

24 Tips to Maximize 24 Hours

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We have 24 hours in a day. There is no way around a certain amount of necessary sleep....you pick the number just not more than eight. With the time remaining in the day, please take to heart the following suggestions that will maximize the value of this time. When it comes to time allotted for work, making more in less time is the objective. I have the same objective in life in general....more of the good stuff, less of what is meaningless and wasteful. 24 tips to max the 24 hours will sting a bit...but from the sting comes a new perspective and perhaps a completely new life.

Are you up for the challenge? Time is a wasting!

1. ***Big rocks first.*** We have all seen the visual. A clear jar. A pile of sand, a pile of marbles, and a pile of egg sized rocks. Putting them in the jar in the right order is the only way to get them all in the jar. The big rocks go first, then the marbles, and finally the sand. Prioritize your day in this way. Make the main thing the main thing. Fill in the cracks of time with the smaller things. In the business of real estate acquisition, face to face with a prospective seller or investor is always the main thing. It needs to comprise at least half of your work time.
2. ***Toughest Job First.*** This extends the metaphor even further. The big rocks are not only the most important, they are the toughest job of the day. Start here when your energy is fresh. Get right on it early, before the distractions start building up. Take this medicine...get it down...and the rest of the meal tastes better.
3. ***Be where you are.*** Partial attention does not portion results in the same way, it has a compounding effect. What I mean here is this, giving a task half your attention will not result in half the benefit, rather it will result is a portion much less than half. This especially applies to direct communication, either in writing or verbally. Giving these efforts your full attention will pay enormous dividends. You will hear what people are not saying.

4. ***Separate phones:*** One to answer, one to go to voicemail. In every business, there is the solicitation that takes center stage. In my world, a call from a seller of real property is the fire siren! Everything goes to second place when this phone rings. Just to further elaborate, a call from my wife gets the same attention! The point I am making here is two fold. There are calls we want to and need to answer that are at the center of our life and business, and there is a ton of others that we can return on our own time. We need to know the difference and set ourselves up accordingly.

5. ***Make lists.*** Each note pad a different topic. Title the note pad boldly with a sharpie. Segregate your mind and life on paper. Have checklists that can be referred to for reoccurring events. Check list for: Day drive with family. This will cut down the time it takes to get out the door dramatically and insure that you do not forget butt wipes, diapers, and raincoats for the kids. Pilots have checklists because forgetting something has expensive consequences. Apply the same logic to life. Have a master grocery list on the refer with the sections of the store labeled on the master. When you need milk, write it on the list under the section dairy. When you need tomatoes, write it on the list under “fruit and vegetables”. This way when you go to the store, you move through the sections of the store and never backtrack. It will cut your shopping time in half. I like separate lists on my desk by topic because when I am done with that list for the day, I turn the note pad face down. This allows for me to just see what is remaining and gives a sense of accomplishment as note pads get turned over during the day.

6. ***No blood, no foul.*** Avoid changing course over ever “urgent” thing. ‘Give the situation 24 hours. Many times the problem or situation will solve itself if unattended. This discernment applies especially to tenant complaints. How many times have I received the urgent call of a blocked toilet or an outlet that does not work, only to get a call an hour later that they fixed the problem on their own.

7. ***Subcontract.*** If your time is worth X, would you consider spending your time for one-eighth X? Of course not, and yet we do it every day. If your time is worth 100K a year, each minute of work time is worth approximately 87 cents. If you are an 87 cent per minute earner, would you work for 11cents per minute. Well, if you are mowing your own lawn, cleaning your own house, changing your own oil, or dropping off your own dry cleaning, that is exactly what you are doing. You are giving yourself a voluntary pay cut. If you love doing these things and call them relaxation or a recharge activity, then at least you know the cost to you for the benefit you are getting, and if not, you are an idiot. Never do what can be hired out at 12 cents on the dollar.

8. ***Schedule your priorities.*** Sounds simple right? Take out your week planner and put on your schedule those things that are most important to you first. For me, the first thing that gets put on my weekly calendar is my night out with my bride. Then I go to the kids and their activities. Next is work starting with the most important to accomplish first. Write office work and what you are to accomplish on your calendar as if it were any other appointment. Estimate the time and stay within the allotment. It is one thing to say what is important. Live it by putting it on your schedule first.
9. ***Have clear objectives for each block of time.*** Not only should the priorities be put on a schedule, objectives for that time need to be outlined. What does completion mean? How do you gauge success? Be this work time or personal, we need to have a clear definition of what our objectives are with each scheduled block of time.
10. ***Deal aggressively with procrastination.*** Procrastination is the outward expression of an inward issue. The issue may be fear, boredom, perfectionism, or a feeling of being overwhelmed. We need to look at what is stopping us from moving forward aggressively. There is no way to change the fruit without changing the roots.
11. ***Life is a team sport.*** We need to learn to delegate parts of it to our team members. The key with delegation is this. Delegate with clear direction, delegate to the right person who is competent, set benchmarks and check points and schedule progress reports. Once delegated, it is OFF your plate. Let it go! Do not give it another thought until the first check point meeting. Have a note pad with the delegation task for the title. As you think of issues, comments, or clarification simply write it on the list and bring it up at the next meeting regarding the delegated task.
12. ***Know when to say NO.*** Why is it we feel obligated to say yes to every invitation, request, or time commitment? We need to know how to deliver NO so that the person of request understands that they are not rejected, just the proposition. Be a one master dog, not a lab that will fetch a stick for any body who will throw one.

13. ***Avoid lines by good planning.*** If a potential line is unavoidable, like the one you will find always at the driver's license renewal office, then come prepared with material to use the waiting time wisely and productively. Use the same vendors, restaurants, suppliers, etc. to develop a familiarity with each other.
14. ***Consider a driver.*** Seriously, taking a town car during peak hour events so that you can be productive to and from the event and that time won't be spent looking for parking. Taking this to a different level all together, consider having a full time driver. Set up the back area of the vehicle with a desk, a phone, a computer...a mobile office. When the driver is waiting for you at meetings, be sure there are secretarial tasks for he or she to do to fill the time and increase productivity. Misc. errands can also be the driver's responsibility taking these tasks off of your "to do" list.
15. ***Prepare for tomorrow the night before.*** Have a notepad by your bedside. Put down what is most on your mind from today that will need to carry over to tomorrow. Get it out of your head before bed. Lay out your clothes, pack your workout gear, put in the car everything you need for the next day. This allows for an early jump on things in the morning. It also allows for a better rest having emptied your head before bed.
16. ***Stay away from time wasting traps and time wasting people.*** At work, the internet can be a huge trap. One e-mail leads to the next, which leads to Facebook, which leads to YouTube which leads to hours of wasted time. The same is true of people. Know those that are respectful of time, and the many who are not. Avoid the time suckers. "Do you have a minute"? is never a minute.
17. ***Stand up when you are on the phone.*** You might ask...how is this time efficient? Because you will be more focused and intent and therefore the phone conversation will be more productive. Productivity is the name of the game. Same time allotment, but dramatically different results because of the level of your focus and intensity. Standing up is an audibly different person than one sitting down.

18. ***Plan letting loose.*** Different from exercise or recharge, planned letting loose is about responsible irresponsibility. Great friends, laughter, crazy golf with the guys and dinner with wives and wine. Vegas is about this sentiment. We all need a time to not be responsible....but do it responsibly. Knowing this time is on the calendar and planned....even though presumably a long way off...allows for better focus in the now knowing this is on the books.

19. ***Reward a job well done.*** When you have met weigh points and exceeded objectives, reward yourself. Nothing like a bonus to inspire! Put the carrot out there to push your abilities, but when the measure is met...celebrate in a meaningful way. Remember, if there are those around you whose sacrifice has made your success possible, be sure to bring them into the goal the celebration.

20. ***Two words: Wireless headset.***

21. ***Say yes to your wife.*** You will eventually anyway, so just do it quickly and move on to the next topic. If you are the wife, remind us of this up front if we forget and start giving an opposing perspective.

22. ***Make sure your car is a rolling university.*** Most often the car is too noisy for centered business calls, but it is not too noisy to be thinking quietly or listening to educational and motivational material. Listening to the radio is useless. Listening to music is great if it serves as a planned recharge. Listening to educational and motivational materials will show itself in consistent returns.

23. ***Ask questions of proposition.*** At the center of it all....know what you want and ask for it. If we simply increased our questions of proposition, we would increase our productivity. When we add qualified thinking and frame our proposition to our audience, we increase our productivity even more. Try taking a day and write down every question of proposition you asked in a day. Make it your goal to increase the number of questions you ask by 10% per week. Do this for a month and you will see a dramatic change in your overall results.

24. ***Don't reinvent the wheel.*** Seek those who have done what you want to do with a high degree of success. Learn from them. Hang with them. Ask questions of them. This can take years off your learning curve. Set pride aside. Seek the knowledge and methods of those who have mastered your field of endeavor.