

# Manage Time - Top Six Tips

Sharpen your use of time by adopting some of these “Top Six” tips:

## 1. Set Goals.

Write down your goals. (It’s only a wish until you write it down.)

Goals must be useful, measurable and attainable.

**Prioritize your goals using the “A, B, C” method:**

A = High Priority

B = Medium Priority

C = Low Priority

Evaluate your goals daily.

Visualize your goals – imagine how you will achieve your goals and “do it.”

## 2. Avoid Procrastination.

Procrastination is the one time waster of which you have control.

**How to keep procrastination under control:**

1. Slice the task into manageable pieces; start on the easiest one.
2. Clarify the task by discussing and rationalizing with others.
3. Designate interim completion points.
4. Chart your progress.
5. Set a deadline for completing the project.

## 3. Minimize Interruptions.

The average employee is interrupted every 9 minutes. This equals 48 interruptions per day.

**How to handle interruptions:**

- If it’s necessary, handle immediately.
- If it’s unnecessary, stop it or avoid it.
- If it’s untimely, reschedule it.

## 4. Manage Your Telephone Time.

The telephone is both a terrific time saver and an insidious thief. Unfortunately, phones are a primary source of interruptions.

**How to manage your phone calls:**

- Screen your calls through an assistant or answering machine.
- If the person you’re calling isn’t available, leave a precise message. You’re more likely to get an answer back without calling again.
- Use automatic dialing to save valuable time.
- Return calls before lunch or the end of the day. People get to the point faster when lunch or quitting time draws near.

- Keep a phone log in your planner to record decisions and discussions.

## **5. Conquer Paperwork.**

You should handle paper only once. Try the **TRAF** system.

**Here are some tips on how to TRAF:**

### **Toss It:**

If you have an assistant, delegate the sorting, screening and tossing of mail.

### **Refer It:**

Keep a folder handy for each person you deal with on a regular basis.

When that person comes to see you, open the folder and take care of all the items at once.

**Act on It:** Start an action folder or action page in your planner.

**File It:** Write a discard date on papers that will outlive their usefulness and clutter your files.

## **6. Plan Shorter and More Effective Meetings.**

Meetings can be big time wasters. Before you set up a meeting, evaluate your agenda and determine if the information could be shared more efficiently by distribution electronically or by mail.

**If it's necessary to schedule a meeting:**

- Don't allot more time for meetings than necessary. Many times all the tasks can be completed in less time than originally scheduled.
- Distribute the meeting agenda at least one day in advance, and don't overload the agenda.
- Start meetings on time, even if everyone is not present.
- Don't schedule a meeting for more than 2 hours; beyond that, concentration suffers.
- Issue minutes promptly.
- Attend meetings only if necessary.

Time management can be as informal or as detailed as you want to make it. Develop a plan to fit your own needs – be flexible throughout time and tailor it as your needs change.

**Remember – It's not how much time you have;  
it's how well you manage it.**