
TIME MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Good time management means using your time intentionally, staying clear on priorities, and planning early enough to keep important work from becoming urgent at the last minute.

ESTABLISH CLARITY ON WORK AND PRIORITIES

A strong time management system starts with a clear understanding of your role, your regular responsibilities, and the work others rely on you to complete. Once you know what you own and when it needs to happen, it becomes much easier to plan your time well and stay organized.

REGULAR TASKS AND DEADLINES

Regular tasks are often the best place to build strong habits because they follow a predictable schedule. Put these deadlines on your calendar, decide when preparation should begin, and give yourself enough time to complete the work without rushing.

- **Record the deadline:** Put each recurring task on your calendar with the final due date and any important milestones.
- **Estimate the workload:** Decide how much time, analysis, and coordination the task will require.
- **Set lead time:** Use a short reminder for simple work, a few days for internal coordination, and a longer buffer for complex tasks.
- **Start before the deadline:** Begin early enough to finish without rushing or creating avoidable errors.

ASSIGNED TASKS AND DEADLINES

When work is assigned to you, it helps to follow a consistent process each time. Capture the request, confirm what is needed, note the deadline, and decide when the work should be scheduled.

- **Clarify the request:** Confirm the deliverable, due date, and expected format before you begin.
- **Assess the effort:** Estimate the time required and identify dependencies, collaborators, or review steps.
- **Schedule the work:** Track the task in your system and place it on your calendar based on priority and timing.
- **Set expectations:** Communicate timing early if the work will require coordination or cannot be completed immediately.

AD HOC, LAST-MINUTE, AND URGENT TASKS

Unexpected and urgent tasks can interrupt even a well-planned schedule, so it helps to respond in a calm and consistent way. When something new comes in, confirm the deadline, understand the impact, estimate the effort, and decide what needs to move to make room for it.

- **Confirm the deadline:** Clarify what is needed, when it is due, and whether the timeline is truly fixed.
- **Triage the request:** Evaluate urgency, impact, required effort, and who else must be involved.
- **Reorder your plan:** Decide what must be delayed, delegated, or rescheduled, then update your calendar or task list immediately.
- **Execute intentionally:** If the task is self-contained, block time and finish it. If it requires collaboration, confirm responsibilities and checkpoints early.
- **Address the pattern:** If repeated last-minute requests are creating avoidable disruption, reset expectations and ask for better lead time in the future.

SET PRIORITIES DELIBERATELY

Not every task should be handled based on deadline alone. Good prioritization means considering what is urgent, what is important, who is waiting on the work, and how much time or coordination it will require.

- **Start with urgency:** Identify work with fixed or near-term deadlines.
- **Weigh the impact:** Give greater priority to work that affects leadership, external partners, compliance, or major deliverables.
- **Account for complexity:** Move complex work up when it requires early preparation, multiple contributors, or careful review.
- **Reassess often:** Review priorities regularly so important work does not become urgent by neglect.

MANAGE THE CALENDAR AS AN OPERATING TOOL

Your calendar should do more than hold meetings. It should help you plan your work, protect focused time, and make sure important tasks are not pushed aside by constant interruptions or reactive requests.

It helps to plan at three levels: monthly for major deadlines, weekly for preparation, and daily for immediate priorities. Your calendar should show not only due dates, but also the time needed to prepare, review, coordinate, and follow through.

- **Map the work:** Put deadlines, meetings, reminders, and focused work blocks on your calendar.
- **Plan backward:** Schedule preparation, communication, and review before the final due date.

- **Protect focus blocks:** Reserve uninterrupted time for work that requires concentration.
- **Adjust deliberately:** Revisit your calendar regularly and move work as priorities change.

ESTABLISH A CORE AND NON-CORE TIME SYSTEM

One useful way to manage your time is to separate core work from non-core work. This helps you protect time for your most important responsibilities while still making space for email, meetings, and routine tasks.

Core time is for work that needs your full attention, such as writing, analysis, reporting, problem-solving, or other responsibilities that carry the most value in your role. Non-core time is better suited for email, meetings, follow-up, coordination, and general administrative work.

A PRACTICAL DAILY PATTERN MIGHT LOOK LIKE THIS:

- **Define the blocks:** Decide which parts of the day are best for focused work and which are better for meetings, email, and coordination.
- **Match the work:** Put high-value, attention-intensive tasks in core blocks and routine work in non-core blocks.
- **Repeat the pattern:** When possible, begin and end the day with non-core work and protect one or two core blocks in the middle.
- **Refine over time:** Adjust the pattern as you learn when you work best and when interruptions are most likely.

CORE

Core activities are the parts of your job that require the most focus, care, and judgment. Because this work is often more important and harder to do well when you are distracted, it helps to protect time for it intentionally.

NON-CORE

Non-core activities still matter, but they should not take over the time needed for your most important work. Tasks like email, meetings, coordination, and routine follow-up are easier to manage when you group them into planned time blocks.

Once you decide what belongs in core time and non-core time, place those tasks on your calendar in a way that others can understand. This makes it easier to protect focus time while still staying responsive.

- **Review priorities each morning:** Decide what belongs in core time and what can wait for non-core time.
- **Protect core blocks:** Use them for analysis, reporting, reconciliation, problem-solving, or other focused work.

- **Contain non-core work:** Reserve separate blocks for email, meetings, routine questions, and coordination.
- **Reset at day's end:** Close open loops and prepare the next day's priorities.

ESTABLISH CONSISTENT ROUTINES AND PROTOCOLS

Good time management depends on simple routines you can repeat consistently. When you use the same approach to receive, assess, schedule, and communicate about work, it becomes easier to stay organized and manage competing priorities well.

- **Confirm the request:** Verify what is needed, when it is due, the required format, and who is involved.
- **Assess the work:** Estimate the effort, identify dependencies, and determine whether collaboration or follow-up is required.
- **Set the plan:** Decide where the work fits in your queue, when it will begin, and what checkpoints are needed.
- **Communicate directly:** Use brief, clear communication to confirm expectations, timing, and next steps.
- **Improve the process:** Look for repeated delays, unclear requests, or avoidable back-and-forth, then adjust your routines to reduce them.

PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING A STRONG TIME MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

1. **Check email at set times:**
 - a. Do review and respond to email at a few planned points during the day.
 - b. Do not interrupt your work every time a new message appears.
2. **Choose the fastest path to clarity:**
 - a. Do use a quick call or short check-in when it will resolve the issue faster.
 - b. Do not rely on a long back-and-forth email chain when a brief conversation would help more.
3. **Keep one clear list of priorities:**
 - a. Do maintain a current task list that shows what needs attention now, next, and later.
 - b. Do not depend on memory or scattered notes across email, chats, and paper reminders.
4. **Schedule important work in advance:**
 - a. Do block time for recurring tasks, deadlines, and focused work before your calendar fills up.
 - b. Do not leave key responsibilities unscheduled and hope time will appear later.
5. **Break large assignments into steps:**
 - a. Do map out a start date, checkpoints, and review time for major work.
 - b. Do not wait until the deadline is close to decide how the work will get done.
6. **Leave space for the unexpected:**
 - a. Do build in extra time for interruptions, questions, and last-minute adjustments.

- b. Do not schedule every task too tightly and expect the day to go exactly as planned.
- 7. **Protect time that requires focus:**
 - a. Do reserve quieter blocks for analysis, writing, problem-solving, or review.
 - b. Do not use your best focus time for routine email or low-priority tasks.
- 8. **Start early when others are involved:**
 - a. Do begin sooner when a task needs input, approval, or coordination from other people.
 - b. Do not wait until the last minute and risk delays you cannot control.
- 9. **Ask for support before you stall:**
 - a. Do reach out when you are blocked, overloaded, or missing information.
 - b. Do not stay stuck too long and let a small issue turn into a larger delay.
- 10. **End the day with a quick reset:**
 - a. Do take a few minutes to review what was completed, note what still needs attention, and set priorities for tomorrow.
 - b. Do not finish the day with open tasks scattered across emails, notes, and unfinished thoughts.

CONCLUSION

Good time management is not about filling every minute. It is about making thoughtful choices, protecting time for what matters most, and building habits that support steady, reliable performance.

ONE-PAGE SUMMARY: TIME MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

This summary brings together the key habits that support a strong time management system. Use it as a quick reference to stay organized, protect focused time, and manage your work with consistency.

Principle	Do	Do not
Check email at set times	Review and respond at a few planned points during the day.	Interrupt your work every time a new message appears.
Choose the fastest path to clarity	Use a quick call or short check-in when it will resolve the issue faster.	Rely on long email chains when a brief conversation would help more.
Keep one clear list of priorities	Maintain a current task list that shows what needs attention now, next, and later.	Depend on memory or scattered notes.
Schedule important work in advance	Block time for recurring tasks, deadlines, and focused work before your calendar fills up.	Leave key responsibilities unscheduled.
Break large assignments into steps	Map out a start date, checkpoints, and review time for major work.	Wait until the deadline is close to decide how the work will get done.
Leave space for the unexpected	Build in extra time for interruptions, questions, and last-minute changes.	Schedule every task too tightly.
Protect time that requires focus	Reserve quieter blocks for analysis, writing, problem-solving, or review.	Use your best focus time for routine email or low-priority tasks.
Start early when others are involved	Begin sooner when a task needs input, approval, or coordination.	Wait until the last minute and risk delays you cannot control.
Ask for support before you stall	Reach out when you are blocked, overloaded, or missing information.	Stay stuck too long and let a small issue grow.
End the day with a quick reset	Review what was completed, note what still needs attention, and set priorities for tomorrow.	Finish the day with open tasks scattered across emails, notes, and unfinished thoughts.

Good time management comes from small, consistent habits. When you plan ahead, protect focused time, and reset regularly, it becomes much easier to stay on top of your work.