



## Organizing Report...

# How Focused Are You?

By Lorena Prime

One of the keys to productivity is how well you're able to focus. External things distract us – our boss, a ringing phone and incoming email, to name a few. We also distract ourselves! In my “5-Stages To Increasing Productivity,” we practice staying focused. This week, try the tips below to improve your focus and see your productivity increase as well.

- ✓ **Turn off email pop-ups and bells.** Such a small thing makes such a big difference! Every time the bell goes off, you cannot fight the urge to check your email. By turning off these interruptions you will stay focused and finish your task more quickly. When you're at a stopping point then check your email. You'll be amazed at how much more you accomplish with this one tiny change.
- ✓ **Recognize when you waste time.** We all surf the internet, talk with our neighbors and spend time on non-essential tasks. It's okay to do this occasionally because we

need a break. Make sure, however, that this time doesn't distract you from completing your most important tasks. If you have to stay later to finish something, ask yourself whether or not it was worth the time.

- ✓ **Limit time answering emails and updating Facebook.** It's OK to use these sites, but don't leave them running all day – you'll be too tempted to check what's going on. You think you'll only be on for a moment but that's not really true. You know you cannot let it pass when your buddy says he's on his boat – what are you doing?!
- ✓ **Use a timer.** It's amazing how this simple gadget helps us focus. We often feel like we have all day to complete a project, so time gets away from us. A timer sets a deadline and helps you stay the course. Need a timer? See [www.online-stopwatch.com](http://www.online-stopwatch.com) or bring a kitchen timer (one that doesn't tick) from

home.

- ✓ **Stop multi-tasking.** This is difficult but you'll get more done faster if you “single-task.” It takes longer to do multiple things at one time than it does to complete one task and then complete the next task. Other people will thank you because you'll be paying more attention.
- ✓ **Use a to-do list and number the entries by importance.** This takes practice but will increase productivity. It is easier to stay focused if you know ahead of time what you will be working on. When you arrive at the office, you'll be less likely to get distracted by lower-priority projects.
- ✓ **Understand when you work best.** Do you concentrate best in the early morning or late afternoon? Maybe you're a night owl? Don't do

menial tasks during your prime concentration time.

Make sure to schedule the tough projects (ones that require your attention) during your peak energy time. **Z**

*Lorena Prime, owner of Clearly Organized, uses a 5-stage process to help people shorten routine office work and save 1-2 hours every day. What could you do with an extra 1-2 hours? For more information, visit [www.ClearlyOrganizedLife.com](http://www.ClearlyOrganizedLife.com) or call 617-633-2199.*



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