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Time Management and Prioritization – Resource guide

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Overview

Description

This **Time Management and Prioritization** guide will serve as a resource to empower learners to manage their time more effectively and prioritize tasks. This guide is ideal for individuals looking to learn why time management and prioritization is an essential skill as they navigate and grow their career.



Introduction

Effective time management and prioritization is important because it allows you to:

- Overcome procrastination.
- Protect your time and capacity.
- Create a plan to accomplish your goals.
- Avoid burnout.

Time management can be challenging if you are easily distracted, overwhelmed or don't have a plan. It can be more difficult to manage your time when you have numerous competing priorities. This is where prioritization can help you establish a plan based on the importance or urgency of the task.

This resource guide includes exercises and resources for the following:

- Time management approach
- Prioritizing important tasks
- Planning to reach goals
- Eliminating procrastination
- Protecting your time

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Time management approach

Proactive versus reactive



Benefits of using proactive thinking:

- Enables you to develop plans to avoid potential problems or prevent minor issues from becoming larger problems
- Promotes stability by planning for the future to set goals and ways to achieve them

Benefits of using reactive thinking:

- Enables you to solve problems as they occur, taking immediate action to address an issue or solve a problem
- Promotes creativity through developing creative and immediate solutions to solve problems

Examples of proactive prioritization:

- Managing your day before it begins
- Planning for big projects and tight deadlines
- Saving money for future expenses

Examples of reactive prioritization:

- Handling immediate family needs
- Responding to social media or text messages
- Addressing unexpected absences

Journal activity

Note: Throughout this resource guide, there will be several journaling activities. Keep a document with all of your answers so that you can refer back to it as you continue on your career journey.

If you would like to record your answers directly into this guide, use the **comment** feature if you are viewing the document in **Adobe® Reader®** or the **type text** feature if you are viewing in a web browser.

To use the comment / type text features, simply click the button on the toolbar and then stamp the textbox onto your page to type.



Journal prompt: Think of a time when you were proactive. Write down what you did to plan, what actions you took and what was the result. Do the same activity for reactive.

The four Ps of time management

Overview

There are four key principles to help you focus reactive and proactive thinking when managing your time and life priorities.



Prioritizing

Ordering things by importance — determining what's important to you or the situation

A first step to prioritizing is to think about these four questions:

- **What** do you want to accomplish?
- **How** do you want to get it done?
- **Why** is it important to you that this gets done?
- **Who** needs to be involved?

Then, ask:

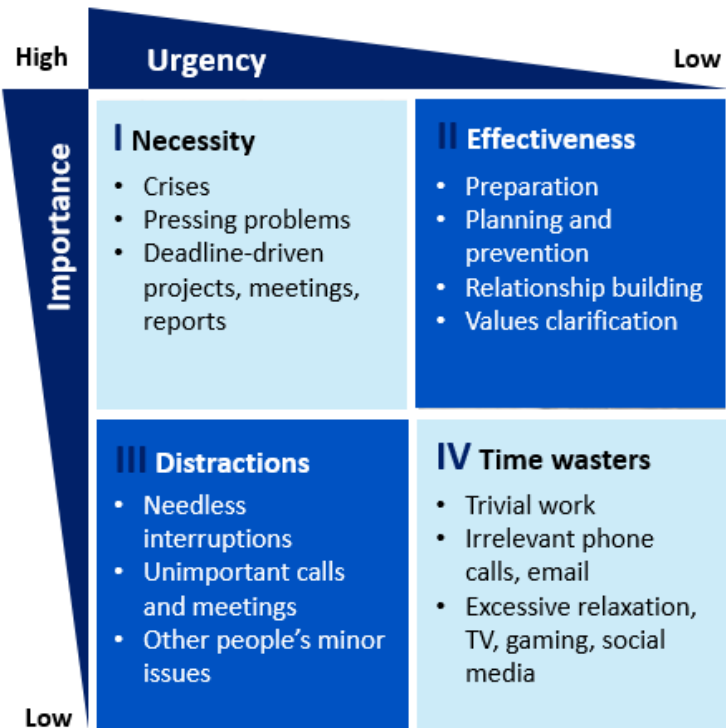
How do these considerations make a difference in how you prioritize all your to-do items?

ABCD prioritization method

A Tasks Absolutely must get done now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When accomplished, A tasks yield extraordinary results. If left undone, they may generate serious consequences.
B Tasks Better get done soon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B tasks can be postponed, but not for too long. They're not as pressing as A tasks but are still important. Within a brief time, they can easily rise to A status.
C Tasks Could wait for now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C tasks can be put off without consequences. Tasks with time deadlines can easily rise to A or B status. Tasks that linger here indefinitely may become D status.
D Tasks Delegated, requires follow up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D tasks rarely have deadlines and can be labelled as nice to do. If left undone, they may not cause serious consequences.

Urgent/important prioritization method

- High Urgency** = A time bound pressure to do something now or in the very near future
- Low Urgency** = No real time bound pressures until a future time
- High Importance** = Something that will be of direct benefit to the individual or organization
- Low Importance** = Something of no direct benefit to the individual or organization

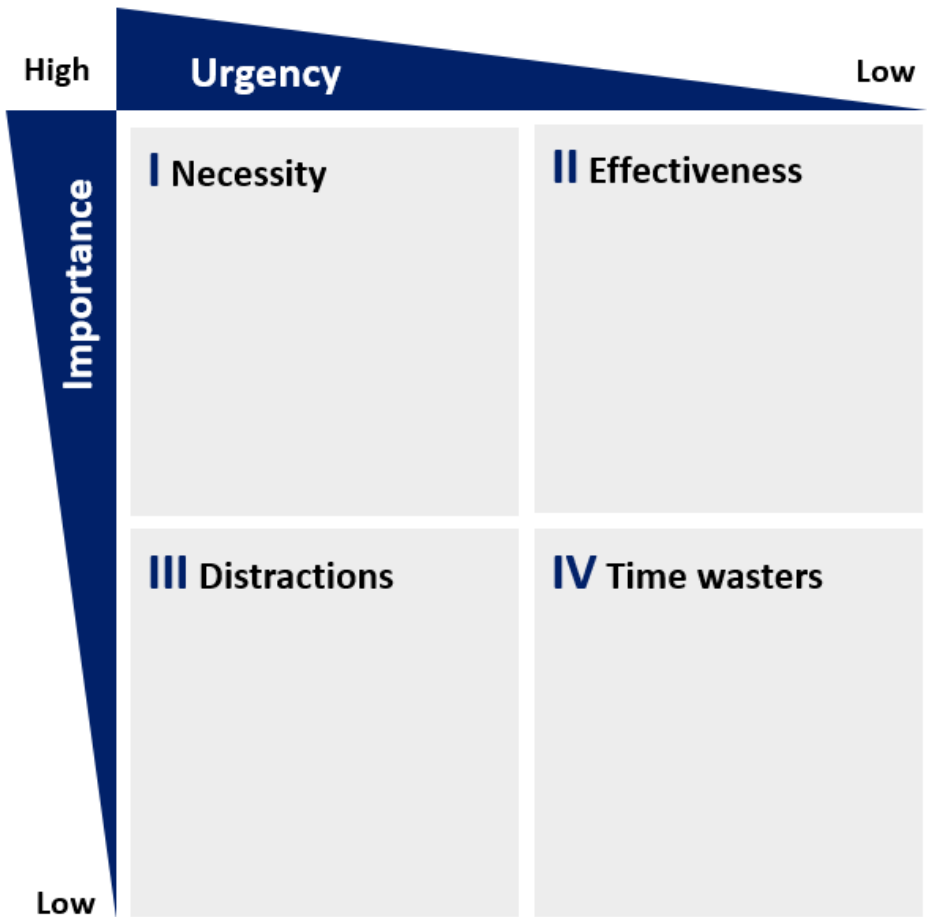


Prioritization activity

Imagine you are an entrepreneur planning on opening a gift shop specializing in rare and unique items in three months. Look at your list of tasks and put the items in order using the prioritization matrix.

Tasks for opening day:

- Set up signs throughout the store to make things easy to find.
- Have the building inspected for safety issues.
- Pay the building rent. (It's due next month.)
- Order the inventory.
- Take stock of the inventory as it arrives.
- Stock the shelves and prepare the store.
- Advertise.
- Set up a music playlist to create an upbeat atmosphere in the store.
- Take out a small business loan.
- Hire employees.



Journal prompt: What method resonates with your style more? Use one of the two methods reviewed above to prioritize a typical day's activities. Reflect on your list and use it to prepare upcoming tasks.

Planning

Research shows that for every **one** minute you spend **planning**, you will gain **ten** in **execution**.



1. Clarify objectives:

Before you can plan anything, you should decide on what you want to accomplish — your objective.



2. Define active tasks:

Define the positive active tasks that will achieve your objective. Think through the sequence in which items should be completed.



3. Schedule time:

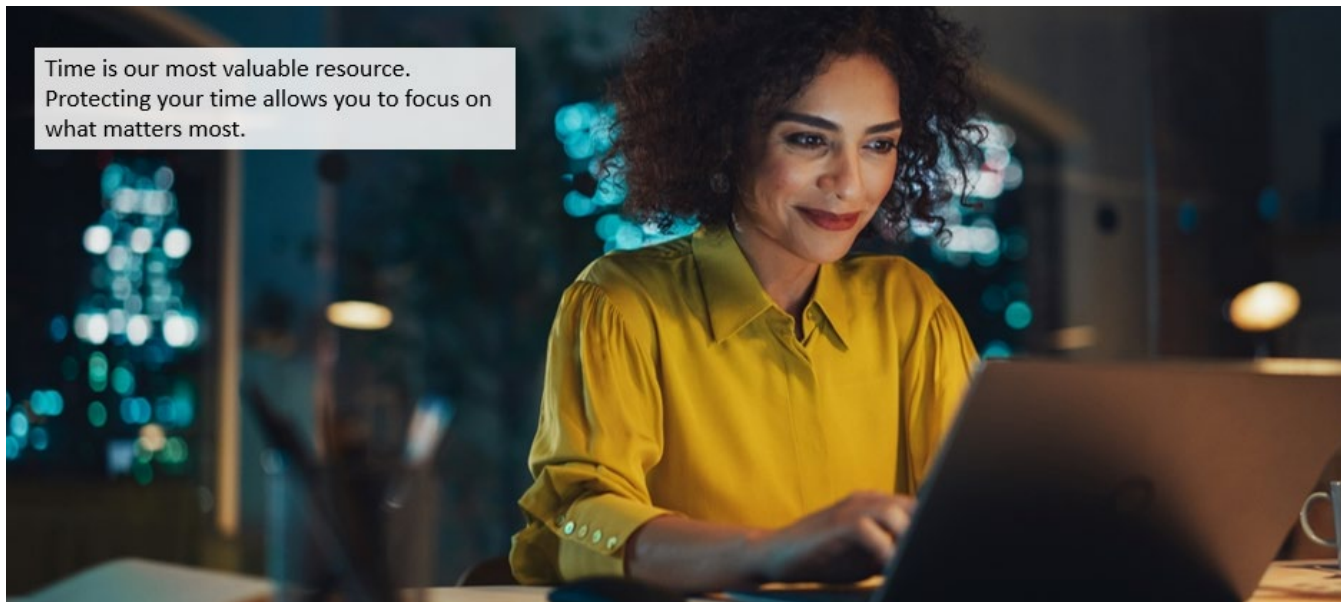
This step deals with when things are going to get done. Time planning ensures that you remain in control of your schedule, not others.



Journal prompt: Proper prior planning prevents poor performance. What does this statement mean to you? How can you apply it to your life?



Time is our most valuable resource.
Protecting your time allows you to focus on
what matters most.



Time is our most valuable resource even more so than money. You can always earn more money in your life, but you can never get more time.

The art of saying no

Saying “no” is not rude; it simply means that, at this time, you won’t be able to accommodate the request due to competing priorities or current commitments.

- Be honest about your capacity with yourself and others.
- Negotiate priorities and due dates.
- Review your schedule.
- Say **no** now, but **yes** for a time in the future.
- Ask for the request in writing.

Best practices for protecting your time

Here are a few best practices for scheduling your time:

- Create to-do lists.
- Prepare for the unexpected by being flexible.
- Find and keep open free time on your calendar.
- Check your progress.

Procrastination

Procrastinating is the act of delaying or postponing doing something.

Why do we procrastinate?

Skill means we don't know how to do something. The right question to ask to overcome a lack of skill is:

Will means we just don't want to do it. Basically, there is no motivation to complete the task. In this situation, you need to ask yourself:



Managing your energy

When you put off doing unpleasant or difficult tasks, leaving them to the end of the day, you may not be managing your energy effectively. There are four different types of energy:

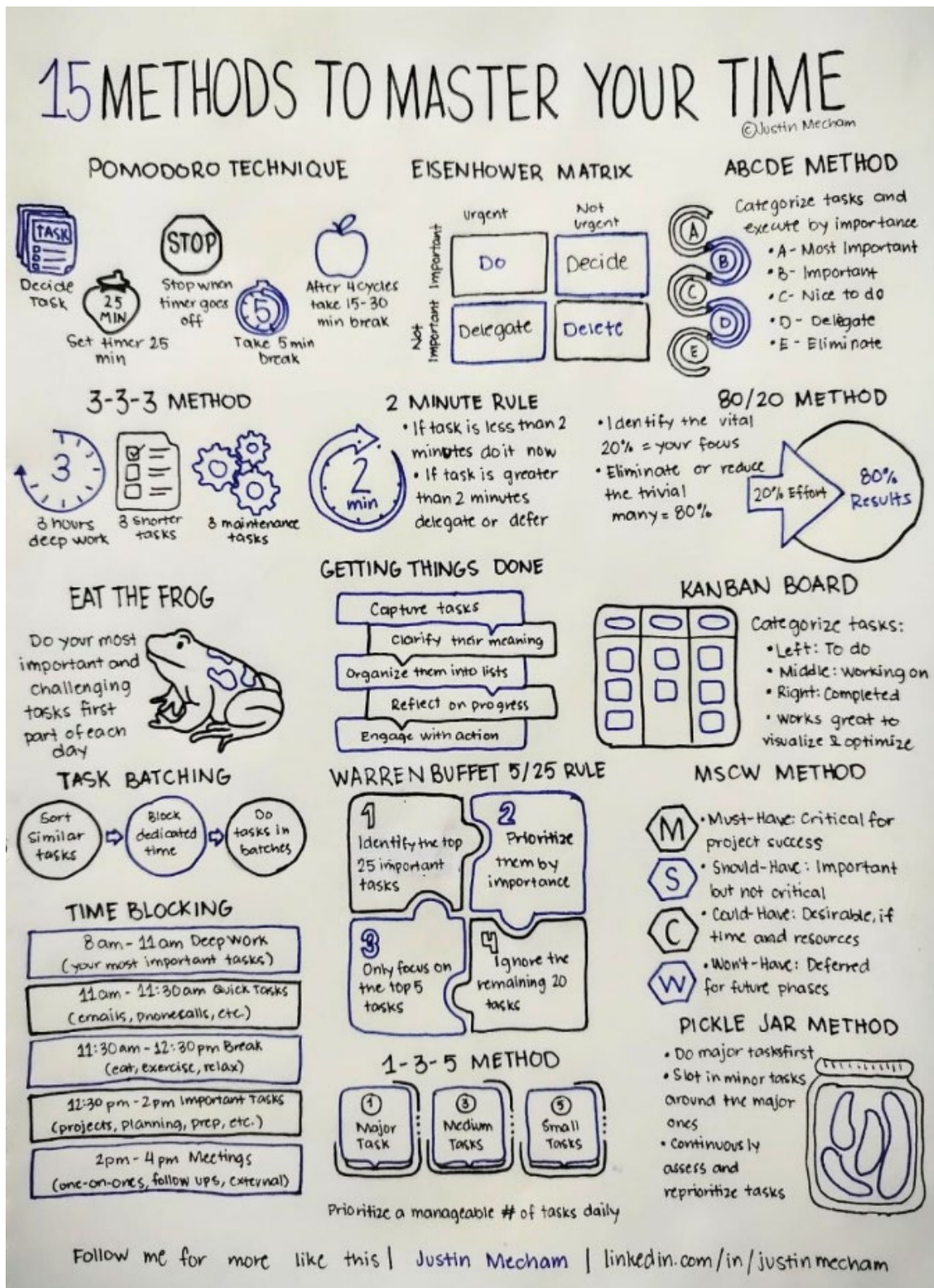
- **Physical** – when your body is too tired or weak to do physical work
- **Mental** – when your brain seems too tired to focus or concentrate
- **Emotional** – when you become emotional about a topic to the point where it causes fear or panic
- **Spiritual** – when you feel like you are doing something you were born to do

Tips for managing your energy

Physical	Mental	Emotional	Spiritual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eat right. ▪ Get your rest. ▪ Exercise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus. ▪ Concentrate. ▪ Manage distractions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defuse negative emotions. ▪ Actively demonstrate random acts of appreciation. ▪ Reframe misunderstandings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Play to your strengths. ▪ Find your passion. ▪ Know your personal values. ▪ Have a sense of purpose and meaning.

Time management methods

Here is a graphic summarizing the time management methods you just learned about, plus a few more:



Source: Justin Mecham | LinkedIn