

Connect Psych Services.

Protecting your
mental
health through
time management



Time, Time, Time!



Do you ever feel like there are not enough hours in a day? You run and run around the clock, busy all day long, yet at the end of the day the list of things that you've accomplished leaves you feeling unfulfilled.

When life gets busy, things tend to pile up especially fast. Time management is not about having all of those things done; it's about having enough time for what matters most to you.

Time management is really "personal management" and it is a skill necessary for achieving a better quality of life. By managing your time in a more efficient way, not only you will get the right things done, but you'll also have enough time to relax, de-stress, and breathe more freely.

The current document highlights the foundations of time management and how they are connected to optimal wellbeing through providing individuals with an increase in self efficacy, assertiveness and a sense of accomplishment while reducing stress factors and avoiding burnout.

Nat & Sasha x

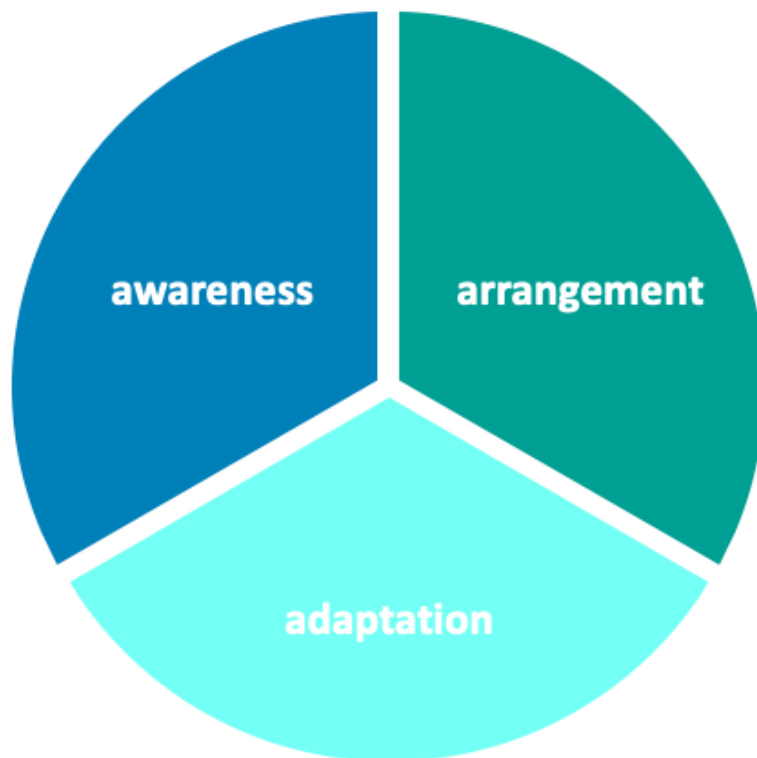
Note - Again, it is critical to understand that tactics are for developing your underlying skills, which will ultimately improve your time management. Simply implementing these tactics is not the end-goal.



Time Management is not
about ticking every single
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DR NATALIE FLATT,
FOUNDER

The Three A's



Awareness

Journaling - helps you become more aware of your thoughts, ideas, and behaviours. This leads to increases in creativity and boosting of time management skills. It leads to self-discipline and a mindful perspective on your behavior and actions.

Find your peak performance time. Break your typical day into three to four time slots and, over the course of a week, rank-order these slots from your most to least productive. Then assign tasks to determine your level of performance needed.

Determine the true value of your time and treat your time as if its money: Remember that your time is valuable, especially at work. Creating a time budget that details how you spend your hours during a typical week. Are there any tasks within this schedule that are taking longer than they really should- perhaps attending to emails or meetings? Try and categorise your time within your time budget into fixed time (must do's) and discretionary time (want to do's).

Evaluate how realistically you assess time. After finishing a task, evaluate how long you thought it would take and how long it actually took. When starting a task, make a conscious effort of mapping out how long you think the project will take, breaking it down into separate steps. Then after completing the task, use reflective questions: Were there certain tasks that took longer than imagined? Have you been estimating things to take longer/shorter to finish than in reality- does this need to be adjusted?

Awareness

Take a “future time perspective.” Think about how the tasks you are doing right now will help or hurt you in the future (e.g., how do today’s project tasks impact next week’s tasks or future projects?).

Evaluate the importance of the task: When you think you might be spending too much time on an activity, step back and evaluate its value or importance- (determine how crucial the outcome is, who else will be affected if it’s not finished on time etc.)



Arrangement

Reduce underestimation errors. When forming plans, ask a neutral party for feedback about your forecasted time requirements. And as a team, map out a time line and KPI's on when things to get done.

Develop basic arrangement skills and Categorise priorities: With every task you've been set, ask yourself if it's a high, medium or low priority. Who or what will be affected if the task isn't completed by a certain date? By categorising your priorities into levels you can better assess their importance and consequently what task needs to be completed first. Once you've tackled your highest priorities, you can move on to your medium priority goals and then your low priority goals.

Try half-sized goals. I know this one sounds obvious but how often do we do this? This is where your awareness skills can come into play. A sense of accomplishment is important to maintain motivation. When struggling to attain a goal that seems to be too challenging, set a less difficult version of the goal. This can help in avoiding procrastination, as once a task is split into a number of 'mini tasks' it can suddenly appear more achievable.

Arrangement

Acknowledge the difference between 'urgent' and 'important':

Although related, these are two distinct concepts; urgent tasks require immediate action, whereas important tasks might not need to be done straight away, but have more significant and long-term consequences. Tasks that are both urgent and important should be completed first. And one of these task needs to be YOU.

Keep your calendar in check: Utilise not only your digital calendar or the calendar built into your email platform but also a physical calendar and notebook where you can add appointments and take notes. Something where you can physically write things down is useful as the act- writing and then actually seeing the words written - can help ingrain the meetings and appointments into your brain and remember them better when future appointments or meetings pop up, which reduces the chances of over-committing yourself. Label or color-code entries (e.g., work, school, family, etc). is a very useful reminder of what is where.

Schedule protected time. Make calendar appointments with yourself to ensure uninterrupted time to dedicate to your most important projects.

Adaptation

Use short bursts of effort. When tasks seem overwhelming, put forth maximum effort for 25-minute intervals to help avoid procrastination and develop a sense of accomplishment and self-efficacy.

Detail meeting and task reminders to highlight exactly what you need to do to achieve the task – , expected quality, how long it needs to be, handout etc. it's good to write specific notes so you then don't spend time trying to retrieve from your memory which you may not get right.

Create contingency plans: When embarking on a task, it helps to think about the best/worst case scenarios when you outline the possible outcomes of your project, or any future hurdles that may arise during the project. For example, could there be any issues with technology, or would there be delays if a certain person working on the project became sick? Thinking about possible barriers ahead of time, can help prepare you for them and develop resolutions that you can then use if these barriers arise, which will save you time in the long run.

Reduce time wasters by working Work Smarter, Not Harder: Similarly, to the point above, think about your projects ahead of time and develop a plan of action before committing to or starting any work. This will be more efficient in the long run, as you avoid things like jumping into a project before realising halfway through that you've gone about it the wrong way and having to start again or realising there was a much more efficient process to tackling the particular challenge. Make sure your efforts in whatever you're doing aren't wasted as this will leave you with more room to accomplish other things.

Eisenhower Matrix

The Eisenhower Matrix – A real Steven Covey special which can allow the person to decide and priorities tasks. By creating these 4 quadrants, you want to actually put yourself in the urgent and important DO - why? To avoid resentment if you are a 'giver' and to highlight the importance of play.

Play rejuvenates us and gives us strength and resilience to show up to our lives even in times of struggle.

By carving out that time, making yourself a priority, and cultivating a consistent self-care routine will not only help you avoid burnout but it can also help you ramp up your productivity—and squeeze more out of the time you are at work.



The Pomodoro Technique

The Pomodoro Technique helps you resist all of those self-interruptions and re-train your brains to focus. Each pomodoro is dedicated to one task and each break is a chance to reset and bring your attention back to what you should be working on.

Step 1-Pick a task

Step 2 - Set a 25-minute timer

Step 3 - Work on your task until your time is up

Step 4 - Take a 5 minute break

Step 5 - Every 4 pomodoros, take a longer 15 minute break

Research has shown the procrastination has little to do laziness or lack of self-control. Rather, we put things off avoid negative feelings. It's uncomfortable to stare down a big task or project - one you may not be sure how to even do or one involves a lot of uncertainty. Really trying to make tasks feel less intimidating.



Habit Stacking

Habit Stacking

The process involves grouping together small activities into a routine which you link to a habit already set in your day. This makes the routine memorable and anchors your new habits to an existing trigger.

The essence of habit stacking is to take a series of small changes and build a ritual you follow on a daily basis. The cue tells your brain to go into automatic mode and which habit to use, and the most stable cues are immediately preceding actions. These are behaviours you always do. Take all these goals that you know you're supposed to be doing on a daily basis and you group them together. Put them together in a morning routine, or an afternoon routine, or build them off a different part of the day.

For example:

After I pour my cup of coffee each morning, I will make my bed.
After I make my bed, I will make my lunch. After I make my lunch
etc etc

Wellbeing

Actively manage your wellbeing - by maintaining routines where possible, staying physically active (at least 30 min per day) , eating nutritious foods high in protein, vitamin B, C and E and seeking additional online positive psychology and relaxation techniques such as mindfulness meditation. Headspace or Smiling Mind are great tools to investigate for 'taking time out and being present' moments.

'I like to move it move it'- Exercise is a must to release those feel good chemicals in the brain and increase problem solving. There are many online classes such as yoga, HIIT, spin or strength-based training. Not only does exercise keep blood, glucose and oxygen levels high, feeding the brain, it releases endorphins into the body giving your mood a boost and increase your motivation and self-confidence.



"There will be good days
and bad days; more restful
days and more stressful
days. Just remember that
tomorrow will be another
day."

DR NATALIE FLATT,
FOUNDER



Connect Psych Services

Being vulnerable is scary, but it's often the first step on the path to growth. Therapy means being vulnerable. But it also means that you've recognised that you want to take every chance to be the best version of yourself and live your best possible life. And what's braver than that?

At Connect Psych we are all about YOU, we bring the therapy to YOU in the comfort of YOUR chosen environment, at the time of YOUR choice and on a communication platform of YOUR choice (voice, video, live chat). The Connect Psych platform cleverly matches you with one of our practitioners who specialise in your challenges; eliminating time and disappointing sessions with other practitioners.

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