

10 Time Management Tips for Entrepreneurs

1. Set macro and micro goals

Set overarching goals for each quarter or month, and then break those down into weekly and daily goals.

2. Create an accountability system

A simple to-do list may enable you to stay on track with your goals. Or you might use an online task management tool (the Google calendar includes one). Another alternative is to ask a teammate, friend, or family member to check in with you on a regular schedule.

3. Schedule EVERYTHING

Map every task in your to-do list to a specific time block in your calendar. Break large tasks into two- to four-hour chunks. Group tiny tasks into half-hour or hour-long blocks.

Include in your calendar time for breaks as well as buffers for traveling or switching between different tasks. Also allow time for planning your day and week.

4. Work with your energy

When do you find it easiest to focus? Schedule your most intellectually- or creatively-demanding work for that time. For many people, that's the morning or late at night.

5. Master the art of prioritizing

At the beginning of each day, identify the three major tasks you must do. Keep your eye on those three critical balls so you don't get distracted by tasks that seem urgent but aren't really important.

6. Batch similar tasks

It takes energy to refocus every time you switch from one task to another, so practice single-tasking. Group together into one calendar block tasks that are similar. For example, if you need to return six phone calls, try to do them all within an hour-long block rather than spreading them out throughout the day.

7. Take micro breaks

This may seem counter-intuitive, but scheduled breaks will make you more productive. This is especially true if your business requires you to spend long periods in front of your computer.

8. Give yourself a cushion

Avoid completely filling your calendar. Allow yourself extra time in case a task takes longer than anticipated or something unexpected comes up. When you estimate how long it will take to do a task, allow an extra 20 to 25% in your time budget.

9. Build in time for thinking

Creativity and strategy drive your business forward, so schedule unstructured time to think about your next business moves. Spend some of this time in reflection; that's the super-power of entrepreneurs because it enables you to learn from experience.

10. Turn off digital distractions

To avoid the temptation to check your social media or email every 10 minutes, turn off notifications on your computer and phone. Limit the notifications you receive for calendar events too.