

Time Management

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Who needs lessons in Time Management

- Have you set any goals for yourself
- Do you believe in maximization of your time
- Do you do lot of analysis / are you indecisive
- Are you a perfectionist
- Do you believe in doing things yourself
- Do you believe in creating a GOOD person image
- Are you a social butterfly
- Are you confused / stressed / overwhelmed

What are the key Time Stealers

- Unclear objectives and priorities at given time
- Interruptions - telephone / personal visitors
- Procrastination and indecision
- Inability to automate / delegate
- Inability to say "No"
- Acting with incomplete / wrong information / knowledge
- Always working in fire fighting mode
- Stress and fatigue
- Unorganized desk and wardrobe

Benefits of Time Management

- Improve effectiveness as well as efficiency
- On-time completion of tasks
- Improve punctuality
- Increase in rewards and recognition
- Improved work-life balance
- Cordial relationships
- Gaining more time for planning and learning
- More control on personal and professional aspects

Problem Formulation ☺

- Time slots that need to be filled with work
 - **Scheduling**: what work to schedule in each slot
 - **Productivity**: how to do the scheduled work efficiently
- A time management solution must consider your goals
 - Maximize job satisfaction or work-life balance?



Scheduling Tip #1

- Make time for **important** but **non-urgent** tasks
 - Reading papers
 - Fitness, sleep, self care (e.g., learning a sport)
 - Get fundamentals of your area clear
 - Developing useful professional skills (e.g., learning a new programming language)
 - Cultivating hobbies (e.g., learn a new language)
- Otherwise, they slip through the cracks
- No time for something = not enough priority

Scheduling Tip #2

- How close to a deadline should you schedule a task?
- No thinking tasks = last minute is ok
 - Example: grading papers
 - Starting early makes it take up all available time
- Thinking tasks = give yourself time to think
 - Example: writing a paper, preparing a project plan
 - Starting late will make you rush and result in a lower quality output

Scheduling Tip #3

- Don't context switch and multitask too much – allot a **few hours at a stretch** to a task
 - Minimize distractions, interruptions (by self and others)
- But avoid boredom: **mix and match**
 - Bored of writing code for the last 3 hours? Pick a good research paper to read
 - Avoid temptation to check Facebook: have a list of “useful” but relaxing activities on hand to unwind

Productivity Tip #1

- Be **organized**, at an individual and team level
 - Organized directories and files, sort information before filing it away (*“The unsorted file is not worth saving”*)
 - Keep your inbox free of clutter (read and process messages in one shot)
 - Clear goals, timelines, to-do lists, communicated to everyone (you, advisor, collaborators)
 - Make a plan of what to do when your plan goes wrong! (Account for sloppiness of others)

Productivity Tip #2

- Use **productivity tools** to help you
 - Collaborative tools (Google docs)
 - Tools for sync up between workspaces (Dropbox)
 - Versioning and sharing code (svn, git)
 - Good device to read papers (tablet)
 - Backup tools (cloud or scripts on local servers)
 - Laptop/smartphone to quickly take care of most email

Productivity Tip #3

- Align your work with your strengths, skills, interests
- Your daily job should ideally be something you
 - are good and efficient at
 - enjoy doing