



Manage Your Time – Not It Manage You!!!

**How to keep track of everything in your life,
with Tips and Tools to help you Manage your Time!**



The plan was To Be A Writer, and you are trying – but let's face it, Life keeps getting in the way. If it's not errands to run, appointments to keep, kids to chauffeur, oh! And don't forget that pesky 9 to 5 job that pays the bills, puts food in your family's mouth and a roof over your head. You can't afford to quit your job – so how are you to manage juggling everything that's going on in your life and still be a Writer?

While I don't claim to have all the answers, I can give you some tips and pointers on how to start Managing Your Time, instead of letting it Manage You!

Is This You?

Me trying to excel
in my career,
maintain a social
life, drink enough
water, exercise, text
everyone back, stay
sane, survive and
be happy!





First Things First 😊

- Relax! Deep breath!
- Now – baby steps. Rome wasn't built in a day, and this process won't happen over night either.
- First step? Let's figure out what tools you have that will help you



What do you need to help you stay on track? Other than Discipline and Perseverance!

- Smart Apps that work for you: Timers, Reminders, Notes, etc
- Calendar/Year at a glance
- Day timer
- Plans
- Lists



Lists? What kind of Lists?

- Deadlines you know of
- Annual plans
- Monthly, weekly and daily things to be done or to participate in
- Task Lists



Let's try Something, shall we?

Let's start with a list.

A list of all the things that need doing in any given day.



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- Step 3: How much time does each of these tasks need?

Don't forget to schedule in time to Write!

It is why you are here at this session, isn't it?

To find ways to make sure you have Time to Write?

Writing is as much a part of your Life as that 9 to 5 job, your spouse, your kids. Once you decide how much time you want to spend on writing – and have worked out where in your schedule that will be – Then get Writing!



So what has that done for us?
Just another bunch of lists, right?

So – what's next?



Scheduling!

Sorry – but it is the best way to manage your time
effectively and efficiently!



How to Schedule

- How much time do you have in any given day?
 - Indicate set things throughout the day
 - Refer to your lists of Daily Things to Do and slot them in, starting with the higher priority items
- Now – take a look at the time slots left. Have you accounted for meals? Driving time between one place and another? R&R time? (We don't want you to go stir crazy!)
- Once you've slotted in all your items, take a look at what's left.



NOTHING left?!?!? Now what?

**And that's the problem, isn't it?
Not enough hours in the day!**

**It happens to all of us!!!!
But to achieve a better life balance you will
have to make some adjustments!**

**So re-visit the schedule you've just created, and the lists of
what needs to be done throughout the week, and
look for some wiggle room!**



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Did someone say Task Lists?



Task Lists? Now we're getting somewhere!

- Do a Task List – every night, or first thing in the morning.
- Having a Task List helps to keep you on track and motivated – more or less.



Creating your Task List

- Jot down the 5 (at least) most important things you need to do tomorrow
- Add any other items that need to be done (but aren't necessarily the most important)
- Prioritize this list! Can anything be done on a different day? Any with a specific deadline to keep in mind?



Organize your Task List

- Organize and Time Block the list.
 - What is your available time?
 - How much time does each task need?
 - Group items by similarity, by type and/or location
 - Make sure you have accounted for driving time, getting yourself prepared (like showering, getting dressed, eating something, etc), as well as unforeseen interruptions or disruptions! (don't schedule things so tight as any thing that goes wrong will totally mess everything else up!)

This REALLY sounds familiar! Are you sure we didn't cover this already?



- Remember that the Task List needs to be flexible – if you need to add or move something, do it!
- Don't forget to schedule for non-task related items such as travel time, meals, unforeseen circumstances and interruptions



Managing the Task List

- Decide which tasks are the most important and which are the least
- Rank the tasks
- Do the most important tasks first
- You can transfer unimportant tasks or tasks not completed from one task list to another.

Yup! Definitely very familiar!

Let's simplify it all into 5 Easy Steps

Only 5? How nice!



The Five Steps of Scheduling

1. Determine the time you have
2. Schedule in the tasks you must do
3. Schedule in the tasks that are not as immediate
4. Ensure there is time in your schedule for unforeseen events
5. Any left-over time is available for You!

If you don't have time leftover go back and reassess your schedule to see if you need to re-schedule things. Time for You is critical to reducing ongoing stress and avoiding burn-out



Perfectly do-able, right?

Sure it is.

What obstacles can you foresee?



What is The Bane of our Timely Existence?



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Procrastination!!!!



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- We believe we work best under stress
- Or, we are just tired/stressed/just don't feel like getting to it!



What is the answer to Procrastination?

Discipline. Plain and simple.

You need to get tough with yourself! But there are some tricks to help you out if you have a chronic “do it later” problem.

Remember that people often start off being under-motivated for a task – the energy and enthusiasm can come as you get into the work 😊



- Carry a scheduler with you at all times. Refer to it often to keep you on track.
- Manage your To-Do Lists or they will grow out of control! Utilize Time Blocks when doing your schedules
- Schedule time for interruptions or unforeseen events
- Get into the habit of doing that To Do list for each day the night before, or as soon as you get up. This could take up to 30 minutes, so don't forget to schedule that in!



- Do ongoing evaluations before and after your tasks. Did you get the result you wanted? Why or why not? What should be changed the next time you do the same or similar task?
- Reward yourself!!!
- Don't forget to schedule Personal time, Family time and general household tasks. Maybe not every day, but often enough that you don't feel you, your family or your house are being slighted or neglected. Pay attention to your family – they might need more time than you have been allocating!



Advice from Phyllis A. Whitney

- Work Discipline is the most important habit of all to develop!
- Choose a stretch of time that you can spend regularly on writing, whether it's an hour a day or three or eight. Find a period that is comfortable and possible for you!
- Make sure this time period is as dedicated as possible! And devoted **ONLY** to the business of writing!



- Put up a Do Not Disturb sign when you are hip deep in a task – like writing - that needs your full attention. Make sure your family respects that! Also that everyone knows when it is OK to interrupt, and when it is not!
- Don't answer phones, texts, emails, or facebook notifications when you are “working”. Schedule a time when you will do these things!
- Block out whatever distractions you know will tempt you to drift away from the task at hand. Have a work area that is YOURS and that makes it easy to work (even if it means locking the cat out of the room to prevent her from lying on your computer and papers!)
- Remember that it is impossible to get absolutely everything done!!!!

At least in one day 😊

Tips & Techniques that bear repeating (again)!

- Create a daily plan. Plan your day before it unfolds
- Put a time limit to each task
- Use a calendar
- Use an organizer
- Know your deadlines



More Tips and Techniques!

- Learn to say No!
- Target to be early
- Time box your activities
- Have a clock visible to you – even right in front of you!
- Set reminders – use that phone, or alarm clock, or whatever!



- Focus on one thing at a time. Are you multi-tasking so much that you're not getting anything done?
- Block out distractions. Figure out what distracts you – and shut them down or make it harder to access them
- Track your time spent. “Egg Timer” is a simple online countdown timer. You key in the amount of time you want to track and it will do so in the background, beeping when the time is up
- Don't fuss about unimportant details! Learn to recognize them!



- Prioritize!
- Delegate!
- Batch similar tasks together
- Eliminate your time wasters during “work” hours. But schedule them in somewhere!
- Cut off when you need to.
- Leave buffer time in between tasks.

So – basically Common Sense?

Well – Yes.

But you knew that.

So why is it still so hard to keep your days running smoothly?



Because we're human!

**And it's easy to fall into bad habits, or a rut, or
whatever you want to call it!**

**But ultimately it's up to YOU what you
do with your Time!**



If you are a hobbyist or a dabbler – then it's OK to not be concerned over how much time you spend on your stories.

But you are a WRITER

And Writer's WRITE.

So get Writing already!

Just make sure to put it on your Schedule 😊