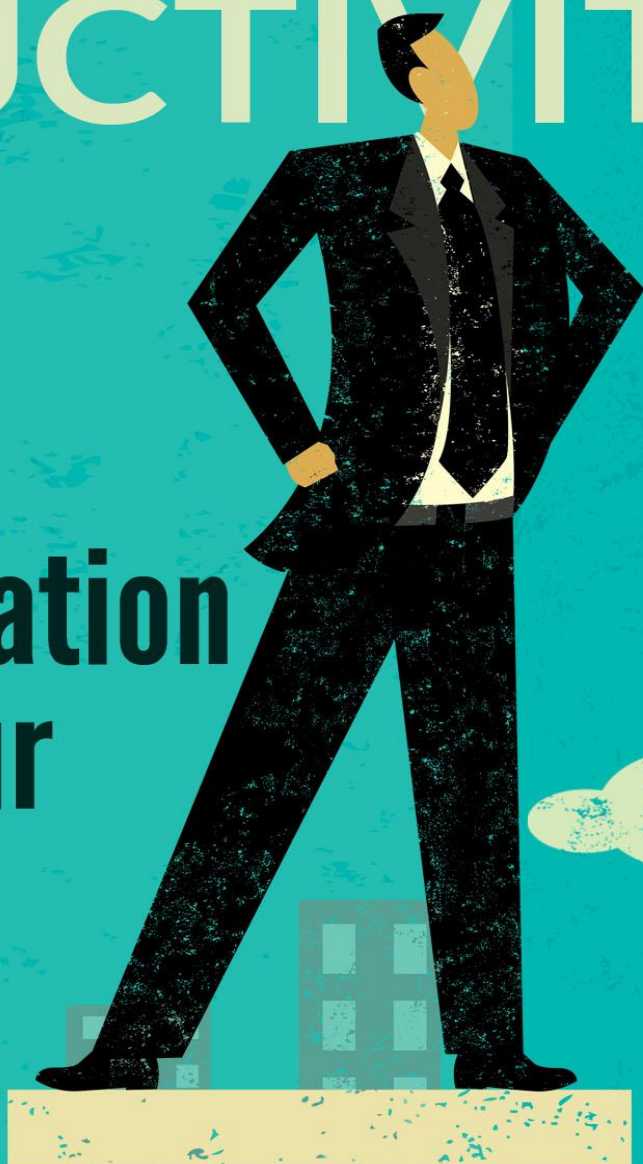


TIME MANAGEMENT FOR SUPERHERO PRODUCTIVITY

by Lee Candy

**Zap Procrastination
and Double Your
Productivity**



eba

Welcome to the system that many of my students use, and indeed, I do too, to get results; to achieve more in our days than many other people do. There's a correlation between the 3% highest achievers in life and the rest.

This correlation is tied into the fact that successful people work to systems. One of which is how they manage their days; How they get the best out of their working days and weeks, which separates the 3 percenters and everyone else.

This system has been crafted around some of the concepts that the **3% highly successful people** do each day. You'll find a simple **5 phase system** that you can use to get things on track and as much as double your own productivity.

My name's Lee Candy. I am the owner of Educational Business Articles (EBA).

I provide advice and guides on many things business related: from implementing my tried and tested leadership hacks system, to transform your business, to my personal excellence one, to help transform your life.

From dealing with change to creating goals and a strategy to success.

I have, over the past 15 years, immersed myself in business; I love it!

Graduating with an honours degree in business

Starting and failing a business venture (I didn't love that bit, though...)

And starting and selling another.

As well as working with over 1500 companies in one capacity or another, helping them better their lot!

My aim is to teach you what I know, so you can experience an improvement in your business role, whatever that may be.

I hope you enjoy this system. Check back to my website: www.educational-business-articles.com for more information and support!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Candy'.

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Introduction

Here's the big question: How do you improve time management skills?

So many people struggle when it comes to time management. For some, just even hearing the words leaves them feeling cold inside.

For many, they associate the idea of a schedule or routine with being controlling, restrictive and the never ending feeling of being overwhelmed.

Time management is really about mind-set.

It's not so much about trying to get more time back, it's about doing more of the stuff that will make a sizeable shift to your outcomes.

Let's face it – if you could get more time, you would probably fill it with more to-dos...

So, when you want to improve time management skills, you can view it as a rigid system, and a inflexible way of trying not to lose time.

Or, you can think of it as being a little like Rocket Fuel. Rather than seeing it as something that'll restrain you, think of how it can free you.

How it can make you 10 x more productive, and bring more money into your business, or how it can help you achieve your important goals.

If you're familiar with Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), one of the principles it teaches you is to start with the end in mind.

When you're tackling something, think about the OUTCOME you desire.

That way, you get a clear picture as to why you are doing something and what you need to do for the best outcome.

Time management boils down to the same thing. It's about starting with what's important to you and your goals, and then building a framework around this.

It enables you to maximise your productivity and effectiveness, around what matters to you.

It's about starting each day with the end in mind.

But before you get into the task of organising your days, you need to understand what's currently holding you back.

What are the things that are sapping your time?

It starts with looking at your non-productive tasks...

Improve Time Management Skills by Eliminating your Non-Productive Tasks

Most people feel that they're busy during the days, but just don't seem to get things done!

It's a horrible experience and we all have gone through it.

Having an effective time management system reduces these experiences.

The root-cause can come from a number of sources, but more times than not, they pop their ugly heads up, when you're not focused.

Without focus (and we'll touch on this, shortly), you take on every task manageable.

- Your boss' priorities
- Your teams' issues and questions
- Your nice to do's
- Other people's agendas
- Too many distractions

And so on...

Most people jot down their actions on a to-list to try and make sense of everything.

But... 'To-do' lists only make you feel even more overwhelmed.

My advice is this:

Want to Improve Time Management Skills? Scrap The Way You Currently Manage Your To-do Lists...

Because, after taking on every conceivable action and added it to your list...

..There's probably more of a sense of overwhelm and a feeling of despair; "I have no time to do all that!"

What's littered within this list are what I call **non-productive tasks**.

- These are the things that sap your time.
- They ensure that you are busy, without being able to put your finger on what exactly you've done for the day.

Your Non-Productive Tasks are all those things that do not add value to you, *directly*.

They don't move you forward in achieving your goals and objectives – whether that's in a team setting or a personal one.

An Example

Let's say that my team sell training courses to Managers and Leaders.

Let's also suppose that my number one objective is to ensure that my team provides 100% quality and delivers courses 100% of the time when we say we would.

These two objectives are my end results. Remember, I mentioned to start with the end in mind? Well, this is it.

Now, my weekly and daily planning can be focused on achieving these two goals:

1. To maintain the best levels of quality training
2. To stick to our promises 100% and deliver when we say we will

If something popped up in our day, that was absolutely not directly linked to this goal and my team's function, then I can filter it out.

I can pass it on to another department or delegate it.

I would certainly not put it at the top of my to-do list.

If I did want to help out **and I had time**, then I would slot it in where I have some natural down time and can absorb this activity...

...**and I would plan it in.**

I'm not saying that you have to be so focused that you become selfish and 100% driven.

What I am saying is that you plan your day:

Plan in your most important parts that will keep you moving forward towards your goals, and then plan in other elements WHEN YOU FEEL IT NECESSARY.

So, in order to improve time management skills for you, you need to be laser focused on what you're trying to achieve.

This process works whether you're organising a team or just yourself.

You need to firstly, understand, and then...

Lose Some of Your Non Productive Tasks

If you look at your day, you'll probably find that it's littered with the right intentions, but many non-productive tasks.

It's probably plagued with other people's agendas;

non focused time;

small breaks;

checking emails;

checking social media;

Distractions - responding to non-essential tasks (for you).

In fact, I would go so far as to say that you're probably in 'flow' around 2 hours per day.

So, the first task for you is to dissect the activities in your typical day.

Do this by brainstorming all the typical tasks that you normally get involved with. Try to be concise and include everything you can think of.

Do this by following the steps below.

Phase 1: Get Clear On What You Want

First, get clarity. What are your main goals, right now?

What is it that you're working on to better your life or team?

What are the main objectives you want to achieve?

Try to write no more than 5 top level goals that you can stick to over the course of the next few months, or so.

But make them inspiring and pertinent.

These can be life goals, or projects, or indeed, team goals. They'll help you organise your weeks and days ahead.

Phase 2: Now Dissect Your Typical Daily Activities

You now need to analyse what you get up to in a typical day.

The task to improve time management skills starts first by seeing what you actually get up to.

It's about seeing the impact of the current time sappers and non-productive tasks, that you spend your time on.

Step 1: Take a moment to brainstorm the things you generally get up to during your days. Include everything and don't dismiss things that you may think are trivial.

Step 2: Now split these activities into either Productive Tasks or Non Productive Tasks.

Remember:

- Productive tasks are all those activities which help you achieve your goals and outcomes. They move you towards your goals.
- Non-productive tasks are those activities, which don't help you achieve your goals...

..But you often feel compelled to do, because your boss has asked you.

Or you want to help out.

Or you find it hard to say no.

Or you need a break from the day to day grind...

Now brainstorm your productive and non-productive tasks, using the [“Time Dissector Worksheet.”](#)

My *Time-dissector* Worksheet!

(Finding My Productive & Non Productive Daily Tasks)



My main goals, right now:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

My Typical Productive Tasks

Typical daily tasks that help me achieve these goals

Brainstorm your daily productive tasks in this box:

My Typical Non-Productive Tasks

Typical daily tasks that are non-productive (Don't help me achieve these goals)

Brainstorm your daily non-productive tasks in this box:

Phase 3: Record the Impact of Your Non Productive Tasks

Next, as part of your quest to improve time management skills and get it working for you...

... It's time to start tracking the impact your non-productive tasks have on your day.

Take your Non-productive tasks that you brainstormed from the "Time dissector Worksheet", and add them to the "Non-Productive Tasks Tracker" (Example diagram is also below).

You're going to keep a tab on the impact they have on you over the next two weeks.

(If you've already brainstormed more than ten non-productive tasks in the previous activity, you'll have to create generic categories so a number of them will be grouped together.)

You want to keep your main non-productive categories down to a maximum of 10, but normally 5 to 7 main categories on your tracker.

Typical categories could be:

- Social Media
- Non-productive meetings
- Checking emails
- Unrelated requests
- Reactive management
- Other people's agendas

And so on...

I propose using a two-week analysis, so keep this tracker with you and update as you go along.

All we want to do, here, is to measure the impact your non-productive tasks have on your typical working day.

Every day, track each time you have been pulled away to complete a non-productive task. Try to account for the TIME LOST, not the number of times it happens.

The form is divided into 5 minute blocks.

All you need to do is colour each five-minute block of lost time to a specific non-productive task, throughout each day.

If you're using the [excel version](#), enter an 'x' in the field, for every 5 minutes spent.

The spreadsheet will do the rest and add up the total time for that day and week.

Keep tracking over two weeks, so you can enough data to make an informed and impartial view on where your time is going.

Here's a snapshot of the 'Non-Productive Tasks Tracker.'

1. Simply enter your non-productive tasks in the red boxes
2. Then track their impact on your days by blocking out each 5-minute block as you go along
3. Add up the total time lost to each category at the end of each day or week.

There's a quote that says, "Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards." That's what we're doing here.

We want to understand what typically happens to you, first, before it can be improved.

Each time interval represents 5 minutes. Keep a track of each non productive task category and if you're updating this on Excel, enter an 'x' against each 5 minute slot. Continue this over the course of the week.

The Spreadsheet will add up the total time.

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Monitor each working day for around two weeks and see what actions you're typically taking, which eat up your time.

You'll take the findings of this analysis on to...

Phase 4: Eliminate Some of your Big Hitters

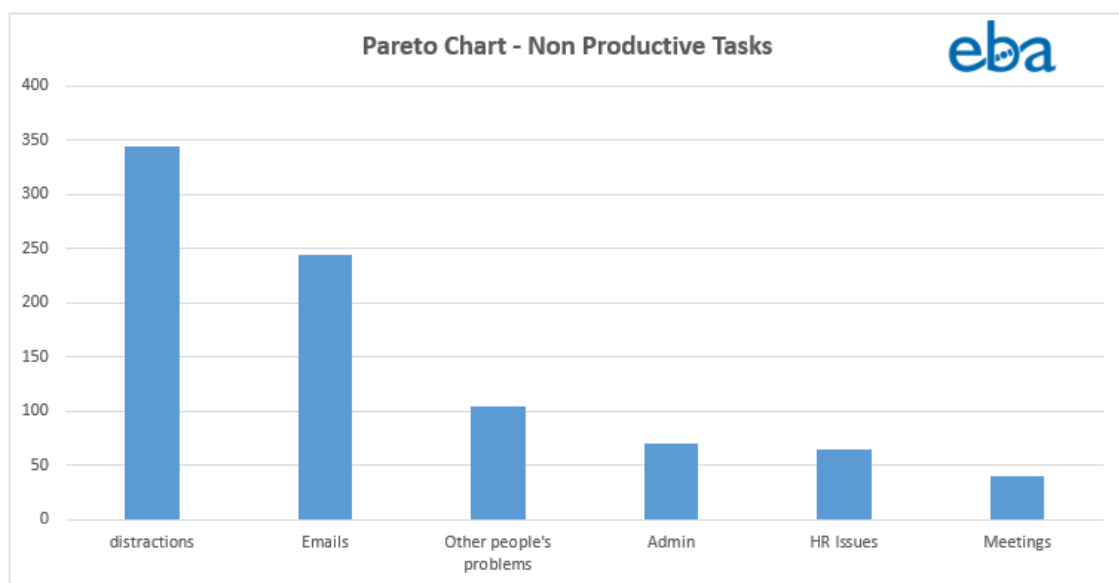
Once you have this information, you can start to see which non-productive tasks are consuming the majority of your time, whilst giving little return to you and your specific goals, which you outlined in phase 1.

It's advisable to organise your categories by their biggest impact.

This can be achieved by using a Pareto Chart.

Pareto charts are simple graphs that show the biggest issues in order of their magnitude.

Here's an example:



Now you've got a good understanding of the non-productive tasks that are affecting your day...

Use the [template](#) to understand your biggest non-productive tasks. The spreadsheet automatically does this for you, so all you have to do is review it and marvel at how far you've come so far!

The next step to improve time management skills for you, is to think about how you can reduce or eliminate as many of these non-productive tasks as possible.

Each time you do, you get some of your vital time back.

Think about how much time you will **allow** on these non-productive tasks.

It's ok to have them.

After all, we all need some downtime, and opportunity to focus on other things.

It's ok to:

- Have breaks
- Do some non-productive tasks
- Help others out
- Relax and unwind
- Check your emails
- Update your social media
- Even play the Xbox or watch TV!

You just have to be in charge as to how much you give yourself. And don't get consumed by these tasks.

You'll be treating these activities as planned slots in your daily diary.

They'll be strategically placed in your diary, so they don't excessively consume your time.

Note I used the word; **ALLOW**: You are in the driver's seat here. You are in control of your day, your week, your month, your year, your life.

Be positive about this, think about what you want to achieve and then believe with every fibre of your being that you can get there, and you will.

Use some of the non-productive tasks as treats and ways to enjoy your downtime when you have it.

However, you want to be honest with yourself about how much time you spend doing these things and ask yourself, is it reasonable?

Try to spend a **minimum of 50%** of your time, working solidly on those tasks that move things forward, every day.

A MINIMUM.

In some instances, it'll be hard to know what to do with some of your non-productive tasks.

Some may come from your colleagues and you don't want to upset them by saying no.

Some you believe you have to do because it's just you working on your own.

Others may be pushed down from your boss.

In my opinion, the first thing you need to do if you ever want to improve time management, is to be honest.

If you're feeling overloaded by your boss, take the Pareto chart and Non Productive Tasks Tracker to him / her, and present the evidence of why you're feeling overloaded. Discuss the facts and see if they can help.

Often, management respond more favourably when presented with data, rather than just someone's opinion.

If your team members are pushing on you too much, be open and discuss your findings with them, too.

Work with your peers, team members and managers to get them to see the situation you're in, using the findings of this study.

Try to agree together, how to tackle the problem.

In other instances, you may want to try stopping some tasks straight away.

In others, it may be that you can complete some tasks during your rest breaks (which we'll touch on, shortly).

Ask yourself:

For every Non-productive task, can you:

- Eliminate this activity altogether- this may mean getting someone else to do it or just getting rid of it.
- Reduce the amount of time lost to this activity – by planning specific time in your diary for it, and only doing it then
- Combine with other activities, so you minimise their impact. For example, In my downtime, I may check my emails and social media.

Or, I may get two team members to complete a non-productive task each at a specific time.

- Can you automate some tasks using software, or outsource it to someone else, even if you pay for someone to do it?

The point is, improve time management skills for you by being structured and disciplined when encountering tasks that don't specifically add value to you.

Be conscious of them and the risk they provide in devouring your time, if you don't control them.

And Control them by planning them into your diary at certain points...

ONLY if you allow it and it serves a purpose, somehow.

Phase 5: Create Your Planning System

You've identified your productive and non-productive tasks – check!

You've also spent a couple of weeks analysing the impact of your lost time – check!

You've started to think about how you can eliminate or reduce some of these tasks – Check!

It's now time to create your planning system.

Planning your tasks is THE crucial step in the ability to improve time management skills and make it all work for you.

It's how you link your daily and weekly tasks together and how you be more productive.

Here's the two step process to bring it all together:

Step 1: Plan Your Week Ahead

We can achieve so much when we get focused. It's like the fuel that can propel us through our days.

By planning each coming week in advance, you can start to think a little more proactive and strategic.

Rather than just turning up to do your work every day, stop to think at the end of each week:

1. What did you get done that you wanted? Were there any gaps? What could you do better the next time you plan your week?
2. What needs to be done next week? What goals or projects are you working on? What main tasks do you need to get done? Where's the focus for the week ahead?

You may have many goals:

- Personal
- Work related
- Business related
- Financial
- Career
- Relationships
- Health and wellbeing
- Family time
- Downtime

Getting things lined up before the week starts, allows you to get organised during each day and can positively affect the amount of time you spend on non-productive tasks.

Planning each week and day, before you jump in, can have such a powerful effect.

In some studies, just by spending the start of every day planning, and avoiding jumping straight into reading your emails..

... it can make you 30% more productive for the day.

Your plans don't have to be 100% accurate, and rigid.

You're trying to improve time management skills by setting out your daily and weekly agenda. So, aim to get it planned and allow it to flex during the course of time.

Having a plan and REASON, which flexes slightly, is better than none at all.

But if you want to achieve your objectives, you have to give it some thought as to where your priorities lay and where your focus should be this week.

Here's the weekly organiser for you to use each week and plan your week ahead:

Weekly *Organiser*



Use this organiser to plan your week ahead. It's important to provide laser focus by planning the major milestones and goals you want to achieve this week.

Main Objectives/ Milestones to do This Week

Current Goals/ Projects

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Weekly Appointments/ Key Tasks

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat

Notes/ Things to remember

Using the Weekly Organiser, here are 4 things to ask yourself each coming week.

1. List the current projects you're working on. These are your longer term goals and could be based around your work or personal life, like:
 - Wealth
 - Team goals
 - Relationships
 - Business Goals
 - Health
 - And so on.

These goals are the things that will propel you forward in life and allow you to develop and achieve the things you want as a person (and team, if you're using this system with your team, too).

2. Now enter your main objectives in the next section. These are the things that you need to get done this week. They'll help move you towards your main goals / projects.
3. Now, list the key appointments you may have this week. This acts as a good reminder for remembering meetings, who you're relying on, what calls you have to make, and so on.
4. Enter any notes or observations you may want to make, based on the week ahead. These could be "Don't forgets" or anything that you feel' important to you and your goals.

Feel good about what you're doing – this should be exciting stuff! You're now thinking more strategically about you and your goals and how you can manage your time.

Step 2: Plan Each Day

The second step to improve time management skills, is to link your weekly planning to each day.

It keeps you on track, fighting the good fight...

The way you start your day can either set you on course to success or ensure you're stuck in procrastination mode.

If you plan each day right, the magic happens.

You get focus and can plan specific points in the day where you can provide high levels of focus and energy on tasks. (We'll get to the 'how', shortly)

The good news: You've already done the leg work by organising the week ahead.

How you plan your days and load it with the important stuff is what makes a time management 'system' work. It's what makes you productive.

The vast majority of people are not natural procrastinators. They just have to get focused. We all do.

Otherwise, we risk floating around during the day, trying to be productive, but working to a scatter gun style, and working on the wrong things – those that won't move us forward in achieving our goals.

So, here's the principle that we're going to plan our days around...

20 is Plenty

Think about how many times a day you're distracted during your working day.

Did you know that it takes typically 20 minutes to bounce back and regain the focus that you had, before you were distracted?

If you add up all of those 20 minutes in your day, there's probably a huge portion of your working day that you could remove, instantly.

Let's say you get distracted 3 times in an average day. That's an hour extra, if you resisted this temptation.

That's why the 20 is plenty technique is such a powerful tool. It refers to a principle called 'Time Blocking.'

Time blocking is a way of blocking everything out.

You give your undivided time and attention to one task.

No distractions.

No answering calls.

No meetings

No emails

No Facebook.

Just you and the task that you set, for a solid twenty minutes.

These 20 minute 'sprints' are immensely powerful. They create absolute focus.

And when your 20 minutes are over, take a rewarding break. Something that suits you.

Loosen up. Walk about. Take your mind off the previous task.

These 20 minute sprints don't have to be one after the other, but the more you plan into your day, the more productive you'll be.

You'll be able to free up more time for you.

And you'll be able to improve time management skills in a way that drastically improves your productivity.

When planning your day, my advice is this:

Tackle your Big Rocks First.

Put your BIG ROCKS at the top of the list: those being the things that will bring in business and money or propel you towards your goals.

They're the big impact tasks.

They may also be the trickiest to do.

That way, you can get the hard stuff out of the way.

You can build confidence and momentum.

Watch your working day and energy levels transform.

Using a time management method like this is like a shot of caffeine! It keeps you fresh and allows you to set and achieve goals throughout the day.

And It also allows you to create a goal – achievement working practice, which helps boost your energy levels and feelings of accomplishment.

Here's How You Plan Your Day

I propose that the first 20 minutes, before you do anything else, you spend on planning each day.

Take a moment to look at your weekly plan. What actions are pencilled in for the day?

Do you have to make some adjustments, because you didn't get everything done yesterday?

What important meetings are you attending?

Who are you waiting on today? Who will you need to chase?

Now drag some actions over from your weekly planner to today's list.

And begin to block them into specific blocks of time, where you can give them 100% focus in 20 minute bursts.

Start by structuring your day into hours, and then hours into blocks of 20 minutes.

Say you start work at 7am.

Start your first task from 7.00-7.20 and then take a 10-minute break.

Then start your next time block at 7.30 until 7.50, taking another 10-minute break.

Focus on getting short bursts of work done. This technique allows you to get into the mind-set of power working.

Power working, and power focus is of laser-like focus, whereby you give yourself permission to forget everything else for just those 20 minute bursts.

To get what REALLY needs to get done.

What do you do during the 10 minutes resting period?

This is entirely up to you. But one suggestion is that all of those little things that you added to your non-productive list, why not slot them into there?

This way, you can do things such as go for a coffee, have a break, check social media and reply to any messages without it somehow taking over your headspace.

And yes, when you're in your resting phase, set the timer so that you know when it has started and when it ends.

Discipline is very important to any system, especially one that you want to help improve time management skills for you!

If you continue to stick to this framework, it'll eventually become a habit.

Use the Daily Planner to help map your time blocks and plan the rest of your day:

The Daily Planner should be updated every day.

Daily *Planner*



Use this daily planner to Block your time into highly focused short bursts of powerblocks. Ensure that the time blocking activities are aimed at completing the things you have set out to complete today. Each block is divided into 30 minute blocks. Remember, the 20 is plenty rule: 20 minutes of focused activity and then 10 minute rest. Try to block book as much focused time as possible.

You can also use this planner to plan general tasks you need to include, too.

Things I Must Complete Today

(and which will help me achieve my goals)

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Daily Planner

7:00 AM		2:30 PM	
7:30 AM		3:00 PM	
8:00 AM		3:30 PM	
8:30 AM		4:00 PM	
9:00 AM		4:30 PM	
9:30 AM		5:00 PM	
10:00 AM		5:30 PM	
10:30 AM		6:00 PM	
11:00 AM		6:30 PM	
11:30 AM		7:00 PM	
12:00 PM		7:30 PM	
12:30 PM		8:00 PM	
1:00 PM		8:30 PM	
1:30 PM		9:00 PM	
2:00 PM		9:30 PM	

Notes/ Observations/ Key Points to Remember

Firstly, take your main tasks that you need to complete today.

This will normally come from the weekly planner, and also work carried over from the previous day.

Update in the appropriate section, the things you absolutely need to get done today, which are going to get you to your goals.

Now proceed to block book the actions that will ensure you get these goals done.

Place them at certain points during your day.

Remember, each sprint is a 30-minute block, consisting of 20-minute focused activity and 10-minute break.

Load your day with as many blocks as possible.

You can also use these blocks to book appointments and other tasks needed, too.

This complete system will help you improve time management skills for you, quickly and effectively.

Often, some people stick to a 3 step system like the following:

- **First block:** 20-minute burst & 10-minute rest
- **Second block:** 20-minute burst & 10-minute rest
- **Third block:** 20 Minute burst & 30-minute rest.
- Then repeat the three cycles again, and again.

The point is, experiment with what works for you.

Create a system based on these principles but which is tweaked to suit your preference; one that can improve time management skills for you.