

## 1. Prioritise & schedule

Make a 'To Do' list each day. Allocate time in your calendar for the day's work and make sure to prioritise the key tasks that need your immediate attention.

## 2. Get in early

It's tempting to stay late at the office to get things done, but it's more common for people to stay late, meaning that you may still get distracted. Instead, make use of your morning brain and get in early. You'll miss the traffic and get more done. As a bonus, you'll get more time for the family in the evening.

## 3. Delegate

If you are part of a team, make sure you use it. Learn how to delegate actions that are better suited to a team member.

## 4. Be prepared

Take stock - of what you've achieved today then define what you need to do tomorrow, and make a plan. This enables your brain to focus resulting in increased productivity.

Set a time period to complete each task. That way, you'll know if you're running over time - or if you've saved time for the next task!

## 5. Improve your typing

Do you spend 4 hours a day on your keyboard? Improving your typing speed by 10 words per minute could save you a whole working day per week! *(Calculated on a 37.5 hour week with a starting typing speed of 15-30 words per minute.)*

## 6. Don't try to multi-task

Whether you're male or female, you're never as efficient when you do more than one thing at a time. Focus on one task and finish it before moving along - no matter what distractions come along!

## 7. Unplug from the office

If you've got to focus your mind on an urgent or complicated task: close your email program; set the phone to 'do not disturb' and put a sign on the door saying 'no distractions please'.

If you're in an open plan office, you might try wearing headphones. Listening to music cuts out other distractions like nearby conversations and can even relax your body, relieving stress.

## 7. My name is NO!

Perhaps you're the go-to person for information, favours or techie advice. You may need to occasionally say "sorry, I can't right now." It's great to be helpful to your colleagues, but they need to know that sometimes you have other responsibilities that have to come first.

## 8. Meeting avoidance tactics

Yes meetings can be important and can't always be avoided, but there are methods and alternatives that will stop you getting stuck in 'pointless meetings'.

**Option 1 - Stand-up meetings:** Just what it says - having a 'stand-up' means you'll get through the agenda quicker because you're not getting too comfortable and digressing from the agenda.

**Option 2 - Just the facts:** If your presence isn't essential for a meeting, ask for a summary of the meeting by email afterward. Read through at your leisure and respond with information if relevant.

**Option 3 - Virtual meetings:** The worst meetings involve having to travel, right? Avoid traveling when you can. Phone conferences, Skype, GoToMeeting etc are great ways to do a virtual face-to-face and avoids spending time in traffic.

## 9. Eat well and get away from your desk

We all know that a good breakfast will keep us going through the morning, but how often do we grab a pitiful sandwich or skip lunch altogether. Without a proper lunch you'll lose focus during the afternoon and hit that 3 o'clock slump!

Get out of the office, or at least away from your desk. The change in environment and fresh air will do wonders for your brainpower, meaning that the afternoon will go much quicker.

## 10. Use the 2-Minute Rule

This is a wonderful tip! Most of those little tasks that flood in during the day aren't difficult to do, they just feel like a distraction or are just boring. But putting them off for an hour, a few hours - a day or so means that they will mount up leaving a mess to sort out. They tend to play on your mind too.

So, if a task comes in which will take 2 minutes (or less), do it straight away. You can stop worrying about it and look forward to a nice clear job list at the end of the day.

## 11. Let's get physical

30 minutes physical activity each morning is a great way to start the day. You'll be much more awake and focussed at work. It doesn't matter if you're not hitting the gym, just get out, take the dog for a walk, as long as you're active you'll stop yourself feeling sluggish later on.

## 12. Batch tasks

It can be a real time-saver to perform similar or repetitive tasks back-to-back. Answering emails or phone calls etc. in a block of work can save time if done altogether.

## 13. Take notes

Keep a notebook handy and jot down ideas or notes through the day, when you're at your desk, on the phone or in a meeting. You won't be stuck trying to remember things later and can jog your memory by reading through your notes anytime.

