

Productivity Tips...

10 habits of very productive people: Part 1

- By Lorena Prime -

Have you ever noticed how some people get a lot done while others languish with just a task or two? You can be one of these "highly productive" people, too, with some habit changes. By tweaking a few things here and there, you can get more done while still maintaining a good work/life balance, i.e. having the energy in the evening to enjoy your family, friends, and activities.

Try the following ideas and see how your productivity soars!

1. Organize your office space. It's hard to implement great ideas when you cannot even find a pen to write them down. Having an organized space doesn't stifle creativity, in fact, it boosts it. Clutter can create mental blocks - we can be so distracted by the mess that it's hard to think. With a clear desk, uncluttered tables, and clean floor, you'll be able to think clearly as well.

2. Set goals and write them down. Goals are your destination, and it's hard to know where you're going if you don't have the end result in mind. Goals also help you avoid tempting distractions by keeping you focused and on track. To create a sense of accountability, you need to put those goals on paper. (Keep in mind that writing them down does not mean that you have to do them today.) Once you have your goals, break them into smaller projects and tasks so that you can move towards them in bite-sized chunks over the year. If you have trouble setting goals, then consider reading a book or meeting with a coach. (I like the book "Teach Yourself to Be Your Own Life Coach," by Jeff Archer, but there many options available - see your local bookstore or library.)

3. Plan each day. This shouldn't take long, but before checking email, take a look at your task list and your calendar. Determining what you've planned for the day first makes it a lot easier to stay focused and to avoid distractions when they come along (and they will). If you start with email, however, you'll likely never leave your inbox.

4. Create a list of tasks and number them. Numbering your to-do's in the order in which you will do them - 1, 2, 3, etc. - helps you stay focused. Numbering helps you weigh one task against the other and helps you realize that some tasks are more important than others. (No, not all tasks are created equal.) This technique forces you to think about what really needs to happen and when. To assign the numbers, ask yourself, "What's due today? What's due

tomorrow? What happens if I don't accomplish this task? What are the consequences?" Numbering keeps you focused and helps you act more quickly to complete the most important things first.



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5. Batch your action. When we're in "phone" mode, for example, it's easier to continue to make phone calls, than it is to switch to a different activity, then back to the phone again. Batching your actions together will

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help you be more productive. Most likely you're already practicing this wisdom when you run errands. You don't run one errand then wait two hours and run another errand. You try to run all your errands at once so you get them done more efficiently. (If you aren't batching your errands, then try it - it's definitely faster.) Batching works well for repetitive tasks such as making phone calls, filing, sending emails, running reports, entering time sheets, creating expense reports, running errands, etc. Don't wait too long to process your batches, however, or you might miss some deadlines or forget important details!

Start with these five ideas, and in the next issue you'll hear about five more habits that highly productive people use every day. Changing your behavior won't be easy but if you practice daily, you'll soon be a highly productive person, too!

Lorena Prime, owner of Clearly Organized, coaches individuals as well as speaking at companies and organizations on time management, productivity, and using Microsoft Outlook more effectively. She uses a methodology that helps people shorten routine office work and save 1-2 hours every day. For more information, visit www.ClearlyOrganizedLife.com or call 617-633-2199.