

## Personal Time Management for Scientists

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### Overview

- Time management is a way of thinking and requires
  - Self-management
  - Self-knowledge
  - Healthy self-centeredness
- Often preconceived “concepts” can get in your way to do things efficiently
- Common Time Management Problems For Scientists
  - Organizational problems
    - Inability to anticipate and thus get overloaded
    - Inability to assess time frame needed for contributions by members of the “team”
    - Responding only to work as it arrives
  - Self-confidence problems
    - Lack belief that goals will be achieved
    - Inability to say no or to ask for help
    - Overwhelmed or prone to excessive procrastination
  - Attitude problems
    - Lack of objectivity (*Chris – can you amplify this? Not clear to me what this means in this context*)
- Acknowledge that you can’t “Manage Time”. Instead of Managing Time...
  - Change behavior and attitude about work
  - Develop better work habits
  - Set optimal work load to achieve those goals and monitor regularly
- Try More Reasonable Goals:
  - Be more focused
  - Set small goals that are achievable (e.g write 3 pages or 250 words rather than the entire manuscript or an entire section of a grant). Finally you will get the whole thing done this way.
  - Change your workload to the not urgent but important (Covey’s matrix quadrant II) from urgent (quadrant I) but unimportant (quadrant III)
- Perspective-assess where you are going
  - Very long term goals
  - Yearly goals
  - Daily goals

- Start day knowing what needs to be done and stick to it.
  - Reprioritizing during the day only wastes time
- Productivity Tips
  - Categorize work activity and then segment each day for optimal use of energy in these by type of work activity:
    - “Alone” work – when most energetic
    - Interactive work – calls, meetings, emails
    - Schedule in distractions
    - 48-12 Rule: work for 48 minutes and relax for 12 minutes every hour
  - Try logging **all** of your time for a few days – you’ll get an accurate picture of how you spend your time.
  - Use social pressure to enforce schedule
    - Commit to others
    - Promise to email drafts to friends
  - David Allen’s two minute rule
    - If a project takes less than 2 minutes, just do it!
  - Find the simplest system to manage and measure work flow that works for you

References:

- “Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity” by David Allen
- “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen R. Covey
- “Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life” by Martin E. Seligman
- And a good example of the activities and results expressed in the Covey quadrants: [www.brefigroup.co.uk/acrobat/quadrnts.pdf](http://www.brefigroup.co.uk/acrobat/quadrnts.pdf)