

Time Management Techniques for the Busy Pharmacy Professional

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss the value of establishing “SMART” goals for pharmacy professionals.
2. Identify tools and techniques that will facilitate prioritization within the pharmacy.
3. Describe methods to appropriately delegate tasks to pharmacy team members that will promote improved time management.

As you all know, all of us have the same amount of time available to us – 24 hours a day. In fact, throughout history there has never been a period in which we have more (or less time). Thus time management is really about self-management, and how we can use the time available to us in the most effective way, with the goal to live a life of purpose and meaning.

Here are a number of strategies to use your time more effectively.

1. Assess your time

By keeping an objective track of your time you are collecting your own time management statistics. A time management inventory eliminates the "trial and error" approach to time management and gives you the time management facts on your own life.

<http://www.mytimemanagement.com/time-management-log.html>

2. Delegate

Do you have too much to do and not enough time? Could you delegate this job to others in the pharmacy at less of a cost to you? Delegation is about using your time more effectively for what is important to you.

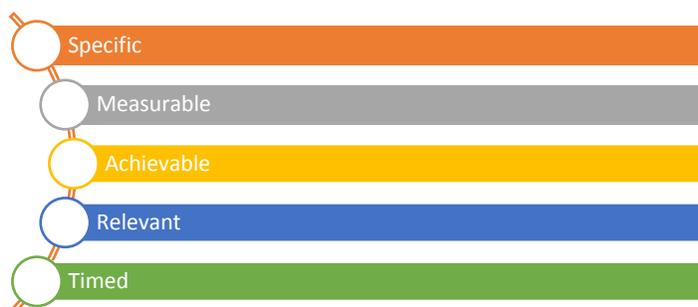
<http://www.mytimemanagement.com/delegation.html>

3. Know your goals

Goals give you direction and help you to prioritize what is important to you. Knowing your goals in life and then taking small focused steps to achieve them is a key ingredient of goal setting.

<http://www.mytimemanagement.com/goal-setting-course.html>

SMART Goals:



- **Specific:** Vague goals produce vague results. In order for you to achieve a goal, you must be very clear about what exactly you want.
- **Measurable:** All goals need some form of objective measuring system so that you can track your progress towards your goal.
- **Achievable:** A good goal is one that is challenging but realistic.
- **Relevant:** Before you set goals, define your values and your purpose to help you decide what goals you will choose.
- **Timed:** Set a deadline so your subconscious mind begins to work on that goal to bring you closer to achievement.

4. Do first things first

Time management statistics show that we can spend much of our day reacting to things and putting fires out constantly. To be proactive about your time management, put your priorities first and then do them first.

<http://www.mytimemanagement.com/time-management-matrix.html>

Urgent/Important Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Quadrant I Important and Urgent	Quadrant II Important, but Not Urgent
Not Important	Quadrant III Urgent, but Not Important	Quadrant IV Not Urgent and Not Important

Quadrant I – Important and Urgent. This quadrant include a crisis, pressing problems, deadline-driven projects, and meeting preparations. These should be completed today. If these are not done today, there will be serious repercussions.

Quadrant II – Important, but Not Urgent. (Preparations, Presentations, Planning, Relationship Building, True Recreation, Empowerment) – These should be done soon. It would be nice to do these today; but, they can be put off for a later time. If these are not completed, nothing significant will happen.

Quadrant III – Urgent, but Not Important. (Interruptions, some phone calls, some mail, some reports, some meetings, many proximate pressing matters, many popular activities) – There is not a set time frame. These are “nice to do” items. If these items are not done, nothing significant will happen.

Quadrant IV – Not Urgent and Not Important. (Trivia, busywork, junk mail, some phone calls, time thieves, “escape” activities) – These items are your time eaters.

Prioritization Tips: The 3 As

- **Address** the urgent – Take care of things with short-term consequences as soon as possible.
- **Accomplish** what you can early – Reports, registrations, requests that can be handled early should come next. Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.
- **Attach** deadlines to things you delay – When you have determined that something can definitely wait, don't just toss it aside until later. Establish a deadline for the task in your schedule, and make a note to remind you to begin working on it.

Prioritization Tips: The 4 Ds

- **Do** – Determine from your list the things you think are most important to accomplish, and are things you should do yourself.
- **Delegate** – Identify another individual who has the knowledge, skills and ability to do the task and delegate it to him or her
- **Delay** until another time – Consider when things are due, how long it will take to accomplish them, and what your current workload will allow.
- **Delete** – If you recognize that some goals are not achievable or realistic, or that they are just not important—eliminate them.

5. Plan your work

Plan your work and then work your plan. Time management statistics show that 15 minutes of planning saves an hour in execution and improves the quality of your work.

<http://www.mytimemanagement.com/to-do-list.html>

6. Stress management

A lack of time is one of the biggest causes of stress. Stress is not bad, but too much and for too long it can be damaging to your health and wellbeing.

Relaxation methods:

Each of the following stress management techniques has been shown to induce the relaxation response.

- Progressive muscle relaxation works on the idea that following the tensing of your muscles, each muscle group can be more deeply relaxed.
- Breathing is one of the easiest ways to get your stress under control. Deep diaphragmatic breathing (belly breathing) impedes the shallow breathing from the chest – which is often a symptom of stress.
- Mental imagery to either visualize a calm and soothing experience or the stress flowing out of your body.
- Meditation which provides a sense of control and purpose to our lives. Some different meditation techniques are provided on this stress management website
- Positive thinking which uses the power of your thoughts to change the way that you perceive a stressful event.

- Hypnosis which puts you into a state of relaxed and focused attention, in which your subconscious can be primed for suggestions of change. See how hypnosis can make a change in your life with these ideas and tips on self-hypnosis
<http://www.mytimemanagement.com/stress-relief.html>

Interesting Statistics:

Employees who exercised before work or during lunch breaks were better able to handle the day's demands. Their general attitude also improved.

- 72 per cent reported improvements in time management on exercise days.
- 79 per cent said mental and interpersonal performance was better.
- 74 per cent said they managed their workload better.
- 27 per cent were higher for concentration on work
- 41 per cent were higher for feeling motivated to work.

University of Bristol, Department of Exercise, Nutrition & Health Sciences, published in the International Journal of Workplace Health Management, 2008, Vol. 1, Issue 3

Three-quarters of surveyed employees saw an improvement in their time management when they exercised before work or at lunchtime.

Nielsen survey for University of Bristol, 2010

Researchers found productivity dropped as much as 40% when subjects tried to do two or more things at once. (University of Michigan)—Entrepreneur

One in eight telephone calls get repeated because something was forgotten—Shirley Fine Lee a.k.a. The Meeting Wizard

10-12 minutes invested in planning your day will save at least 2 hours of wasted time and effort throughout the day—Brian Tracy author of “Eat the Frog”

Employees do their hardest work between 9 AM and 12 PM. After that, productivity tends to drop—from BQuTMS (<http://blog.bqutms.com/15-surprising-stats-about-time-management/>)

A person who works with messy or cluttered desk spends, on average, 1 ½ hours per day looking for things or being distracted by things or approximately 7 ½ hours per week—Dr. Donald E Wetmore

20% of the average workday is spent on “crucial” and “important” things, while 80% of the average workday is spent on things that have “little value” or “no value” —Shirley Fine Lee a.k.a. The Meeting Wizard