

**Effective Time Management**

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What we will learn and do:

- Ineffective time management adversely impacts physician career satisfaction.
- Effective time management requires:
  - Setting short and long-term goals
  - Setting priorities among competing responsibilities
  - Planning and organizing activities
  - Minimizing exposure to circumstances that result in wasted time
- The identification and practice of time management skills should improve physician efficiency and career satisfaction.

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What we will learn and do:

- Both the clock and the compass are to be considered in time management (TM)
- Have created an individual TM plan using the four quadrant approach
- Become aware of ten time sinks to avoid

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### Time Management

#### *Career Advancement*

- Be strategic in accepting duties/projects. Know your faculty assignment and match time with percent effort (teaching, clinical, research, service).
- Know your passions and skill set, **develop these**. If you have fulfilled an area, move to the next. (**for example: service**).
- Create a personal mission statement.
- Have a 1 year and 3(5) year personal action plan.
- Measure outcomes along the journey.

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### Professional/Personal Life Balance: The Clock and the Compass

- Two powerful tools direct us:
  - The clock represents our commitments, appointments, schedules, and activities.
  - The compass reflects our vision, values, principles, mission, conscience, direction, and what we feel is important- how we lead our lives.



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### Create a Personal Mission Statement

- List three or four things you would consider "first things" in your life.
- Consider any long-range goals you may have set.
- Think about the most important relationships in your life.
- Think about any contributions you'd like to make.
- Reaffirm feelings you want to have in your life – peace, confidence, happiness, contribution, and meaning.
- Think about how you might spend this week if you knew you had only six months to live (or six months left on your contract).

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### Design a Mission Statement

- Schedule a personal retreat to write your mission statement.
- Set a daily goal to visualize yourself living your mission statement.
- Review your mission statement each week before you begin to organize your schedule.
- Set long-term and "context" goals
  - Use a what, why, and how format to effectively capture these goals

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### Mission Statement

At the beginning each week, think about your personal integrity account. Jot down deposits and withdrawals as you interact with conscience. Are your activities and work commitments resulting in endpoints which demonstrate your passions?



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### Limit self-interruptions – know your time sinks

- Are you an e-mail "addict"?
- How much time do you spend organizing your work vs. looking for things?
- Does your calendar system support or confuse you?
- How do you signal "Do Not Disturb"?

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**Recapturing time: a practical approach to time management for physicians**

Ten common time wasters and potential solutions

Time waster	Proposed solution
Telephone calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check messages and return calls 1-2 times per day*</li> </ul>
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check no more than 3-4 times per day*</li> <li>• Disable auto-alert messages for mail arrivals</li> <li>• Develop a reliable and reproducible filing system for saved messages</li> <li>• Rapidly dispose of unwanted messages</li> <li>• Accurately identify and discard junk mail</li> </ul>
Physical interruptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close office door and respect as colleagues do the same</li> </ul>
Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle each piece of paper only once ( "When in doubt, throw it out" )</li> <li>• Develop reliable and reproducible filing system</li> <li>• Store publications as electronic PDF files</li> </ul>
Repetitive activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automate (e.g., develop patient education handouts)</li> <li>• Create "quick text" for frequently used phrases in email or in electronic medical records</li> <li>• Delegate tasks that can be done by others</li> </ul>

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**Recapturing time: a practical approach to time management for physicians**

Ten common time wasters and potential solutions

Time waster	Proposed solution
Disorganization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean and organize the desk and office</li> <li>• Organize paper, mail and electronic files for easier accessibility</li> </ul>
Procrastination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and address reasons for procrastination</li> <li>• Accomplish small increments of progress on a project</li> <li>• Do not allow perfectionism to get in the way of progress</li> </ul>
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrive on time (change the culture of lack of punctuality)</li> <li>• Bring alternative work if others are not punctual</li> </ul>
Waiting †	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform quick and easy small tasks (clinical or administrative paperwork works well)</li> </ul>
Commuting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy music, books on tape, quiet self-reflection, relax</li> <li>• Use audio continuing medical education, learn a foreign language</li> <li>• Read journal articles if using public transportation</li> </ul>

\* May not be suitable for specific physician job descriptions.  
 † Includes waiting for meetings, conferences, telephone hold, etc. This is an ideal time to complete less important responsibilities (quadrants III and IV).

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**Learn to say "no" graciously without guilt**

- Remember that all requests are not created equally
- Ask: Do I need to get involved here? Ask your mentor for guidance.
- Respond in a timely manner
  - Say what you can do
  - Say what you can't do
  - As appropriate, refer to other resources and/offer other alternatives
- Give yourself permission to say "no"
  - Saying "no" does not equal rejection of a person
- Affirm your dedication to your values, mission, goals, and objectives

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### Time Perspective

- Future-Oriented
- Present-Hedonistic
- Present-Fatalistic
- Past-Positive
- Past-Negative

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### Time Management

#### Personal Exercise: Four Quadrant Approach

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### Four Quadrant Approach

Time Management Prioritize – urgency and importance	
(File)	(Act on) high priority
DO IT LATER	DO IT NOW
(Bin it!) low priority	
DISCARD	PASS IT ON
<b>URGENCY</b>	

**IMPORTANCE**

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**Differentiating tasks by size and time to complete**

Size of task (est. time)	Description	Examples
Large (> 1h)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require maximal concentration and uninterrupted time</li> <li>Schedule task during most alert and productive time</li> </ul>	
Medium (30-60 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require concentration</li> <li>Ideally, should be alert and productive</li> </ul>	

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**Differentiating tasks by size and time to complete**

Size of task (est. time)	Description	Examples
Small (5-10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require minimal or brief concentration</li> <li>Schedule during less alert portions of the day or week</li> <li>Use as transition between large or medium-sized tasks (create a 'mental break')</li> </ul>	
Very small (< 5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require little concentration</li> <li>Useful as 'fill' time while waiting for meeting to begin or on hold on the telephone</li> </ul>	

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**Closing thoughts on what we learned:**

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Questions/Comments



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