

Time Blocking Tips Top Experts and Scientists Use to Increase Productivity

If you're too busy to set aside time for priorities then, by definition, you're busy with the wrong things.



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April 16, 2019 9 min read

From the moment you wake up to when your head hits the pillow, entrepreneurs spend their days jumping from task-to-task. We're also rushing from meeting-to-meeting. Putting out fires. And, getting distracted by emails, phones, and answering a question from employees. [Starting a business](#) is exhausting. With so much going on, how is it possible for us to get anything done?

For some entrepreneurs, they're able to roll with the punches. They also don't mind putting in 80 hours a week. Whether if it's because they're workaholics or just have to do this out of necessity because they're a one-person team, it's just not possible to maintain this lifestyle.

Whether you want to admit it or not, everyone has a limited supply of energy, focus and willpower. Eventually, those 80-hour workweeks will come back to haunt you as you begin to crash and burn.

What's more, without having some sort of [time management technique](#) you're just spinning your wheels. Instead of completing your most important tasks, you're allowing interruptions and less important tasks to consume most of your time. Next thing you know, you're constantly playing catch-up and missing out on the most important things in life.

But, what if I told you that there was one-productivity hack that ensures that you get things that need to get done to move your business forward while helping you live a more fulfilled life? Sound too good to be true? It's not with time blocking.

What is time blocking?

Time blocking is a pretty straight forward concept where you segment your day into defined chunks of time. For example, instead of checking your emails throughout the day, you set a block of time, let's from 8:00 am to 8:30 am, to clear your inbox and respond to messages. Once your inbox is at zero, you move on to the next task.

The key to time blocking is organizing the tasks that need to be completed and then set aside a specific timeframe to focus only on those items. This prevents multitasking and interruptions from dictating your day. As a result, you'll cross-off items from your to-do-list faster and you'll be more productive.

Most importantly, it encourages busy entrepreneurs to schedule time for themselves. Whether if it's five minutes or an hour, time blocking forces you to add that much-needed "me time" into your calendar so that you can reflect, exercise, read, or do whatever else makes you happy. This helps us recharge when running on fumes and gives us the time to enjoy life.

Why time blocking is valuable for entrepreneurs.

There are two amazing things that happen when you start time blocking.

The first is that you're able to accomplish your most important task quicker and more thoroughly. This is because you're not dividing your attention between 15-different tasks. Instead, you're devoting 100 percent of your focus to the task-at-hand.

Secondly, you're still able to handle all of those less important tasks since you're not frequently switching gears. In other words, by [grouping similar tasks together](#) you're using the same area of your brain, as opposed from jumping back-and-forth. This also gives you structure and helps you stick to a schedule.

However, that's just the beginning. Time blocking can also;

- Helps you balance your urgent and important tasks.
- Forces you to make a commitment to your priorities.
- It promotes [deep work](#) while combating procrastination.
- Assists you in becoming more realistic with your time so that you aren't over- or underestimating how long it will take to complete a task.
- Takes advantage of [Parkinson's Law](#), which is that "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion." When you know that you have a specific amount of time to complete a task, you're more likely to get it done.
- Closes those open loops that don't have the next step. For example, if you have to contact a freelancer to get a quote on a job, you know when you'll do this, as opposed to saying, "I'll get to this later."
- Let's you say "no" without feeling guilty since you know when you're available and when you're not.

How to time block.

When starting out, the idea of time blocking may sound overwhelming. However, you'll notice that you aren't scheduling everything in detail. Instead, you're dividing your day into blocks so that you can focus on one thing at a time.

But, if you still aren't sure on where to actually start, here some pointers that have helped me get the most out of time blocking.

Block your priorities.

This is probably the most difficult part about time blocking. I mean as an entrepreneur, isn't everything a priority?

Of course not.

So, take a couple of minutes and create a to-do list of the tasks that you need to complete each day. Next, list each job and rank them in order of importance. These are usually the responsibility that helps you reach a goal.

Now, take your list and block out the most important and urgent for first thing in the morning. For me, I set aside from 9:00 am to noon for my most important tasks of the day. From there, set blocking out chunks of time for your second most important task and so forth. If you don't get to the tasks that are neither important or urgent, no worries. You'll get to them tomorrow.

Stop working on clock time -- work when you're most productive.

As an entrepreneur, you don't necessarily have to adhere to the traditional 9-to-5 workday. Instead, you can create a schedule that's based on when you're most productive.

For example, if you're a morning person and are fully alert and focused by 7:00 am, then that's when you should start working on your first priority. If you're more productive from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, then block out that in your calendar for your most important work.

As an added perk, you may be able to avoid distractions altogether. I know plenty of entrepreneurs who either start working early or wait until later in the day since they aren't going to get distracted by emails, phone calls, or employees popping into their office.

Create theme days.

This goes back to that whole batching concept I discussed earlier.

Instead of attempting to do 10 different things in one day, create theme days. For example, maybe Mondays are spent on recruiting and Tuesdays are when you schedule all of your meetings. Wednesdays you focus on improving your product. And, Thursdays is when you address your marketing.

This creates a flow, prevents multitasking, and ensures that you have all of the tools and resources needed for that specific day.

Reserve breaks and time off.

It's tempting to block out every hour of the day. But, that's counterproductive.

Always schedule an empty block of time in your calendar. You can use these blocks to meditate, go for a walk, or just do absolutely nothing.

It also adds some flexibility to your schedule in case there's an emergency. For example, a client got stuck in traffic and has to push back the meeting by 10-minutes. Because there were white spaces in your calendar, that's not a disaster since you have the extra time to push everything back.

Set boundaries -- but be flexible.

When you're involved in deep work, then that's the only thing that you're focusing on. Emails, phone calls, and knocks on the door all have to wait until you're done. Just make sure that you let others know when you wish not to be interrupted.

At the same time, life is unpredictable. While you should try to stick to your schedule as much as possible, don't be afraid to be a little flexible. For instance, an email from a prospective client can wait until later in the day. But, when a piece of equipment just broke down, you probably have to stop what you're doing and attend to that.

Create time blocks for things that happen.

Besides establishing specific times for your priorities and rest, make sure that you block out times for the things that really matter. This includes;

- A couple of hours per week to review and reflect on your accomplishments.
- Administrative tasks like bookkeeping, filing, and organizing your workspace.
- Time to conduct research, such as market research or even hotels for your next business trip.
- Writing and creating time, like composing blog posts.
- Time to catch up on anything you didn't complete.
- Self-care time, such as exercise, yoga, and meditation.
- [Quality time](#) with your friends and family.
- Me time to do whatever it is that makes you happy.

Use a calendar to track your blocks.

Having the [top calendar app](#) is a key component to time blocking since it can be used to track your blocks and avoid scheduling conflicts. Some people still use a paper calendar, like those oversized desk calendars. Personally, a digital calendar is my preference so you'll always have your calendar with you.

Revise.

Finally, track your progress either every week or month and revise your schedule as needed. For example, if you blocked out two hours to write a blog post, and it only took you one, then adjust your calendar to reflect that by pulling your next task forward.