

TIME MANAGEMENT

TEAMSSKILLS



Domino's

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Objectives

By completing this workbook you will be able to:

- ✦ Explain what good time management is and how it impacts your daily work
- ✦ Use the Urgent/Important matrix to help with your time management skills
- ✦ Prioritise items on your to-do list to make optimum use of the time available

INTRODUCTION

How often have you said ‘I wish there were more hours in the day’?

There are always deadlines to meet, problems to deal with, and demands on your time. But, if we’re honest, many of us would have to admit that we don’t stop to think about making better use of our time.

We get into certain patterns of working, we find a way of coping from day to day, and are content to let things go on as they are. Effective time management in the workplace is simply about making the best use of the limited time available to work towards achieving personal and business goals. Managing your time well will give you greater control over your activities, increase your efficiency, help you to become proactive in preventing or dealing with problems, and improve your work-life balance.

Taking control of your workload will enable you to decrease the intense stress of work overload. Developing good time management skills will help you to function well both in your work role and your personal life as a whole.

Time management is the deliberate exercise of control over the amounts of time spent on particular work activities, in order to maximise personal efficiency. It involves analysing how time is spent, prioritising different tasks and reorganising which work activities are most important. Various techniques can be used to complete tasks more quickly and effectively. These include information handling skills, verbal and written communication skills, delegation, and daily time planning.



DO I SHOW SYMPTOMS OF POOR TIME MANAGEMENT?

Tick the ones you feel apply to you enough to be a problem.

- You are always behind with your work
- You have a mass of projects you will do at some stage
- You have so much work to do, you do not know where to start the more time you have available the less you get done
- You start projects with great enthusiasm but do not carry them through to the end
- You live your life from one crisis to another
- There are things that you have neglected to do that are keeping you awake at night
- When you get around to starting a task which you have been putting off, your attention is distracted by the thoughts of all the other tasks you have to do

Most of us will need to regularly review how we use our time to maintain efficiency. On the following pages you will find some useful hints and tips to help you make the most of the hours available.

THREE STEPS TO IMPROVED TIME MANAGEMENT

- 1** Establish how your time is currently being spent
- 2** Realign tasks using the Urgent/Important matrix
- 3** Prioritise tasks on your to do list

1. ESTABLISH HOW YOUR TIME IS CURRENTLY BEING SPENT

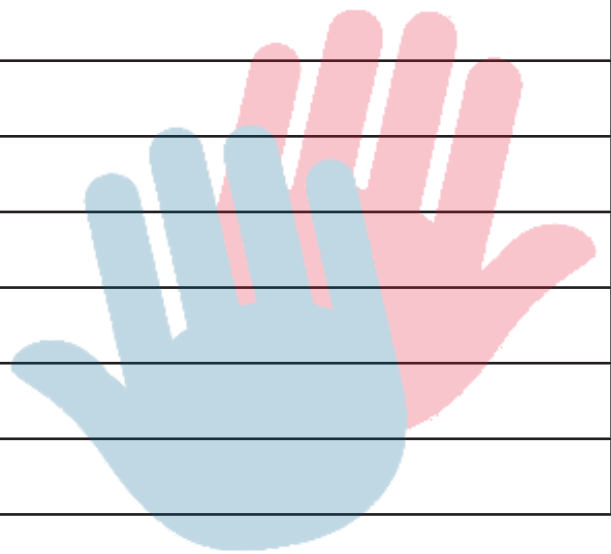
Keeping an activity time log for 2 days helps you to understand how you spend your time, and when you perform at your best. Without modifying your behaviour any further than you have to, note down the things you do as you do them. Every time you change activities, whether opening mail, working, gossiping with colleagues, note down the time of the change.

At the end of the 2 days review your time log entries and ask yourself:

- ⚡ How much of your activity is planned and how much is unplanned?
- ⚡ If planned, do you complete tasks in the time allowed?
- ⚡ How much time is spent on important and/or urgent matters compared with routine activities?
- ⚡ How much time is spent on routine activities which could have been delegated?
- ⚡ How often do interruptions divert you from your planned activities?
- ⚡ At which times of day are you most productive?

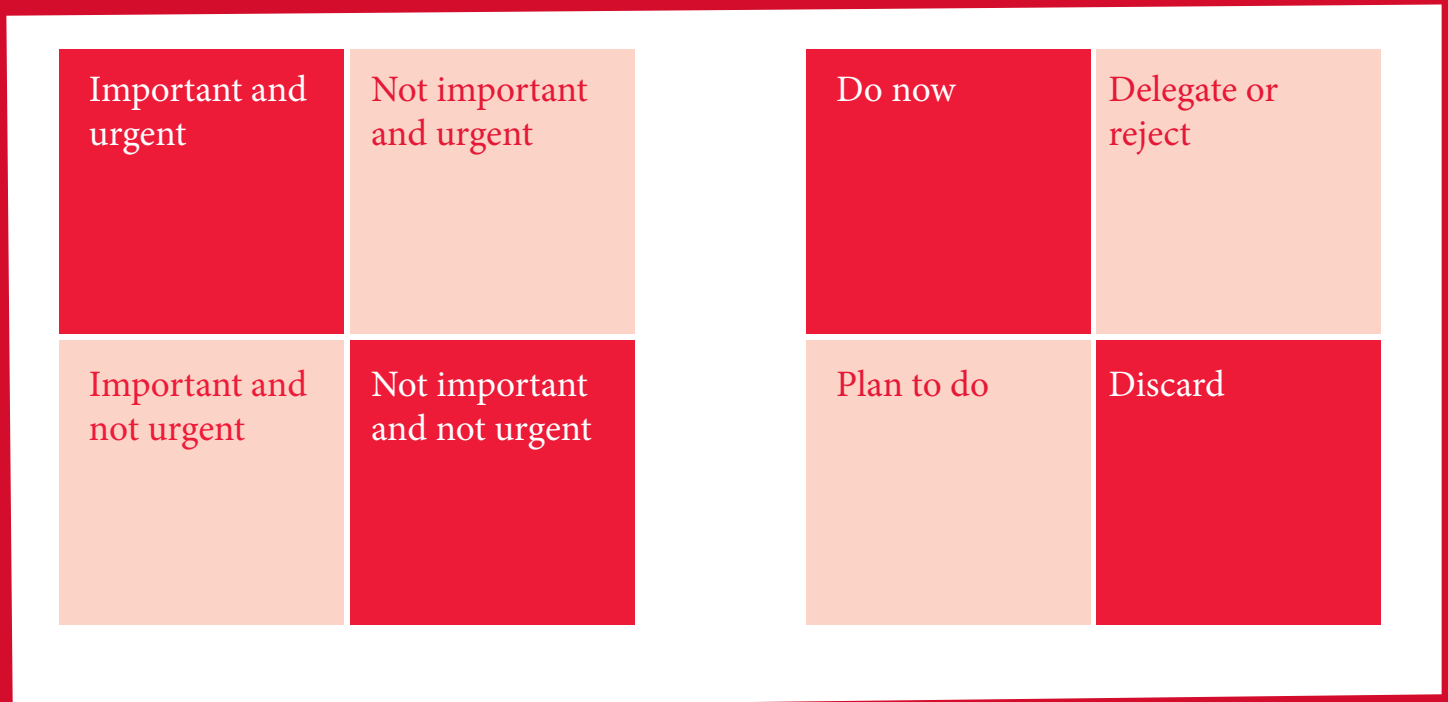
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2. REALIGN TASKS USING THE URGENT AND IMPORTANT MATRIX

The matrix is a tool for prioritising tasks and activities by categorising them based on level of importance and degree of urgency.



Important tasks are those which contribute to your long term goals and objectives. If you are not clear about what your aims are, it will be difficult to prioritise tasks and plan to complete them, so this should be your starting point.

Important and urgent

Tasks which are urgent and important might include: emergencies, requests from senior management, or reports that need to be delivered within a specific time frame. These need to be carried out straight away or delegated to someone else if appropriate.

Important and not urgent

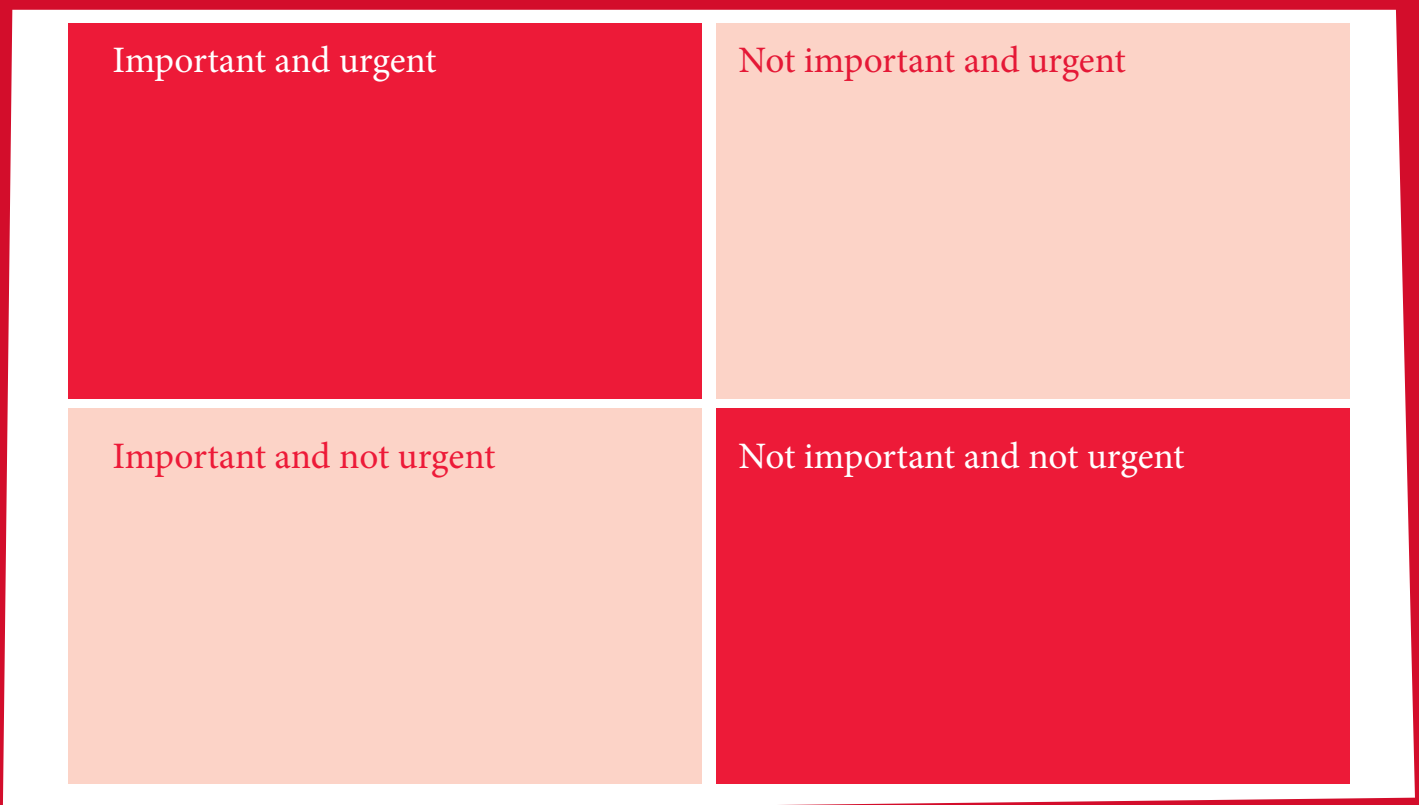
It is vital to plan time slots in advance for tasks which are important but not urgent. This will ensure you will have time to give them the attention they deserve and to complete successfully.

Not important and urgent

If you judge that tasks are urgent but not important – for example, requests from others, interruptions and distractions - you should assess them carefully and try to avoid doing if at all possible. You may be able to delegate them to others, or to explain sensitively why you are unable to complete them.

Not important and not urgent

Tasks which are neither important nor urgent may waste your time. You should try to exclude these whenever possible. Cross them off your task list, or keep them on a holding list until time becomes available for them or it becomes clear that they are no longer relevant or necessary. Look back through your time log sheets to work out how you spend your time.



How can this help me?

It is all too easy to allow urgent tasks, especially unimportant ones, to crowd out activities which are key to achieving personal or organisational goals. If important tasks are left until they become urgent, you will need to complete them in a rush to meet deadlines, and you may not be able to give them the consideration they really need. This is likely to result in poor results and cause unnecessary stress and anxiety. Prioritising and planning tasks in advance can help you to manage your time more effectively and achieve your goals more easily.

3. PRIORITISE TASKS ON YOUR TO DO LIST

The ABC time management method is a very quick and simple technique that involves separating out tasks and prioritising them in order of necessity, so that you can tackle the most important jobs first and use your time more productively.

Step 1. Create a to-do list of all the tasks and activities that you need to complete. The list does not need to be in any particular order.

Step 2. Label each task on your list with an A, B or C depending on its importance:

A tasks are the most important. They must be done straight away. An example of an A task could be writing a presentation for a meeting happening later the same day. These tasks are your most urgent, and you do not have the option of putting them to one side.

B tasks are those that need to be completed soon, but are not as urgent as the A tasks. An example of a B task could be submitting a report to your manager, or completing a budget report for the month. Most B tasks have deadlines, so be careful that you don't neglect them for so long that they suddenly get upgraded to the A list.

C tasks are those that can be left for those days when you have a little bit of spare time. They are not urgent and include things like arranging your personal files on your PC.



Step 3. Create a table or a spreadsheet with three columns, as in the example below. In each column, list all the tasks you have categorised under that letter.

A	B	C

Step 4. Get to work on the A list, starting with your most important task. Only once you have completed the A list can you move on to your B list, then finally the C list.

Step 5. At the start of each day, take a few minutes to move your tasks into the appropriate list. As the B or C items become more important, move them up into the A or B columns. Update your to-do list and ABC table daily, crossing off or deleting tasks when they have been completed.

By practising the ABC method every day for at least a month, you will develop a habit of working on your highest priority tasks, which should help to alleviate the pressure of your workload.

ADDITIONAL TIME-MANAGEMENT TIPS

Write things down

A common time management mistake is to try to use your memory to keep track of too many details leading to information overload. Using a to-do list to write things down is a great way to take control of your projects and tasks and keep yourself organised.

Plan your week

Spend some time at the beginning of each week to plan your schedule. Taking the extra time to do this will help increase your productivity and balance your important long-term projects with your more urgent tasks. All you need is 15 to 30 minutes each week for your planning session.

Carry a notebook

You never know when you are going to have a great idea or brilliant insight. Carry a small notebook with you wherever you go so you can capture your thoughts. If you wait too long to write them down you could forget.

Learn to say no

Many people become overloaded with too much work because they over commit; they say yes when they really should be saying no. Learn to say no to low priority requests and you will free up time to spend on things that are more important.

Identify bad habits

Make a list of bad habits that are stealing your time, sabotaging your goals, and blocking your success. After you do, work on them one at a time and systematically eliminate them from your life. Remember that the easiest way to eliminate a bad habit, is to replace it with a better habit.

Think about what you are giving up to do regular activities

It is a good idea to evaluate regularly how you are spending your time. In some cases, the best thing you can do is to stop doing an activity that is no longer serving you so you can spend the time doing something more valuable. Consider what you are giving up in order to maintain your current activities.

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