

10 Essential Time Saving Tips



for Engineers and Scientists

In a recent survey, scientists listed lack of time as one of their biggest pain points related to their work. Due to being highly motivated, engaged, and accomplished, engineers and scientists are more likely to seek and accept numerous challenges and invitations to undertake new projects and responsibilities. This can generate stress, anxiety and frustration, therefore being able to manage your time in the best possible way is imperative.

START STRENGTHENING THESE SKILLS TODAY WITH 10 HELPFUL TIPS FROM WILEY



RECOGNIZE HOW YOU SPEND YOUR TIME

Most technically trained individuals have never tracked how they use the hours in their week because their intent is to achieve the best technical result possible. Tracking the time spent on specific tasks every 30 minutes for 1 week will indicate where time is being spent productively and where it is being wasted.



STAY FOCUSED

Although attention must be given to multiple tasks, too many projects underway simultaneously increases stress levels. Try to maintain primary focus and concentration on one project to ensure completion in a suitable time frame.



PLAN YOUR DAY

Particular times during the day should be made available for email responses and social interactions so that they do not consume large parts of the day but are an active and important part of your schedule, providing a “refresh” from intense effort that requires high levels of concentration and extensive time.



DON'T PROCRASTINATE

Try to avoid procrastination as it inhibits progress and achievement. Step back from the task or problem to consider what part it plays in your overall goals and responsibilities. Placing the task in context can supply sufficient motivation to move forward.



DISCONNECT

Current technologies mean we're 'always connected', when we work like this we can be easily distracted to less important tasks, this can enhance stress and a feeling of frustration. Schedule in time when you disconnect yourself from these technologies to focus on key tasks and projects.



WHEN ARE YOU MOST PRODUCTIVE?

Evaluate your accomplishments during the week to identify the most productive time(s) in your day. Devote this time to more creative activities such as devising novel project directions or writing proposals, manuscripts, and reports.



MEETINGS OVERLOAD

High performers are always in demand at an extensive array of meetings, which takes time away from other activities and productivity. This can be a particular concern for younger group members/recent graduates who may be reluctant to say no to such requests. So, ask yourself, do you really need to be in that meeting? And if you do, ensure meetings have concrete outcomes and action points.



USE THE RIGHT PLANNING TOOL FOR YOU

A variety of planning tools are available, including to-do lists, calendars (hard copy or electronic), charts, and electronic planners. Select the best method for you by answering this simple question: Which of these will I actually use to make my life, and the lives of those around me, better?



PRIORITIZE TASKS

Determine whether tasks are urgent, not urgent, important, or not important. Give priority to the urgent and important activities.



MAKE PERSONAL TIME

Overemphasis on work-related tasks can impede both personal and professional growth and over time can raise stress levels and decrease efficiency as well as job satisfaction. Short breaks from difficult and extended tasks to talk with colleagues or friends, spend more time with family, exercise or simply relax has an extremely positive effect on both physical and mental health.

These tips are taken from the new book **Leadership by Engineers and Scientists: Professional Skills Needed to Succeed in a Changing World** by *Dennis W. Hess*