



# Time Management Course

## A 4 Module E-Course

### Are you someone who:

- Always or quite regularly misses deadlines.
- Has to spend their personal time at home dealing with work emails because you don't have time during the working day to attend to them.
- Delivers work late and/or not up to the standard you would like.
- Is always stressed out and overworked and quite often off ill.
- Procrastinates.
- Has loads of interruptions and time wasters during the day which you don't know how to deal with.
- Has lost track of all the work that needs to be done.
- Finds themselves forgetting tasks to do and either scrambling at the last minute to get them done or missing due dates.
- Is being overlooked for good bonuses and promotions.
- Is considered disorganised.
- Has a reputation for being unprofessional and unreliable.
- Lacks focus and concentration on tasks.

*Research has shown that high achievers and successful people are excellent at time management.*

### Being great at managing your time means you:

- Are more productive and efficient. This translates into better performance, higher pay and more promotions.
- Stress less. Because you can manage your time well you get more done in the time allotted and you have less to worry about.
- Build a strong professional reputation. You are seen as someone who can deliver high quality work all the time without making excuses.
- Achieve your goals and so increase your confidence and sense of capability to achieve more difficult goals in the future.
- Move up the career ladder faster.
- Accomplish what really matters because you are focusing on priorities and doing the right work.
- Feel a strong sense of accomplishment each day and feel in control of your schedule, your day and your work, rather than feeling work controls you.
- Get to experience more balance in your life. With good time management practices you can spend more time on leisure activities that matter to you.

I have put together an email course on Time Management. It is a four module course which should take between 6-8 weeks to complete if you spend about 3 hours a week on the course material.

All the material for the course including the notes, exercises, practice sessions and advice are contained in the four modules. The material in the course is such that you can do the course over and over again and each time get benefit. In fact the material is designed that you keep learning. There is a lot contained in each module.

- The material is very practical and you can straight away start implementing some actions to save you time.
- The work you can do in your [own time anytime during the week](#).
- During the course of the programme you can [email your queries, comments, issues, etc., to me around the course content](#).

In this course the first two modules focus on quick wins which you can immediately go and implement to save you time. If you implement these you can save between 5-8 hours a week. The third and fourth module outline a process to manage your time and activities for a fixed time period – for example a year. In the third and fourth modules you will record everything you have to do in the time period you are looking at (in this course we look at a year) and set goals, prioritise, plan and schedule your work on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis. You will end up with a planned schedule to cover the work priorities over the year.

You do not need any specific technology for this course. There are loads of apps out there which you are welcome to make use of. For the purposes of this course paper and a diary will suffice. You don't need anything else.

**The outline of the 4 module program is as follows:**

**Module 1:** Benefits of good time management and specific benefits for you. Motivation exercises to keep you managing your time well and not give up. Multitasking, dealing with interruptions and distractions, managing email, managing social media, managing WhatsApp and other messaging services, managing internet browsing. We cover the material and then you get an opportunity to put into practice what you think will help you. Some tools get included such as the interruption log.

**Module 2:** Setting up your work environment to manage your time better, stopping procrastination, managing boundaries at work, delegating, having the right levels of self-motivation and attitude, and leveraging resources such as people and finances to do more with the resources you have.

**Module 3:** From module 3 we move from the quick wins to the actual process of planning your year's work. In this course we look at a year as the time period, however you can use a quarter, or a 6 monthly situation as the time period, or even just focus on planning and scheduling your work for the next month. The sections are: Capturing and recording your work; setting goals; prioritising; and organising. Examples are given as we go through the process step by step.

**Module 4:** We carry on with the process for scheduling work. The sections we cover are: planning (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly); scheduling; doing and building routines. Some guidelines are given for prioritising, for estimating how long tasks will take, and for constructing your daily schedule.

Contact: [penny.holburn@live.co.za](mailto:penny.holburn@live.co.za) for more information or to book for the course. You can start the course at any time.

Over the page are 10 pages of extracts from the course to see if you want to do the course. The full course is around 90 pages. Each module is approximately 20 pages.

## Extracts from the Course

# *Time Management*

# Time Management

## Do More of What Matters

### Introduction

“Time management” is the process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between specific activities. Good time management enables you to work smarter which means that you can get more of the right kind of activities done. And in fact, you can get more done in less time even when time is tight and pressures are high. Managing your time is very important. What you accomplish during the day will determine how efficient, how productive, and ultimately how successful you are. Good time management also means less pressure, more down-time for relaxation and greater wellness. Research shows that high achievers manage their time exceptionally well.

Time management is more than how busy you are. In fact you can be really busy with activities that are not useful. Being busy is not the same as being effective. The question is not how busy you are, but how effective you are. And the chances are that if you are overwhelmed all the time then you are not being that effective. Being effective and efficient means some time has to be given to planning.

What will learning to manage your time better do for you? In other words, what will doing this course give you?

Benefits of excellent time management:

- Greater productivity and efficiency
- A better professional reputation
- Less stress

- The likelihood of more promotions
- More time and opportunities to achieve important life and career goals
- Accomplishment of what really matters
- More focus at work
- A strong sense of accomplishment every day
- A feeling of control over your schedule, your day and your work

Which of these benefits would you like to experience? Write down in quite a lot of detail how better management of your time could be to your benefit. Writing down the benefits is important because it helps with motivation. Like anything else, it takes persistence to master time management. And when the going gets tough you need to remember the benefits of getting this right. If you persist and manage your time well, you reap rewards in all areas of your life – career, as well as personal, financial, health, relationships etc.

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On the other hand, failing to manage your time effectively can have some very undesirable consequences.

- Missed deadlines
- Inefficient work flow
- Unhappy customers
- Unhappy suppliers
- Unhappy team members
- Poor quality work
- Bottlenecks in the system
- A poor reputation in the workplace

- A derailed career
- Being overlooked for promotions
- Higher stress levels
- More ill health
- Less time for hobbies and fun

Write down how you are losing out by not managing your time well. This is also a motivational exercise in that the more pain you have attached to poor time management the more you will be motivated to manage your time well.

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Spending some time learning how to manage your time has huge benefits for you right now and in fact long into your future.

In this day of technological advancements there is plenty of software and lots of apps available to help you manage your time better. For this course you don't need these. You are more than welcome to search through all the available supporting tools out there, and use what you want, however we are not going to use any specific tools in this course. Because you can in fact manage your time very well without the tools. A notebook, diary, e-calendar such as Outlook, and spreadsheets can do the job as well as many apps. And in fact all the tools in the world are not going to help you if you don't have the self-discipline to follow the steps involved in learning to make good time management a habit.

This four module course is divided up as follows:

**Module 1: Multitasking; dealing with interruptions and distractions, managing email, managing social media and the internet, managing phone calls**

**Module 2: The work environment, procrastination, managing boundaries, delegating, self-motivation and attitude, leveraging resources**

**Module 3: Recording and capturing work to be done; goal setting, organising and prioritising**

**Module 4: Planning (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly), scheduling, doing, building routines**

## Module 1

**Module 1: Multitasking; dealing with interruptions and distractions; managing email; managing social media; managing phone calls**

### 1.1 Multitasking

Multitasking means doing more than one task at a time. For instance, talking on the phone while typing a memo. Or, attending a meeting and making notes while at the same time answering text messages on your phone. Or making dinner while talking to a friend on the phone.

In reality the brain cannot multitask. It can only focus on one task at a time. When you think you are multitasking what is happening is the brain is switching backwards and forwards between the tasks very, very quickly. So quickly in fact you don't notice it. In this switching backwards and forwards between the different

tasks time is wasted for the brain to focus on the rules for each of the tasks each time around you pay attention to it. So when you are typing a text message on your phone your brain decides that it needs to type a text and then gathers all the rules and procedures stored in the brain for doing this and does it. Then in the next second when you decide to focus on the meeting your brain sets the meeting discussion as the goal and retrieves all the rules and procedures for being in a meeting discussion and listens to what is going on in the meeting. Then the next second it switches back to the text message you were typing. So you are not doing two things at the same time. You are switching between tasks with tiny time intervals between them so it looks like you are doing two things at once. But you are not. You are switching back and forth – because in reality – the brain can only focus on one thought at a time. It can focus on lots of thoughts in a second, but only one at a time.

The truth is that multitasking is not a good use of your time. It can take 20 – 40% longer to finish a list of tasks when you multitask. In addition to taking longer, the finished product is usually of poorer quality. Forget about multitasking. Focus on one task at a time. That way you will produce better quality work and actually get more done. Research has shown this to be the case.

When you jump from one unrelated task to another your brain has to switch contexts and takes up to 5 minutes to become fully productive in the new context. It takes time to switch gears and get ready for a different task. Working on a single task for a block of time is much more effective. And it helps you get into the flow state. Being in the flow is being in a state where you are totally focused on what you are doing to the extent that you don't even notice time passing or what is going on around you. It is the most high performance state you can get into. It is when the sports player plays like never before. It is when the actor delivers a performance that cannot be matched. It is when the speaker has everyone on their feet with applause because they have so astounded their audience by their brilliance. It is also the time when people make creative breakthroughs and new discoveries are made.

The truth is Multitasking:

**Slows You Down** -- we do it because we think we can get more done in a shorter amount of time but in fact multitasking costs time. Studies show it takes longer to complete activities when multitasking. The smart way to work is Time Blocking. Time blocking is completing things in batches: pay all your bills at one time, then reply to all your emails, then turn to the next project. That allows you to get focused and concentrate for each activity.

**Causes You to Make Mistakes** -- Studies show that switching between tasks can cause a 40% loss in productivity. And the more critical thinking that is required for the tasks, the greater the likelihood for mistakes.

**Stresses You Out** -- Making mistakes and wasting your time cleaning up the mess causes stress and unhappiness. And think about all the energy used up moving constantly from one task to another. It is exhausting just thinking about it.

**Diminishes Your Creativity** -- "Aha" moments are reduced when you're multitasking according to research. Creativity requires a lot of "working memory" or temporary brain storage and when that is all used up, our ability to think creatively is taken away. There's just too much going on in our heads for daydreaming and blue sky thinking. Multitasking takes up working memory. Your mind is just too full of things. It takes away focus and concentration.

**Makes OHIO Impossible** -- The "only handle it once" (OHIO) rule of productivity goes out the window when you're multitasking. In fact, you're likely to have to handle it five or six times. The OHIO rule is one that is very helpful in saving time. Instead of going backwards and forwards on different days just sit down and finish the task if it is something that can be done fairly quickly. It is also a rule for emails. Lots of people read an email. Then leave it. Then read it again later, do nothing about it and so have to come back to it again. Read it once and action the item and remove it from your inbox. Unless the item is something like a project, deal with the email in its entirety once. Not only will you be more productive, you will feel you have accomplished a great deal more during the day.

**Think back over the last month and even longer if you can. When do you find yourself multitasking? Write the situations down below.** (The reason I say think back over the last month is because often our memories or recollections trick us. It is easy to say – yes I do this. I want you to actually have something you have done. They must be very specific instances of where you actually multitask – not where you think you may multitask.)

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Now write down how you will stop multitasking. For instance if the phone rings while you are in the middle of a complicated task let it go to voicemail. If a new idea for a goal comes up jot it down on a piece of paper and carry on with the task you are doing. Find ways in which you will just do one thing at a time. And this means specific time periods for answering phone calls. Jotting down ideas as they come up on a piece of paper and carrying on with the task. Shutting your office door and only being available for questions at specific times. Sometimes you just cannot but be interrupted because there is an emergency. Most of us though, can cut down on the number of times this needs to happen.

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**Putting this into practice**

Now you need to actually put this into practice. Do this when planning your time for the next day, or for the day if you are planning your day first thing in the morning. Write down blocks of time to focus on one task in your diary as if they were appointments. And then stick to them.

## 1.2 Dealing with interruptions and distractions

Interruptions can come from emails suddenly pinging into our inbox, from people dropping in for a chat, from crises that arise suddenly (and often because we don't plan our activities and manage our time well) or phone calls. Or actually a whole lot of other things. Being able to deal with interruptions and distractions will also help you to not have to multitask – so all these tips help. When you are fixing one time waster, you are often actually doing something to fix another time waster.

- We teach people how they may treat us. So if you get lots of interruptions during the day you have allowed people (taught them) that they may interrupt you.

Do you get lots of interruptions during the day? \_\_\_\_\_

Who interrupts you? Write down their names

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What is the reason they give for interrupting you? Give all the reasons below for why people interrupt you.

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- It is possible to say no to interruptions politely. You don't have to be rude. Things you could say could include:
  - "I am sorry, I am on an urgent deadline, please come back at ..... x time".
  - "Right now I am swamped with work, how about you ask Mr/Ms XYZ instead".
  - "I am sorry, I just cannot help you right now. If you come back at ..... o'clock I will be able to help"
- If you have an office, then close your door. It is harder to interrupt someone when you have to knock on the door and open it.
- Set specific times for when you are available for interruptions including signing documents, handling queries, etc. People learn when you are available and will plan their day around your times. Otherwise, they may only interrupt you if there is a problem that needs immediate attention.
- If someone interrupts you while you are busy with a task tell them you can't speak to them now and you will set another time convenient for both of you. Most people are happy to schedule another time. If they can't, then say, "I only have five minutes to talk about this," and stick to five minutes.
- Do not invite the person interrupting you to sit down and don't engage in small talk.
- If the person has to talk to you right now, ensure they get to the point. If the allotted time runs out before you reach a solution set another time.
- Keep long chats about what you did over the weekend for lunch and tea breaks. You can waste a lot of time sharing your personal information.

Consider some of the names you mentioned earlier of people who interrupt you and the reasons for the interruptions and write down below some statements you can use should they interrupt you.

Make them specific to the person and the usual reasons they interrupt, so you can actually use these statements. Then if you need to, practice saying these statements so it becomes easier when you have to apply them in practice. If you practice them, once the person comes and interrupts you, you will have these statements already learned.

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### **Interruptions Log**

If you find you have lots of interruptions then create an interruptions log. This enables you to record the interruptions you experience in the course of a day.

### **Example of an Interruptions Log**

<b>Person</b>	<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Nature of the interruption</b>	<b>Urgency</b> (how immediate is the need to be attended to)	<b>Importance</b> (is it related to a priority)

Once you have recorded interruptions for a week sit down and analyse the information. Determine what the most common interruptions are. Estimate how much time you are losing through interruptions. Then plan how you will deal with the interruptions going forward.