

Time Management

<http://www.teal.org.uk/sv/timemgmt.htm>

Great **time management** is one of the most vital skills doctor can develop. A quote from Stephen Covey sums up how we can best use our time : "I am personally persuaded that the best thinking in the area of time management can be captured in a single phrase :

“Organize and execute around priorities.”

Time Management Grid

Urgency	
Importance	Quadrant 1 Urgent and Important "Firefighting"
	Quadrant 2 Important but Not Urgent "Quality Time"
	Quadrant 3 Urgent but Not Important "Distraction"
	Quadrant 4 Neither Urgent nor Important. "Time wasting"

TOOL 1 : The Time Management Grid.

This grid focuses on the two key dimensions of Time Management Grid : the urgency and importance of tasks clamouring for our attention. along the top is the urgency axis : The vertical axis is the importance axis. The top boxes contain more important activities, the bottom activities are less important. This gives us four quadrants :

~ **Quadrant 1** represents things which are both urgent and important. We've called this "firefighting". The activities need to be dealt with **immediately**, and they're **important**.

~ **Quadrant 2** represents things which are important, but not urgent. We've termed this one "Quality Time". Although the activities here are important, and contribute to achieving the goals and priorities - **they don't have to be done right now**. As a result, they can be scheduled in when you can give quality thought to them. A good example would be writing up patient notes, getting feedback from a senior member of staff, working on your portfolio or educational learning plan, revising for an exam, preparing for an work based assessment, family time and personal relaxation/recreation are also part of Quadrant 2.

~ **Quadrant 3** are **distractions**. They must be **dealt with right now**, but frankly, are not important. For example, when you answer an unwanted phone call, - you've had to interrupt whatever you were doing to answer it.

~ **Quadrant 4**, are **Time Wasting** things which are neither urgent nor important to your working day

Using the tool : **consciously strive to maximize Quadrant 2 time.** Allocate time in your diary to carry out these tasks when you are at your best. Doing so can reduce the amount of time taken up by fire fighting quadrant 1 activities, since many quadrant 1 activities could have been quadrant 2 if they had been done earlier. You can also seek to reduce time spent in Quadrant 3 by improving your systems and processes for dealing with distractions, and you can seek to eliminate as much as possible of quadrant 4 activities, by either not spending time on these things, or changing the nature of them to make them more productive. For example, driving can be quadrant 4 if the time is unproductive, but there are a number of ways of making this time more productive by learning new skills with a tape course, planning and so on. Or combine exercise with getting to and from work by cycling / walking or use public transport and use the time to, plan your day ahead or reflect on the past day

TOOL 2 : Goal Planning

Many people have a daily to-do list which they can prioritize and then work through. However, to focus your time on that which is truly important, ie in line with your goals, you will need to :

i. **Consciously become aware (and write down!) of what you are trying to achieve across the key roles and different parts of your life.** Some Doctors may feel strange to set goals for family life, but these goals may be more about finding quality time together than achieving specific objectives. However, if you only set goals for the parts of your life which are concerned with work, then these elements may squeeze out time for other parts of your life. ii.

Write down your goals in your Educational Learning Plan (consulting with your educational supervisor) using your curriculum to make plans for each work placement. This can inform your daily and weekly planning. Don't be over ambitious, since that can lead to feelings of frustration, but equally set at least one or two stretching challenges for some of the most important goals.

Tool 3 : Eight Tips for Great Time Management

- ~ Know what is important - write down the key goals you are working towards. (This can apply to all parts of your life.)**
- ~ Consciously plan your time (educational learning plans): per placement and weekly**
- ~ Choose how you communicate : phone, memo, meeting or e-mail with your Clinical and Educational Supervisor**
- ~ Write in your diary in pencil, then you won't feel bad about changing your plans. (ensure that the revised placement plans are approved by your Educational and Clinical Supervisor)**
- ~ Avoid being driven by your diary. Just because something has already been entered, doesn't mean that you can't do something else with the time.**
- ~ Know when you are at your best, and schedule quadrant 2 activity for that time.**
- ~ Make the most of 10 minutes - many tasks can be done in a "spare" 10 minutes, including taking a relaxation break.**
- ~ Periodically review your time effectiveness against the quadrant map, and against your goals.**

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	Urgency	
Importance	Quadrant 1 – URGENT & IMPORTANT Fire fighting	Quadrant 2 – IMPORTANT but not urgent – Quality time
	Quadrant 3 – Urgent but not important Distraction	Quadrant 4 – neither urgent not important - Time Wasting

