

Mastering TIME Management

Achieve your
goals and live a
balanced life by
getting more
done in less
time

TIME: DON'T FIND IT, CREATE IT!

"Time stays long enough for those who use it."—Leonardo Da Vinci

"I want to do it, but I just can't find the time."

How often have you heard this phrase? Or better yet, how often have you said this phrase? You only have 24 hours in a day, and if it eight hours of that is spent sleeping, you only really have 16 hours. And there are so many things to do during those 16 hours that it can be difficult to find time to complete many tasks that may even be of high priority.

As a result, you may have just resigned some of your goals to a later date. A mysterious date, when you will suddenly "find time."

Find time. An interesting phrase, isn't it? As if time is something you've been searching for, and suddenly you expect to find in a dark corner somewhere one day. And then you'll say, "Oh, there you are! I've been trying to find you all this time!" And we'll get everything done, and it will be a glorious day.

Now, let's stop there. Let's switch gears for a second

and start off with some interesting facts about some successful people you probably know, shall we?

Billionaire Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft and common name in every household, clearly has a lot on his plate. On top of his professional life, he's started the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which works on using his riches to create a better world. But in the middle of all of this professional success, he still finds time to be with his beloved wife and three children, as well as play golf.

Investor Warren Buffet manages to find time to not only play the ukulele, but even play online bridge (sometimes with Bill Gates!).

Current U.S. president Barack Obama may have an incredibly busy life (with running the country and all), but he still manages to fit in a golf game every now and then when he needs to wind down; on the other side of party lines, former president George W. Bush is a quite accomplished painter.

Susan Sarandon, one of the most well-known actresses of our time, somehow finds time in her busy life to play ping pong often (in fact, she even helped to launch a sports bar with ping pong tables called "Spin" in New York!). Meryl Streep, on the other

hand, spends a vast amount of her time knitting, which she uses to help gather her thoughts.

Okay, you can stop there. What in the world is your point?

All of these extremely successful have clearly “found” time. Obviously, they tracked it down and leapt on it, and now they have ample amounts of it that they’re hoarding all to themselves, or else they wouldn’t be able to be so unbelievably successful while still having extra to spend on their family, personal lives, and leisure activities...right?

Wrong. “Finding time” is a myth. As Charles Buxton once said, “You will never find time for anything. If you want time, you must make it.”

The difference between extremely successful people and the rest of the population is not that these people have “found” time. Indeed, they have accomplished one of the hardest things in the world—they have planned their time so that they manage to fit in everything they want to do. They have created time. And that doesn’t mean that they have some special power the rest of us don’t have to create hours in a day.

They were able to create time by mastering the art of time management.

ARE YOU LIVING IN CLOCK TIME OR REAL TIME?

“When a man sits with a pretty girl for an hour, it seems like a minute. But let him sit on a hot stove for a minute—then it’s longer than any hour. That’s relativity!”—Albert Einstein

Time. Some say it’s the fourth dimension, while others just wish they had more of it. But one thing’s for certain: there’s only one kind of time, and it’s the kind that makes the clock spin and the seasons change. Right?

Wrong.

In their Entrepreneur article “[10 Management Tips That Work](#)”, Joe Mathews, Don DeBolt and Deb Percival argue that there are actually two types of time: clock time and real time.

Clock Time: Definite. Probably what you think of when you think of the word “time.” 60 seconds per minute, 60 minutes per hour, 24 hours per day, etc. It’s a quantitative, measurable thing, even if you can’t see it in front of you.

Real Time: Relative, depending on what you’re doing.

Everyone has been acquainted with real time. It's the kind of time that makes a weekend fly by and a Monday drag on forever. Or, the kind of time that makes a night out with friends seem like only a few minutes long, but an evening out with your in-laws seem like a year.

Mathews, Debolt and Percival point out that whether we know it or not, everyone lives in real time. We perceive time based on what we're doing. Though we spent three hours reading a book in clock time, it might have been twenty minutes in real time, and that's how we perceive it.

However, we try to manage our time based on clock time instead. Instead, we need to realize that we live in real time. You can't map out that you'll finish Project A in the same amount of time as Project B because there are so many factors to consider. If you like Project B more, it will take you less time. If you are feeling tired when you're working on Project A but motivated when you're working on Project B, how can you possibly expect to get them done in the same amount of time and in time for your meeting with your boss?

In order to live in clock time, you have to learn a bit about yourself and how you work best, which leads us

to our next section.

Key Takeaway:

- There is a difference between Clock Time, which is measured in seconds and minutes, and Real Time, which is how you experience it. This is why fun, engaging activities go by fast and boring monotonous tasks can seem like they take forever.

KEEPING AN ACTIVITY LOG

“It’s not enough to be busy, so are the ants. The question is, what are we busy about?”—Henry David Thoreau

It can be difficult to keep all of these different things in consideration and notice the small details of your day-to-day life. Which is why we’ll give you a bit of homework.

Ugh, homework.

We know, we know. But this homework isn’t busy work—it’ll pay off.

Keep an activity log for one week. Write down everything you do when you’re working (or, as the case may be, trying to work).

It might feel a little overwhelming trying to write down everything, but we want you to keep in mind four main things. We have provided a supplement for you to write all of these down.

- 1. What are you working on?** Make sure you write down the exact activities you’re working on. This

could include working on a report at work, doing laundry, or making client phone calls.

2. **Feelings and Energy Levels:** when you feel on top of the world and ready to tackle any tasks that you come across, write it down. When you're feeling exhausted and unmotivated, write it down. Any feelings or change in energy levels, take note of.
3. **Interruptions:** when do you tend to have interruptions in your tasks, whether they're phone calls, meetings, or even self-inflicted interruptions, like stopping to check your e-mail or your phone?
4. **Time:** how much time does it take you to accomplish tasks? What time did you start what tasks, and what time did you finish them? Even if it seems trivial, write down all times.

Write down everything, no matter how mundane it may seem. If you did it right, by the end of the week, you'll have copious notes that you can analyze.

*We've included a sample activity log at the end of this eBook that you can print out and use. We know, we're cool, and you're welcome :-)

Analyze Your Activity Log

Now that it's been a week, look at them all. Odds are, you'll notice some patterns:

- 1. Feelings and Energy Levels:** Everyone has a time when their energy level peaks. For some, this is in the morning; for others, it's at night, or perhaps in the afternoon. Odds are, you'll notice a time when you're more productive and when you feel super motivated—as well as a time when you feel listless and tired.
- 2. Interruptions:** Is there a time when you tend to be interrupted the most often? Do you get the most calls around a certain hour, or do people drop by around a certain time? And do you tend to interrupt your own efforts (by checking your e-mail or your phone, for example) at a certain time? Perhaps you do it around the time when your energy levels are low...see the connection here?
- 3. Time:** Are there certain tasks that take you longer than others? Think about it—do those tasks take you longer because they're harder, or because you like them less? When do you get the most done?

Activity logs are great for learning about yourself and your own working habits. Often, people try to work against the current of their brain rather than going with the flow. If you know your flow—that you work best at noon but get tired around three, for example—you can plan around your own brain flow to maximize efficiency.

But how do I plan? There's just so many things to do!

Don't you worry; we're getting to that. First, you need to use the Matrix.

Key Takeaways:

- Keep an activity log for a week (use the one at the end of the eBook). Keep notes of everything you can, especially feelings and energy levels, interruptions, and time.
- Analyze your activity log at the end of the week to learn about when you peak and crash, as well as patterns in your day-to-day life.

USE THE MATRIX

“Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you.” -Carl Sandburg

Who am I, Keanu Reeves?

Yes. The Keanu Reeves of time management. But you’re not only using one Matrix, but two.

#1: Urgent-Important Matrix

Yeah, the Urgent-Important Matrix is pretty much as cool as it sounds.

In fact, former President Eisenhower himself used it, to the point where it’s often called the Eisenhower Matrix. And if you think you’ve got a lot to do, well, the President of the United States probably has more. So you know this is good.

Okay, good point. But what do you mean by “urgent” and “important”?

We’ll define them each for you:

Urgent: activities which must be completed immediately, and often are associated with the achievement of someone else's goals

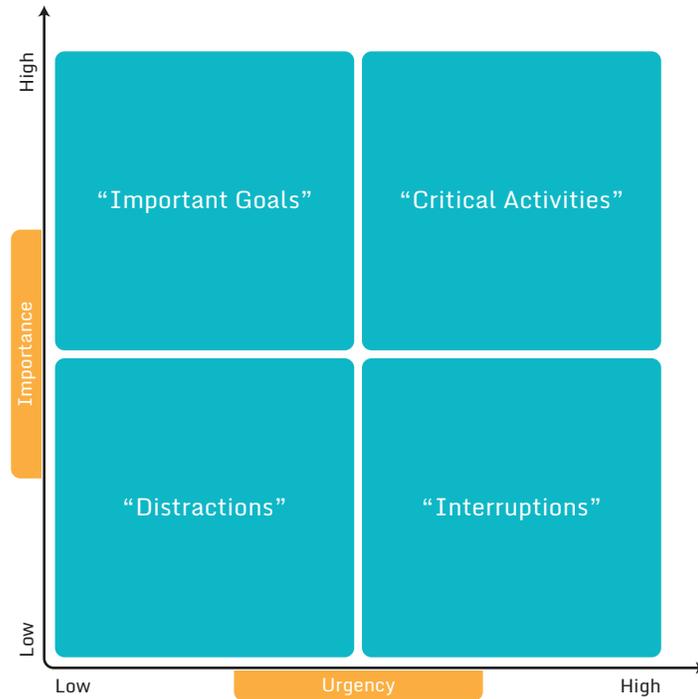
Important: activities that lie close to your heart or that lead to achievement of your own goals

As Eisenhower himself once said, “What is **important** is seldom **urgent** and what is **urgent** is seldom **important.**” Keep this in mind when you're creating your own matrix.

Now, I need you to think back to grade school math.

Ew, more homework?

Just a little! Imagine a square, where the horizontal axis is **urgency**, and the vertical axis is **importance**. Divide it into four quadrants, so that it looks like this:



As you can see, our version of the Eisenhower Matrix has one or two neat little white words in each quadrant. Here’s what they mean:

Critical Activities - High Urgency, High Importance – These are tasks that are incredibly important and you need to get done immediately—in other words, tasks that you either could not foresee or that you procrastinated like crazy. Either way, get these done, ASAP. An example of a critical activity might be a presentation you need to give at work tomorrow that might put you in the running for that big promotion you’ve had your eye on.

Interruptions – High Urgency, Low Importance –

Remember earlier, when we mentioned people stopping into your office, distracting phone calls, and the like? You might be starting to see a pattern, because interruptions are a nuisance when it comes to time management. After all, even though they're not important, they need to be done ASAP, so they often force you to drop anything for something with low pay-off. These unfortunately serve as roadblocks on your way to achieving your goals. Think: can you get rid of any of these, or perhaps delegate them?

Important Goals - Low Urgency, High Importance –

These are tasks that may not be urgent, but are vital to achieving your goals. Don't procrastinate these, or they will become critical activities. Think about your important goals, like improving your company's social media or writing a novel. Don't let them fall by the wayside.

Distractions – Low Urgency, Low Importance –

Avoid these. Not only are they not important, but they don't even need to be done immediately (or at all!). Often they're simply something that someone else wants you to do for their own personal gain. Either ignore them or cancel them—and if others insist that you do them for their own personal gain, just learn how to politely say “No.” Distractions will just hold you back.

Now, write each of the tasks you worked on the from your activity log for the past week in its appropriate quadrant, depending on its level of urgency and importance. Also add in the amount of time you spent on each of the tasks. Try to fill out the grid.

Once you've done that, look at your matrix again. Are the majority of your tasks of high importance? Or are a lot of them interruptions or distractions?

Add up the time spent for each quadrant. Is most of your time spent on important tasks, or non-important stuff?

In order to get the most benefit from your time, you'll want to delegate or politely say "no" to as many tasks in the bottom-half of the grid so that you can focus as much of your time on the top-half.

However, importance and urgency aren't the only aspects of your work you should take into consideration.

#2: The Action-Priority Matrix

Now remember, Keanu Reeves of time management, there is also a second matrix. And this one is the Action-Priority Matrix. Also pretty darn

cool-sounding.

This time, the x-axis is **effort**, while the y-axis is **impact**.

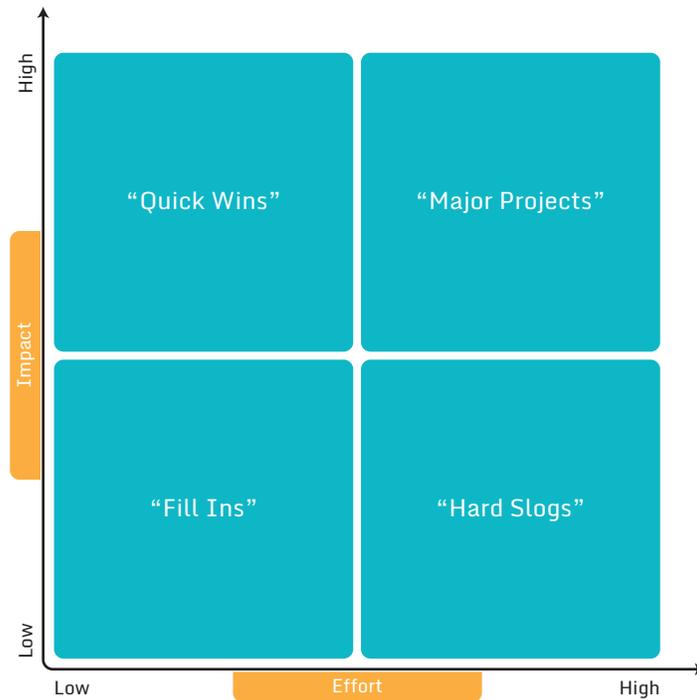
Wait, then why isn't it called the Effort-Impact Matrix?

We have no idea, Keanu. But it still works.

Impact: activities that have a large influence on your careers and goals.

Effort: activities that take a lot of work and energy to complete.

You know the drill. Get to drawing that matrix.



Organize your tasks by effort and impact in the matrix, then check out what quadrant it falls in:

Quick Wins – **High Impact, Low Effort** – These are the best, and we all wish all our tasks were like these. They are the ones that are super easy and high-impact, so it’s a win-win. An example might be mailing an important letter or calling your boss to double-check a statistic. Get ‘em done and cherish the moment after when you feel ultra-productive.

Fill Ins – **Low Impact, Low Effort** – If you’ve got some free time, get these done. But even though they’re easy, they aren’t all that important, so feel free to put these on the backburner. Some examples

of fill ins might be fixing something minor around the house or getting a new water cooler for the office.

Major Projects – High Impact, High Effort – These take a lot of energy and time, but they're totally worth it. An example might be a big event you need to plan for work. Think of this as a big task that you can break down into lots of little tasks (that might end up being lots of Quick Wins!).

Hard Slogs – Low Impact, High Effort – These are tasks you should avoid at all costs. What's the point of doing something that takes a lot of energy and doesn't help you out much in the long run?

Use your activity log and add the activities, plus the time spent, on each of the quadrants using this grid.

Now, look at your matrix. How much time do you spend on the unnecessary stuff, and how can you fix it so that you spend the majority of your time on the tasks that are of high importance and impact to you?

Remember – try to delegate interruptions and just avoid distractions and hard slogs. They're merely time-suckers, and you need all the time you can get.

Key Takeaways:

- Managing your time effectively comes down to working on projects that are of high importance, and not just busy-work.
- Use the Urgent/Important and/or the Action/Priority matrix to see how you're spending your time each week.

MAKE A PLAN

“He who every morning plans the transaction of the day and follows out the plan, carries a thread that will guide him through the labyrinth of the most busy life.”—Victor Hugo

Now that you’ve figured out some of your work patterns and isolated the tasks that are of high impact and importance to you, you can start making a plan. But first, you’ll want to define your big, long term goals.

First, make a list of your big goals for the next year. *Check out the awesome supplement we included at the end of this eBook for you to write down your goals.

Think about yourself one year from now. What would you like to have accomplished by then? These could be things like losing 20 pounds, getting a promotion, or buying a new home—whatever you desire.

Once you have those big goals down on our nifty sheet, you’ll want to work backwards so you can create a plan that will help you achieve them. Break each of those big goals into smaller goals and tasks

that you can set for each month. For example, if you want to lose 20 pounds in the next 12 months, set a goal to lose 2 pounds each month. Then, you can list the activities you'll need to do each week to help you get there. This may include 30 minutes of exercise each day, sleeping 8 hours a night, or doing a weekly shopping run to your local grocery store or farmer's market.

Once you've got these goals broken down, start your planning by writing down your goals and tasks for each month, week and day. These may be consistent every day or they may change each week or month based on how you're breaking up your big goals.

The important thing is that you're defining your big goals and then breaking them down into more manageable tasks you can do each day to help you achieve these big goals. Write this plan down and you'll be far ahead of your friends, who might just

“wish” they could achieve their goals but wonder why they never do.

Takeaway:

- Creating a plan can help you spend most of your time on your most important goals.

- Write down your big, lofty goals using the printable at the end of this eBook.
- Break down these goals into smaller goals that you can aim to complete each month, each week, and even each day.

STICKING TO YOUR PLAN EVERY DAY

“One of the greatest resources people cannot mobilize themselves is that they try to accomplish great things. Most worthwhile achievements are the result of many little things done in a single direction.”—Nido Qubein

I’ve got a plan! How exciting!

Yes, yes! However, keep in mind that although creating a plan is a great first step, it’s not going to help if you don’t actually stick to it. This is where you’re going to use the power of discipline, focus, and short-term planning to ensure you’re going to achieve your big goals.

First of all, every Sunday, you’ll want to plan out what your week will look like in your planner or calendar. If you don’t have the time to go out and get a planner, you’re in luck—we’ve created a weekly planner supplement too, so you can print it out and use that.

Do you have any appointments coming up this week

that you must remember? What tasks will you work on each day so you can hit your weekly goals? Are there distractions you know will come up that you can manage ahead of time by delegating or politely saying “no”?

Secondly, you’ll want to write down a much more specific daily plan, based on the planning you did in the last section. Again, we’ve got ya set for that—check out the supplement at the end of the eBook.

Spend the last 15 minutes of every day making a list of all the tasks you’ll work on the next day, and list them in priority order.

The next day, soon after waking up, take a look at your list and begin working on the most important tasks. And after you start working on it try to continue working on it until it’s done. Remember, multitasking is actually an energy-drain and is counter-productive to efficiently managing your time.

Your goal is use the power of focus to knock out one important task after another, taking short breaks in between each when you recognize your brain starts to get a little tired.

How can you do that, you ask? We'll tell you.

Key Takeaways:

- Now that you've written down your goals, plan out your week and your day.
- Spend the last 15 minutes of every day making a list of all the tasks you'll work on the next day, and list them in priority order.
- Each day you'll want to work on the most important task until it's done, taking short breaks in between tasks to give your mind and body a refresh.

THE POWER OF FOCUS: HOW TO STAY PRODUCTIVE

“Time has a wonderful way of weeding out the trivial.”—Richard Ben Sapir

Man, I’ve got this all planned out. This is great.

Hold your horses, Keanu. Though creating a plan is vastly important in time-management, all of it will be in vain if you don’t learn how to focus. After all, if you blocked out an hour of time for Project A, but you aren’t focused on it, you won’t get it finished in time and it will bleed into the time you had blocked for Project B.

Remember, if you want to manage your time, you need to use your time effectively. That means no surfing on Facebook, no procrastination, none of that. Just pure, honest work. You need to focus. Get that task done in the time block you’ve set aside for it, and you’re golden.

But how do I work past those times when I’m just feeling unproductive?

Use your mental toughness!

What?

[Mental toughness](#) describes a frame of mind in which people stop at nothing to achieve their goals. Even if you're not feeling like working, use mental toughness so that you can be disciplined enough to start working and only stop when the task is finished. If you're constantly checking your Facebook or procrastinating, you've got to improve your mental toughness. It's something that all of those successful people we mentioned have. Do you really think Bill Gates has the time to screw around and not get his tasks done?

Luckily, getting mentally tougher is easier than you think. Simply force all other distractions out of your mind and remind yourself that as soon as you're done, you can attend to the other stuff. And mental toughness is sort of like a muscle...the more you use it, the stronger it gets. You can do it!

Key Takeaways:

- Focus is of the utmost importance.
- You must be mentally tough and work through moments of insecurity or tiredness to get your tasks done.

PRODUCTIVITY HACKS

“To do two things at once is to do neither.”—Publius Syrus

Still having trouble getting done what you need to get done in the right amount of time? Take a deep breath and check out these tips to be focused and productive. Using even just a few of these can help you focus more and spend less time on the “clutter” in your life that soaks up your valuable time and energy.

1. Don't Skip Breakfast.

Well, that seems random.

Not at all, my friend. [One study](#) found that skipping breakfast may interfere with your ability to focus and your cognition. Eat a big, healthy breakfast full of fiber and protein every day.

2. Have a Cup of Coffee.

Try having a cup of coffee to give you a bit of a boost. Coffee can help you focus better, but don't drink an entire pot, because that will just make you jittery...and no one focuses well when they're jittery.

3. Pay Bills Automatically.

Most major banks,

credit cards, utility companies and other creditors allow automatic bill payment. Set these up to free up your mind and time. You can also use programs such as Mint to track your spending, earnings, and investments all in one place.

- 4. Cook in Bulk.** Making meals at the beginning of the week frees you from having to cook after an exhausting day of work. Preparing a lot of healthy food in advance will also help you eat healthy throughout the week.
- 5. Use a Meal Delivery Service.** Cooking at home can be the healthiest and cheapest way to eat, but it can also take a lot of time. Try meal delivery services like BistroMD, DietToGo, or Healthy Chef Creations to get prepared meals delivered straight to your door. While these services aren't cheap, they will help you save time and get more done outside of the kitchen.
- 6. Streamline your Wardrobe.** Too many choices can slow you down, especially when it comes to your style. So what should you do? First, get rid of any clothing you no longer wear; just drop it off at your local Goodwill or other donation center. Not sure what to give? If you haven't

worn an item in the last year, it's doubtful you'll wear it again. Give it to someone who will. When buying clothes; stick with the basics; if most of your options are unique and funky, you'll have trouble matching each morning. Instead, focus on a few core types of outfits and then plan and accessorize around them. Next, plan your outfit the night before so you can just put it on and walk out the door first thing in the morning.

- 7. Shop Smarter.** Gone are the days of having to fight for a parking spot and then wait on long lines to shop for clothes at the mall. Online retailers such as Trunk Club for men, Hoseanna for women or Wittlebee for children allow you to get clothing delivered straight to your door. Zappos is another e-tailer who will be happy to deliver footwear or loads of other clothing options to you, with a hassle-free return policy and customer friendly attitude.

- 8. Work out Faster.** Unless you're retired or independently wealthy, endurance training can sap valuable hours from your day. Instead, try burst training; high intensity, short duration exercises that can zap fat in less time. Workouts as short as 20 minutes can boost your metabolism, pack on muscle and have you

looking and feeling great. Try workouts Cross-Fit, interval training (sprinting for 30 seconds, recover for 1 minutes, repeat) or any fast-paced high intensity exercise that will increase your heart rate and leave you exhausted after 20 minutes.

- 9. Back-up and Sync-Up.** Backing your files can save you time and lots of headaches if your computer ever crashes. Use a cloud-storage system like Dropbox to back-up your files and access them from any other compatible devices.

- 10. Turn Off the TV.** Studies suggest that the average American watches about 25 hours of television per week, and viewers in other Western countries aren't very far behind that. What could you do with an extra 25 hours each week? Here's a few ideas: get in better physical shape, read more, further your education, learn a new skill, start a side-business, or connect with friends and family. Along with sapping your productivity, watching too much TV can ruin your mood. A study from the University of Maryland tracked nearly 30,000 adults over 30 years and found that "unhappy people watch an estimated 20 percent more television than very happy people."

- 11. Eat Your Frog.** You know that one big “thing” you’ve been putting off for weeks? Doing that first thing in the morning will get your day started on the right track, boost your confidence and crush any thoughts of procrastination. Each day, find that one thing you’ve been putting off and get it done right away. You’ll be amazed how smooth the rest of your day will go once you tackle it.

- 12. Protect your Einstein Window.** According to time management expert Dr. Todd Dewett, everyone has the time of day when their mental ability peaks—or, as he calls it, the Einstein Window. Block out your hardest tasks during this time, and make sure that no one bothers you during this time, or your wasting moments of intense productivity!

- 13. Stop Checking Email.** In today’s digital age, it’s easy to read and respond to emails all day...and not get anything else done. That busy-work can make you feel productive, although you’re not making progress on any of your important projects. Set a couple specific blocks of time during the day to check and respond to e-mail, each no longer than 60-90 minutes. Once you’ve exhausted this time, close your inbox and move

on to more important work. You can also try an application like Sanebox to reduce your email clutter and filter out the non-important stuff.

14. Clear the Clutter. Just as making a to-do list clears the mental clutter out of your mind, clearing the clutter from your home or workplace helps you to work more efficiently. Manage your clutter by taking just 15 minutes a day to organize a section of your home or desk. Knowing that you have a set time makes the daunting task of organizing a huge mess more manageable.

So how should you clear it?

- a.** Put all of your “stuff” in one area. This could be a box, or a room in your house, depending on how much clutter you have.
- b.** Go through each of the items and sort them in the following ways: throw away, give away, sell, keep.
- c.** Take action on the items you’re going to throw away, give away, or sell.
- d.** Group similar items you want to keep together. Then give them a “home.” This could be a storage bin, shelf, or other area of your house that is easy to find but not in your way.

- e. Use “viewable” space only for items that you absolutely use every day. Keep this to a minimum though; the more stuff you have out, the more cluttered your home or office will be.
- f. Develop a system and schedule to go through your clutter each day, or week, to keep your area organized and clutter-free.

15. Outsource. Do you spend most of your time doing mind-numbing work? Outsource anything that isn’t “thought-work” to capable colleagues or interns. You could use websites like Elance or fiverr to find people who can take the boring stuff off your plate, allowing you to focus on your most important work.

16. Break it Down. Break large projects down into smaller tasks to make the process more manageable and allow you to track progress along the way. Set deadlines for each of the tasks and make sure you’re on track to hit them. When obstacles come up, you’ll be able to spot them quickly and adjust your plan before the big project is due.

17. Say “No.” We’ve mentioned this a few times in reference to Hard Slogs and Distractions, but

really, this can apply for many things. Requests and distractions from co-workers, friends, and family can happen all the time. And while it's important to help others, make sure that by saying "yes" to someone else, you're not saying "no" to yourself and your success. When you get a request that isn't going to make a difference in anyone's bottom line, politely state that you're in the middle of something important and can help them at a later date or time. Starting with this simple technique can filter out the fluffy stuff that gets asked of you but won't really make a big impact for anyone.

- 18. Set a Limit.** Set parameters for getting a project or task done, and then try and do it faster. If you predict a job will take 2 hours, shoot to get it done in 90 minutes. Don't sacrifice the quality of work, but challenge yourself to get it done faster.
- 19. Figure Out Your Ideal Environment.** Maybe silence works perfectly for you—hey, that's what libraries are for. But maybe libraries drive you crazy, and you do your best work when things are bustling around you, or even when you're hanging out with friends. Maybe you like to blast rock 'n roll while you're working, or maybe classical music helps you focus. Figure out what

environment suits you—and take advantage of it!

- 20. Work from Home.** Ask your boss if you can work from home one day a week. Working from home can help you stay focused, allow you to move ahead on your big projects, and get you away from the distractions at the office.

- 21. Know the Difference Between Urgent and Important Work.** Understanding the difference between urgent and important work can make a huge impact on your productivity. Urgent work consists of those fire-drills that happen throughout the day but don't really have a big impact on long term objectives. Important work is the stuff you need to do that will bring in revenue, get you that promotion, and keep you on track to having a successful career. The next time an “urgent” issue pops up in your life, rather than jumping on it, ask yourself if it's truly important. If not, see if you can address it later, or maybe not at all.

- 22. Make your Meetings Efficient.** Long meetings can be a waste of time and energy. The next time you're getting together with your team, try this:
 - a.** Make it “standing-only.” People will be

less likely to go off-topic or talk for a long time if they're not able to sit.

- b.** Send an agenda at least the night before, and hold people to it. If anyone brings up items not on the agenda, ask them to discuss it another time.
- c.** Set a timer. Once the allotted time is hit, the meeting is over, no exceptions. Doing this will ensure the most important topics are discussed first.
- d.** Tired of stragglers holding up your meetings? Lock the door one minute after your meeting is planned to start. After being locked out once or twice, the offenders are likely to be the first to show for future meetings.

23. Carpool. Along with cutting your carbon footprint and saving gas money, carpooling can free up your time to discuss projects with coworkers, network with new contacts, or even catch up on sleep.

24. Take Public Transportation. Time spent on the bus, train, or subway is perfect for reading, learning, or planning your day. The best thing is that you can do all this without worrying about changing lanes or getting stuck in traffic.

- 25. Listen to an Audiobook.** Sitting in traffic is a waste of time. Make that time productive by listening to audio books to keep your brain fresh and full of new ideas. Try Audible.com Amazon, or iTunes for the audio version of those books you've been meaning to read but haven't had the time yet.
- 26. Make a To-Do List.** You know all those things you need to do that keep popping up in your mind? They're taking up tons of mental space, so get them out of your head and onto paper (or a device). Using productivity tools such as Evernote can help you keep track of notes, ideas, and anything else that you want to review at a later time. Astrid is another application that allows you to create to-do-lists with specific tasks to keep you on course. You can even share lists with co-workers, as well as alerts and reminders. Or, simply go old-school and just use pen and paper. Whatever you use, list out your most important things that need to be accomplished that day, and get them done first.
- 27. Track Your Productivity.** Rescue Time and Todoist Karma are apps that allow you to track productivity, spot inefficiencies in your day, and give tips to help you improve productivity. After

all, it's hard to improve your productivity if you're not sure where you need to focus first.

- 28. Stop Multitasking.** Neuroscientists and productivity experts warn against multitasking. Focusing on more than one thing at a time will slow you down, increase your stress and kill your productivity. Instead, get laser-focused on one thing at a time, and once finished, move onto the next.
- 29. Never Remember Another Password.** Download a password manager such as LastPass or 1Password so you don't spend useless time tracking down forgotten usernames or passwords.
- 30. Focus on the 20%.** Also called "The Pareto Principle" after economist Vilfredo Pareto, this law states that 80% of effects come from 20% of the causes. It's likely that 20% of your work yields 80% of your results. Determine what that 20% is, and then focus on it as much as possible throughout your day.
- 31. Learn to Speed Read.** Imagine being able to read twice as fast as you normally do. Well, you can learn how to do just that without a whole lot of effort. Here's how.

- a. Turn off the voice in your head. When you read, instead of vocalizing each word, just read it. If you say each word to yourself when you read it, your brain will be capped at learning at the speed of your speech, which is slower than your speed of comprehension.
- b. Read in chunks. Instead of reading every word individually, read blocks of words at a time. As you get better at this skill, expand your blocks from two words to four, then to six, etc.
- c. Use a pointer. This could be a finger, bookmark, or pen placed directly under the words you want to read. The faster you move the pointer, the faster you'll read.
- d. Don't go back. After you've read something, try not to re-read it a second time. Doing that will slow your pace and break your flow. Your goal is to read the materials as quickly as possible while retaining the most important information—but not so quickly that you need to go back and read the points again.
- e. Filter the fluff. When reading a document or book, look for headings, subheadings, and bullets. That's where the important stuff is. If you understand the point the

author is making, there's no need to read through examples and other supporting evidence that further drives the point home. Your goal is to read the important stuff only, and nothing more.

- 32. Limit Social Media Usage.** Programs such as Rescue Time track your time spent on social media sites so you can better understand how many hours you spend Facebooking, Tweeting, and socializing on any platform. While there is value in using social networks for personal and professional use, excessive time on these sites can crush your productivity.
- 33. Take Breaks.** Being productive is all about quality of time, not quantity. Try working in bursts for 60-90 minutes followed by 5-10 minutes of break-time. Whenever you feel your mind wandering for more than a few minutes, that's a sign to take a break. But once you're back from break, get laser-focused on your work and make that time count.
- 34. Plan Your Day in Advance.** One of the last things you should do before your head hits the pillow is to plan the next day in advance. Doing so will help you fall asleep because you'll unload any

nagging thoughts onto paper. You'll also be read to tackle the most important stuff first thing the next morning, instead of getting dragged into emails, phone calls, and other reactive stuff that can keep you busy, but not productive. And yes, there's a world of difference in the two. "busy" results in stress, while "productive" results in progress.

- 35. Wake up Early.** Waking up 30-60 minutes earlier each day can allow you to move from reactive to proactive, giving you time to get focused before the e-mails and phone calls come flooding in. Early morning is also the best time to eat your frog (see #11).

Takeaway:

- Managing your time effectively is about more than just creating a plan and staying focused. There are simple things you can do every day to free up more of your time for your most important projects and goals.

“BUT I WANT SOME TIME FOR ME!” –THE IMPORTANCE OF BALANCE

“Let him who would enjoy a good future waste none of his present.” -Roger Babson

How am I supposed to do all this and still stay sane? I need some relaxation time every now and then! How do Bill Gates and Meryl Streep do it?

That’s a good question, Keanu. A good question... with a good answer.

It is vastly important to give yourself some time for you. Not just because you want it, but because you need it. Unless you’re some crazy workaholic superhuman, if you don’t get time for yourself every now and then, you will most certainly burn out. And when you’re burnt out, you’ll be tired, unfocused, and quite unproductive. In other words, you certainly won’t be able to get that big to-do list done.

That’s why you need to balance your life between productivity and relaxation. That doesn’t mean half your waking hours should be spent relaxing, but

rather that you should include a bit in there so that you can recharge your batteries and keep on going.

What is it that helps you relax? Watching a show on Netflix, reading a book, going for a nice run, or perhaps a hobby like playing the piano? Figure out what sorts of things make you happy, and schedule in some time in your planner for them. It sounds uptight, planning fun time, but it's necessary. If you don't plan it, you might not find the time for it, and no one wants to be burned out. Block out an hour every day or every other day for you to relax and recharge. If you're refreshed and relaxed, you'll be able to get more stuff done during the productive parts of your day.

Takeaway:

- It's important to allow periods of relaxation so that you don't get burned out.
- Being burned out will mean that you will not be able to get anything done.
- Thus, you must plan out a block of time each day for you to relax and do activities you enjoy.

LET'S REFLECT...

"Time has no meaning in itself unless we choose to give it significance."—Leo Buscaglia

Okay, so I want to be as good at managing my time as all those successful people are...but you threw a lot of information at me.

Yes, we did. Activity logs, planning, matrixes, oh my!

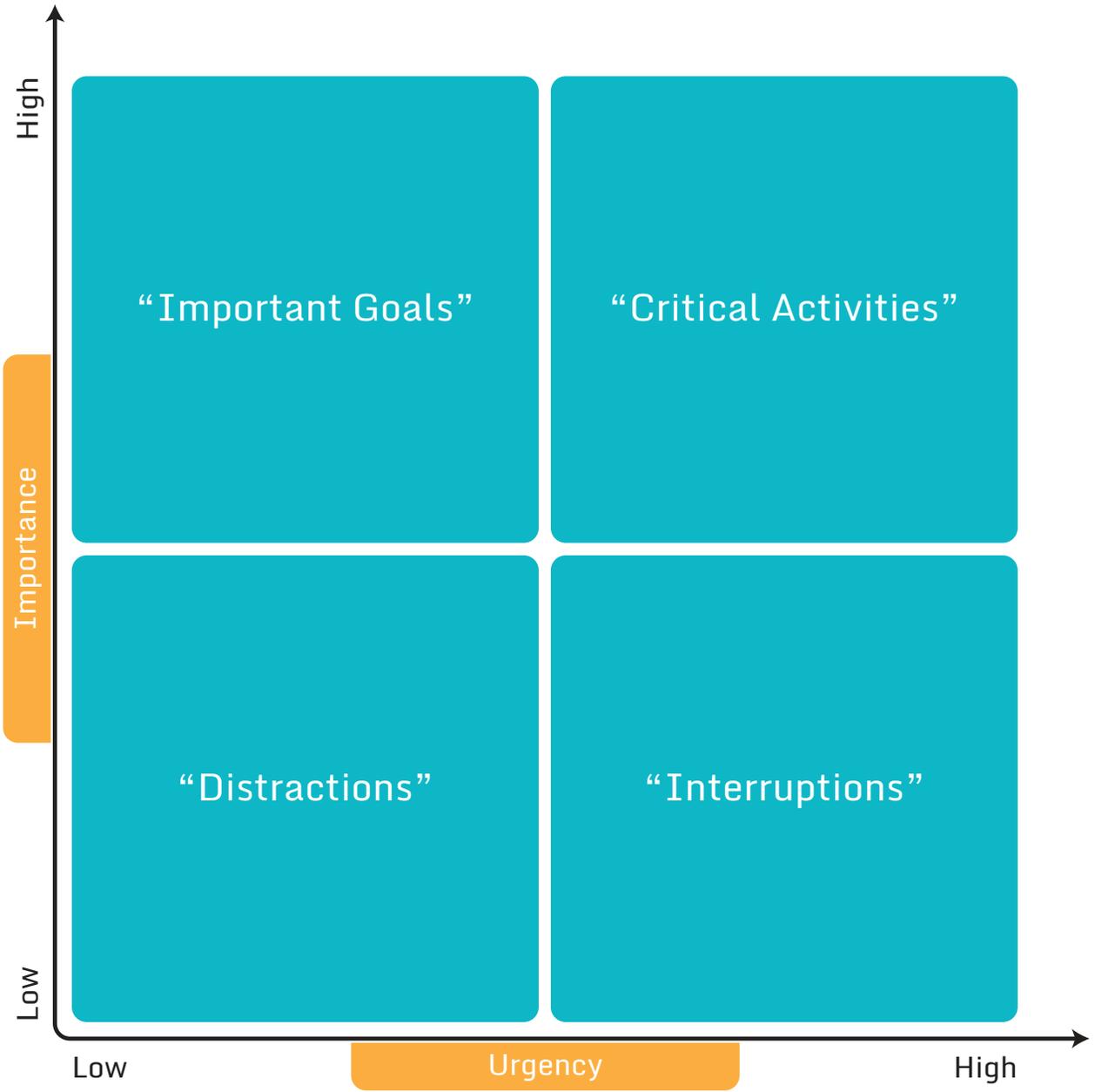
But all of this information is what you can use to help use every second of your day. John Howe once said, "What a folly it is to dread the thought of throwing away life at once, and yet have no regard to throwing it away by parcels and piecemeal." By letting time slip through the cracks and failing to use any of the previous tools we've mentioned, you are letting bits of your life escape you. You deserve to live every second of your life to the fullest. And that's why time management is so vital.

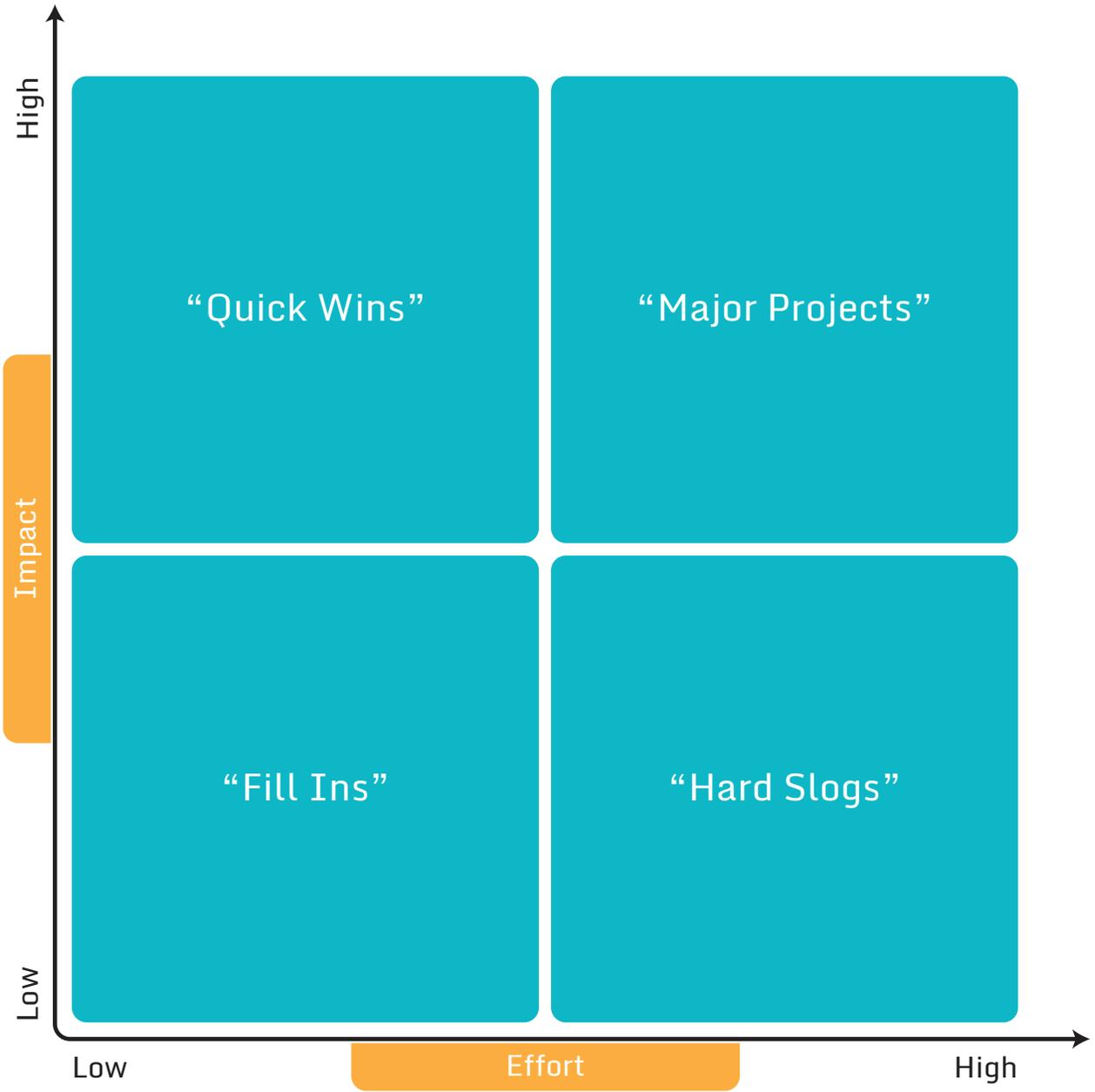
So how does Bill Gates run a global foundation while still finding time to spend time with his family and put a golf ball around every now and then? How does Warren Buffet manage to balance his incredibly demanding investing with a bit of ukulele and bridge?

The answer seems simple: time management. The acts behind it, however, seem complicated.

But they don't have to be. By learning about yourself and how you work best, you can assure you're living in real time instead of clock time. You can bend time at your whim and make time for everything you need to do. You can create a plan for yourself and create a detailed to-do list. You can break down even the most overwhelming goals into lots of little wins. And by using matrixes, you can make sure you dedicate your time to only the tasks that will help you—not hinder you.

By mastering the art of time management, you can stop trying to find time in its dark, elusive corner. Instead, you can create it.





WEEKLY PLANNER

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

SUN

APPOINTMENTS



TO-DO'S



GOALS



WORKOUTS



WATER DRANK



FOOD JOURNAL



	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
APPOINTMENTS							
TO-DO'S							
GOALS							
WORKOUTS							
WATER DRANK	VVVV VVVV						
FOOD JOURNAL							

DAY PLANNER

DAY OF THE WEEK:

APPOINTMENTS



TO-DO'S



GOALS



WORKOUTS



WATER DRANK



FOOD JOURNAL



V V V V V V V V V

GOALS TRACKER

MY GOALS ARE...

ACTION STEPS I'LL TAKE TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS

