

No time to manage? Effective time management for busy business owners

It's not always the specific items on our to-do lists that is the challenge. Often, it is the way we think about what goes on to our lists in the first place, that is usually the cause. And at the very root, it can be the unconscious and limiting beliefs associated with the things we have on our lists, that are holding us back.

These resources are aimed at giving you some insight into your specific situation, which will help you to tackle the root of any time management challenges you are experiencing right now.

Tools and tips for specific situations

As with any tool, its about picking the right one for the job.

For example, the Pomodoro Technique is great for chunky pieces of solo work such as creating content, writing a report or doing your tax return (especially if it's something you haven't done before and you don't know what is involved).

Life is unpredictable and everything changes, so continually review and adjust how you're managing your time, and play with different techniques until you find what works for you. Eventually you will get better at noticing when you need to change something and with these resources, you will be able to adjust your working practice, before overwhelm sets in.

Practice does make perfect (or at least, making something sustainable, which is what we want!). Don't just practice effective time management in your work day, use these tips all the time to get the best out of you and all of your time.

The table below sets out a number of different tools and techniques for different topics.

Topic	Considerations
Ownership & expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the “so what...?” of a particular task - why must it be done/for what and who’s purpose or benefit? • Be aware of the word SHOULD, WHO says YOU should? • There may be other people who can do something better than you/have more time so take time to consider that and remember “The One Minute Manager Meets the Monkey”
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-5 min rule - do it or schedule it. If the task can be done in this time, just do it • You’re a bit stuck - try something for 10 mins and after that, if you’ve made progress, you can keep going but if you’re still stuck, stop and re-think it: maybe you need specific help, maybe you need to delegate, maybe it’s not the right action • For big tasks, try the Pomodoro Technique: set a timer for 20 minutes, then have a break/do something different
How you structure your day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rituals and routines e.g. “Life SAVERS” Hal Elrod “Miracle Morning” (Silence, Affirmations, Visualisation, Exercise, Reading, Scribing) • Starting your day as if you were going out/going to a meeting - think about what you wear “to work” • Schedule breaks, time to eat • Pay attention to when you naturally are most motivated and plan tasks around those times if you can • Block time out for specific tasks so you actually do them, schedule them as an appointment in your diary • Urgent Vs Important - use the Eisenhower Matrix to make sure you get to the important stuff and if you can, delegate the urgent/not important stuff and delete what is neither urgent or important • If you have a draining task to do, think about chunking that down into smaller parts and scheduling it and then reward yourself when it’s done
Self-care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a finite number of hours in the week - be realistic about this • Be aware of people pleasing tendencies and look at boundaries. Some people need to work with a coach on this • Taking breaks - take more when you’re really busy or feeling stressed, it will feel counter intuitive but it really does work • Stay hydrated and energised • Review you sleep routine and your sleep hygiene • Go for a walk, schedule time to see people IRL • Action is better than no action, practice not perfection • Be compassionate if things don’t go to plan: congratulate yourself for what you did well and take the learning for things that could have gone better
Reward & Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for and act on quick wins • Chunk big tasks down into smaller tasks to make progress • Writi a list and tick stuff off • Treat yourself (chocolate, TV show, something you enjoy) when you’ve completed your tasks

How you define “work”

(Especially if you are creative/work in a creative way such as creating content, delivering value for clients/customers):

- Space in your diary is a good thing and is to be protected
- It is ok to give yourself permission to have space, don't make the mistake that you have to be busy to be productive!
- Time to read/watch a YouTube/listen to a podcast/conversation with a business connection all count a “work” (as long as it is work related)
- Rest and time doing other things is also essential to keep your creative brain in good working order (fill your own cup up/put your mask on first), you can't give the best value to your clients and customers if you are frazzled, tired, overworked, stressed and if you're not engaging in learning about your field of expertise

Effective Coaching questions

These coaching questions are useful when you need to get to the root of something that is holding you back.

Scenario	Coaching questions
When you're procrastinating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do I want X thing/X outcome? • What does [success/X outcome] look like? • How will I feel when I achieve X/have X thing? • How am I feeling now? • How do I want to feel? • What tools do I already have (skills, resources, knowledge, innate ability, access to other support, friends and family etc.) that will help me? • What else do I need to achieve X thing / and how can I get it/them?
When there is an expectation involving someone else	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the outcome in question? • What does the outcome look like? • What does the other person expect/do we have the same expectation? • So what?/Why does it matter?/For what purpose does this action need to be completed?/What will be different/better as a result? • Why is it needed now? • Who else could do it? • Is me taking the action on going to get the best action? • Is it the best use of my time?
When you are feeling overwhelmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What emotions are you feeling right now (name them)? • What is not in your control right now (note them down then put aside)? • What is in your direct control now (can do without any input from others)? • What is one thing I can do to move this forwards? • At the end of the day, when I look back, what would I like to have achieved/completed? • How will I feel when I have completed X thing? • What can I do to reward myself when I complete X thing?

Coaching Model

The Brooke Castillo Coaching Model (CTFAR) is an effective way to reframe negative and unhelpful thoughts.

1. Do the model twice: once for the “as is” (how you are feeling now) and the second for the “to be” reframing the current negative thought to a positive thought.
2. The Circumstance is always neutral (neither positive or negative), and stays the same for both scenarios.
3. When reframing to a positive thought, try to pick a thought that is realistic. It might be too far to go from feeling “frustrated” to “excited” for instance. But “frustrated” to “open”, might be more achievable.

EXAMPLE 1	PROCRASTINATION	
	As is	To be
Circumstance	Lots of choices/options	Lots of choices/options
Thought	I don't know which one I should do	I am exploring my options
Feeling	Overwhelmed, anxious, frustrated	Curious, open, interested, motivated
Action	Avoid taking action, get distracted, do other things	Take some action, including small actions such as researching something, even if it then means that an option then becomes unviable, it has still served a purpose and helps to move forwards
Result	Situation doesn't change/situation stays the same	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New information, clarity, plan of action which has eliminated unhelpful or unviable options • Over time, the situation changes

EXAMPLE 2	PEOPLE PLEASING	
	As is	To be
Circumstance	I have a to-do list	I have a to-do list
Thought	I have too much to do	I am human / I can only do so much
Feeling	Overwhelmed, anxious, stressed, tired	Compassionate, giving grace, motivated, sense of agency and worth, energised
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid taking action, get distracted, do other things • Or, working too many hours to get everything done 	Take some action, get some things done
Result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The list stays the same/things don't get done • Or, new things replace things that do get done by working extra hours, yet overall, the situation doesn't change 	Sense of achievement, able to prioritise other things on list and take a break knowing you have a plan to achieve them

TEMPLATE	
As is	To be
Circumstance	
Thought	
Feeling	
Action	
Result	

References and additional information

Simon Sinek: <https://simonsinek.com/books/start-with-why/>

For support managing ADHD: <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-adhd-adults-podcast/id1591127163>

<https://www.adhdadult.uk/resources/>

Ken Blanchard et al: The One Minute Manager Meets the Monkey <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4SQ95hw9ZA>

Miracle Morning and "Life SAVERS": <https://halelrod.com/>

Brooke Castillo Coaching Model: <https://scs.thelifecoachschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Self-Coach-101-eBook-v2017-Revised-New-Links.pdf>

The Pomodoro Technique:

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/take-it-from-someone-who-hates-productivity-hacksthe-pomodoro-technique-actually-works>

Eisenhower Matrix: <https://asana.com/resources/eisenhower-matrix>

Summary of different time management techniques: <https://checkify.com/blog/time-management-methodologies/>

About Integrity Performance

“I HELP BUSINESS OWNERS AND DIRECTORS OVERCOME OVERWHELM SO THEY CAN DELIVER EXCELLENT RESULTS.”



I am a certified ILM Level 7 Executive Leadership coach. I am also a Chartered Manager and a member of the Chartered Management Institute. I have over 10 years experience in senior leadership positions specialising in organisational performance across the public, charity and renewable energy sectors.

I began my career at a company that was the gold standard for developing its people, frequently featured in ‘The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies’. Experiencing this powerful leadership style influenced my own. I have since made it my mission to help directors and business owners overcome overwhelm so they get excellent results for their businesses.

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