

TIME MASTERY: You Want it *When*?

Good time management brings the rewards of results, recognition, free time, clarity, and focus. It gives you a purpose in life, structure to your day, direction, and reduced frustration. It brings you to the end of the day with a sense of accomplishment. If life is running you instead of the other way around, then these time mastery tips can help you get the upper hand.

1. **Manage your reading pile so it doesn't "mushroom."** You can't possibly read everything you'd like to, so develop ways to tackle your reading pile and keep it down to a reasonable size.
2. **Create systems for repetitive tasks.** Put automated systems or processes in place so you don't have to do the same tasks over and over. If you can't, look for ways to do those tasks more efficiently.
3. **Know and avoid your biggest timewasters.** Discover your timewasters, identify alternatives to address them, and implement solutions to stop them in their tracks.
4. **Eliminate bottlenecks in your work caused by people or processes.** Minimize common slowdowns by reorganizing workflow efficiently, eliminating dependencies, keeping the process moving, and being willing to accept partial delivery on some projects. And don't be a bottleneck yourself!
5. **Recognize that different personalities relate to time differently.** No single work style is the "correct" one; no one way is the "right" way to do things. Understand how to work effectively with each work style you encounter.
6. **Know how much your time is worth.** Calculate the dollar value of your time, and eliminate those things that aren't worth your effort. There's always time to do what's important: the challenge is determining what "important" means to you.
7. **Save time in bits and pieces.** Instead of wasting little chunks of time before a meeting or before lunch, do a small task that requires concentration for only a short time: reading, planning, paying a bill, writing a note. Little things add up.
8. **Make effective use of down time.** The only thing worse than wasting time is having someone else waste it for you. Be prepared with a book, magazine, article, or audio book if you get stuck somewhere with nothing to do.
9. **Avoid time wasters within your department or organization.** Learn to communicate effectively with co-workers and employees, make sure all roles are

effectively defined, request and respond constructively to feedback, and don't waste time looking for a scapegoat if something goes wrong: fix it first!

10. **Make decisions quickly once you have the appropriate information.** Don't dither. Any decision that's likely to serve you and your company is better than no decision at all. Plus, be willing to end old bad decisions that interfere with new ones.

Time is like money, because it's a limited commodity and using it effectively requires thoughtful analysis and planning. Like money, you have to learn to master it ASAP, or suffer the consequences. Without good time management, you'll experience negative consequences such as missed deadlines, late nights, stress, crisis, and overload. Time mastery, on the other hand, allows you to run your life -- and keeps life from running you.

© 2009 Laura Stack. Laura Stack is a personal productivity expert, author, and professional speaker who helps busy workers Leave the Office Earlier® with Maximum Results in Minimum Time®. She is the president of The Productivity Pro®, Inc., a time management training firm specializing in productivity improvement in high-stress organizations. Since 1992, Laura has presented keynotes and seminars on improving output, lowering stress, and saving time in today's workplaces. She is the bestselling author of three works published by Broadway Books: *The Exhaustion Cure* (2008), *Find More Time* (2006) and *Leave the Office Earlier* (2004). Laura is a spokesperson for Microsoft, 3M, and Day-Timers®, Inc and has been featured on the CBS Early Show, CNN, and the New York Times. Her clients include Cisco Systems, Sunoco, KPMG, Nationwide, and 3M. To have Laura speak at your next event, call 303-471-7401. Visit www.TheProductivityPro.com to sign up for her free monthly productivity newsletter.