Work on your listening skills. Seeing through others' perspectives improves relationships and your effectiveness.
- Stop being a "Lone Ranger." Acknowledge the interdependent nature of life.

- People work harder and better when they feel appreciated.
- Apply what you learn immediately to create positive habits and create long-lasting impact. Mastery comes from experiential lessons over time.
- As you grow more certain of your purpose and your talents, you will come to rely less on the attitudes and beliefs of those around you. Don't let average people hold you back.

Exercise:

Look back to your time log that you started on Monday. What time allocations were good investments and which were not? If time flies when you're having fun, where does it go when you are not?

Based on this, make three decisions about the following week. Choose:

- Something to start doing
- Something to stop doing
- Something to do more of

Repeat this process every week, or once a month, to look at what habits you're building and what changes you might want to make.

About Barry



I have worked with over 1,000 individuals as a business and executive coach over the past eighteen years. Based in Troy, Michigan, I have earned the distinction of Master Certified Coach (MCC) from the International Coach Federation (ICF). I work with executives, business owners, and high-potential professionals to help them significantly increase their performance, productivity, profitability, and life balance.

My workshops, seminars, speaking engagements, and [customized coaching programs](#) foster a comprehensive and holistic approach to individual and organizational development assuring practical applications on both professional and personal levels.

I spend much of my time helping individuals and organizations master the leadership, management, communication, and coaching skills needed in today's competitive and rapidly changing world. I speak frequently to groups in Southeastern Michigan on coaching, leadership, management, mastering relationships, sales effectiveness, and life-balance issues.

If you're interested in working with me, you can find out more about my services on my website, www.dempcoaching.com.

Further Resources

You can find a number of articles related to time management and other personal development on my website, www.dempcoaching.com.

I also recommend the following books:

Now Discover Your Strengths by Marcus Buckingham

Read this to identify your five signature strengths. By increasing our use of these strengths you will be far more fulfilled and accomplished.

The Power of Full Engagement by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz

This book will help you optimize your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual energies to live a fuller life.

The Power of the Positive No by William Ury

Based on your life vision statement developed from the assignment from Thursday you will further clarify the “Yes”s in life that will give you the power to say no and get more of what you want.

You can find more book recommendations on my website, at <http://dempcoaching.com/books.html>

Appendix: Values Clarification Assignment

1. Complete the values clarification questions below.

- a. What results in life are essential for you to see yourself as a success?
- b. Describe the qualities and characteristics of the relationships you hope to develop.
- c. Describe the career of your dreams.
- d. Describe your “best” future self.
- e. What inspires you?

- f. What are the things in life you love the most?
- g. I am passionate about ...
- h. At the end of your life, what would you like people to say about you?
- i. What do you dream or daydream about?
- j. Describe your perfect workday.

- k. Describe your perfect leisure day.
- l. Describe your perfect vacation.
- m. Describe 5-10 things that are beautiful to you.