



**THE  
SUPERVISOR/HR  
NEWSLETTER**

**THE  
TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY  
SYSTEM**

HELPFUL RESOURCES FROM YOUR  
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**JUNE  
17**

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*Staying Balanced in a Changing World*

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# 3 Key Components of Effective Time Management

Effective time management is an absolute must in order to manage the typically busy lifestyle associated with living in the 21st century. A certain degree of time management skills is required to work through schedules that seem to pull us in multiple directions simultaneously. Below are 3 time management tips you can use immediately to take control of a busy schedule and increase your own productivity.

Effective time management is a necessity commonly needed by anybody expecting to successfully manage the typically busy lifestyles we live today. Coordinating business, social, and family activities can be a very stressful task. Without establishing some sort of time management system, you are inviting tension and chaos into your life.

Although lifestyles may vary, there is an overall need for just about everyone to develop some sort of time management skills. From the important matters concerning your business to managing a household, there will always be multiple tasks needing to be completed. This can only be done by you managing your time in an efficient manner, but where do you start?

Let's discuss 3 simple time management tips you can use to immediately take back control of your day while increasing your productivity.

## Task Listing

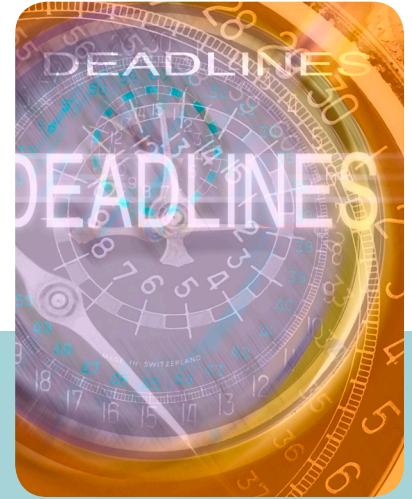
The first order of business for anyone juggling a hectic schedule is to first list the things you want to accomplish. Certain sizable tasks will require that you break them down into the steps that are involved and needed to actually complete the task itself.

When developing your 'to do' list, you will also be able to note the estimated amount of time you'll need to complete each task.

## Task Prioritization

Now review your list and begin to prioritize each task. Certain things may be more important or time sensitive than others; therefore, you will schedule for their completion first.

During this stage your focus is simply to 'rank' your list according to their respective priorities or associated deadlines.



## Task Scheduling

Here you want to 'arrange' for the actual completion of each task on your list by 'working' them into your schedule. Using their rank in priority and their estimated time of completion you can now put together a 'workable' plan for when each task will be done.

Be realistic here and don't try to over book yourself. It will only make you frustrated and discourage you when you can't complete all the tasks. It will also increase your haste which will invite error resulting in the inefficient use of your time.

With a little practice here you'll improve your time management skills helping you to more quickly and accurately develop, schedule and coordinate your activities.

Having in place a time management system such as the one we discussed above enables you to alleviate undue chaos while accomplishing more. Whether it's for personal reasons or your business, time needs to be properly allotted for each task to be successfully completed. By simply following the 3 time management tips we discussed here today you can enjoy a fuller and more productive life and all with less stress.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

1. Be proactive. Take responsibility for your life.
2. Begin with the end in mind. Define your mission and goals in life.
3. Put first things first. Prioritize, and do the most important things first.
4. Think win-win. Have an everyone-can-win attitude.
5. Seek first to understand, then to be understood. Listen to people sincerely.
6. Synergize: Work together to achieve more.
7. Sharpen the saw. Renew yourself regularly.

Of these seven habits, habits 1, 2, 3, and 7, or 57% of the seven, involve the better use of time. Enough of the argument? Take a time management course!

*Adapted from Covey, S. (2004). The 7 habits of highly effective people. New York: Free Press.*

# Ask Your EAP!

The following are answers to common questions supervisors have regarding employee issues and making EAP referrals. As always, if you have specific questions about referring an employee or managing a workgroup issue, feel free to make a confidential call to the EAP for a management consultation.

*Q. All employees trust our EAP, so if we have an incident at work, such as a sexual harassment complaint, isn't the EAP the best choice for doing the investigation so everyone knows it is fair?*

A. An employee assistance program would not be assigned responsibility for conducting an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint because this is a formal function and the legal obligation of management. The process itself is what defines its integrity, not the personality attributes of the investigator. Many steps and communication points are involved in such an investigation, and documentation is relied upon later to make administrative, legal, and disciplinary decisions. The perception of the EAP as a source of confidential, reliable, and safe help would be damaged if it were to play this role, and such activity would confuse employees, thereby reducing program utilization. An EAP has a specific purpose within an organization and a defined mission within its "EAP core technology," the principles that describe its functions. Playing an investigatory role is not compatible with this purpose, and loss of the EAP's perception as a safe and confidential resource would result.

*Q. I am a long-time friend with my employee who is a participant in the employee assistance program. Can I ask her to sign a release so the EAP can give me more information about the nature of her problems and how they are being treated?*

A. You can ask, but the EAP will recommend against it. Establishing a separate information flow to you creates a relationship that is fraught with risk and assorted problems. The EA professional will offer quality guidance on your role in managing performance so your employee has the best chance of returning to the level of performance you require. Your employee is free to share information, of course, but when supervisors try to manage performance and also process personal problems, employees typically diminish their involvement in treatment recommendations due to role conflict. Why? The employee perceives you as a trusted, safe, and understanding friend, and will relate to you on this basis rather than as the employer's representative, which is your job. Undermining this employer-employee dynamic removes a constructive force and sense of urgency that troubled employees rely upon to become motivated and stay focused on treatment.

*Q. Do some employees with depression still function satisfactorily at work, but if treated, could perform even better and more happily? I have employees who appear depressed, but I can't refer them to the EAP. Still, I bet they would benefit if they went.*

A. Many depressed employees can function at work adequately, but if treated would likely experience an uptick in their social and occupational functioning. Some employees may suspect they have untreated depression, and some may not identify it at all because they have slowly adapted to its symptoms over an extended period. A crisis may bring these individuals into contact with outpatient mental health services, where the diagnosis is first identified. Depressed employees may appear slow to respond, lacking in energy, or resist engaging with others. Suggest self-referral to the EAP for obvious symptoms only (e.g., "you look really tired"). Or if work tasks cannot be accomplished satisfactorily, consider a formal EAP referral. Be careful not to adapt to the personality of a depressed worker by labeling them as lazy, quiet, unassuming, or "eccentric." When this happens, others adapt, reduce confrontation, work around the employee, and allow the condition to linger, with unforeseeable consequences. **Copyright © DFA Publishing, LLC**

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