

EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

Participant's Workbook



EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

Developed for:



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by:

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EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

Preface:

Welcome to one in a series of individualized Optimist International Skills Development Modules. Our goal is to help you, our members, learn and apply practical skills to deal with the opportunities and issues in your life. This series of modules is not designed to deal with "theoretical" issues, but rather to provide a practical "hands on" approach.

Each of these modules is to be used, written in and applied. You can learn skills on your own, or join with others in a collaborative learning venture. Each module contains an instructor's guide in addition to a separate participant's guide which can be duplicated as often as necessary to supply the needs of your Club members.

Future modules will deal with individual as well as group-oriented skills, all of which are designed to help individual Optimists enhance their personal leadership ability in any chosen field of activity, i.e., employment, home, school, and volunteer activities. This is a significant development for our organization in its service to its own members, and we hope that participants will provide feedback about each module to the International Headquarters (c/o Leadership Development). In this way, we can maintain our focus on providing meaningful leadership training to Districts, Clubs and individuals throughout our Optimist organization.

We truly hope you enjoy the journey to self-improvement.

EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

An Individual Learning Guide

Dost thou love life?
Then do not squander time
For that's the stuff life is made of.
Author Unknown

Managing our Lives, Managing our Time.

Most of us live by the clock. When was the last time you told someone “I wish I had more time,” or “Sorry I don’t have time now,” or, “Let’s get together sometime.”

We live in a society consumed by a fascination with the clock. All of us feel a lack of this precious commodity called time. Expressions such as: “Time Wasters, the Time Crunch, Shop til you Drop, Turning it up a Notch, the One Minute Manager” all reflect the stepped up speed of our society.

In reality, each of us has exactly the same amount of time - 168 hours per week. Each day we receive in our personal bank 86,400 seconds. What we do with those precious seconds is up to us.

Do you find yourself desperately seeking more and more time? Are you a candidate for “Rushaholics Anonymous?” It may help you to know that preoccupation with time is not a modern problem. Long before we knew what a nanosecond was, Plautus (200 B.C.) was cursing the sundial:

The gods confound the man who first found out how to distinguish hours! Confound him, too, who in this place set up a sundial, to cut and hack my days so wretchedly into small portions.

Our society is fast paced. Twenty and 30 years ago we did have more leisure time. Society moved at a slower pace. The telephone was the only method of communicating with people at a distance. Today, we have the telephone, cellular telephones, voice mail, pagers, electronic mail, satellite and video communications. “I receive more than 600 email messages a week.” a computer office manager says, “It’s all I can manage just to answer my messages, let alone get any real work done.”

There are some who say that if we get rid of our clocks and timepieces, then our problems with time will fade. **Yet our problems with time go deeper than clocks.** As we grow older, time seems to pass more quickly. Just ask any parent whose children are grown how quickly the years seem to pass. Time speeds up as we grow old.

Our personalities make a difference too. Each one of us has a personal clock, a unique sense of personal time. Some of us are Type A driven personalities. Others are Type B, we're more laid back and relaxed. Each of us has different requirements for sleep and relaxation. Yet we all feel we don't have enough time.

Past present and future, time is the one commodity we can't get enough of, and money can't buy.



Now stop and ask yourself:

1. What do I really mean when I say "I don't have enough time!" _____

2. How does time move faster for you as you get older? _____

3. If you could improve your time management skills, what would you like to do differently?

Priorities

This module is about how to manage our time better. The first step is to realize that time is about our life - it's about our choices. Every day we're confronted with choices about our time:

Do I go to my daughter's softball game and cheer her on from the sidelines, or do I go to my office and work?

Do I take the next half hour and exercise at the gym, or do I go to McDonald's for a Big Mac?

Do I take a nap, or do I mow the lawn?

Each decision determines an irreversible choice. We cannot go back and recapture time that is lost.

Go to the library and you'll find a whole shelf of books devoted to time management. There are many books, yet they all say the same thing. There are two different approaches to time management. One approach is how to squeeze more activities out of the time available.

A second approach shows how to enjoy and savor the time you have in order to enjoy your life.

Whichever approach you choose, the steps described here are practical and time proven. They'll help you if you put them into action.

Your Time Log

The first step in understanding our priorities is to **fill out a personal time log**. Then we set our goals, prioritize our activities and act to overcome procrastination. Base your time log around the five basic life activities:

	Your Color
1. Work (or School)	_____
2. Sleep	_____
3. Family and Social Life	_____
4. Hobbies, Recreation, Interests	_____
5. Community, Religious or Charitable (Optimist) Work	_____

To fill up your time log, use the following sheet and start tomorrow (or even today). There's no reason to put it off. First, collect five different colored pencils or crayons. Each color will stand for one of the five different activities of your life.

If you use red for work activities, whenever you shade in an hour box with red, you'll know that's time you spent on work. Blue may stand for recreation. Whenever you color something blue, you'll know that time was spent playing golf or playing catch with the kids.

Put this time log and your colored pencils next to your bed, on your desk, wherever you will see it and work on it. At the end of each day fill in each box. Use the appropriately coded colored pencil. You can split up a box with several different colors, but don't get too concerned about dividing into five-minute increments. Fill out this chart for seven days.

The results of your time log may well astound you. The difference between how we think we spend our time and how we actually do it may be quite a revelation! **The purpose of the time log is to help us objectively look at the difference between what we say we spend our time on and what we actually do.**



Start filling out your Time Log. In one week, analyze your Time Log:

1. What surprises are there about how I actually spend my time? _____

2. What would I like to do differently? _____

My Time Log

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
7 a.m.							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12 noon							
1 p.m.							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12 mid.							
1 a.m.							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

- Color Key:**
- Work
 - Sleep
 - Family and Social Life
 - Personal hobbies, recreation and interests
 - Community, religious or charitable work



Set Goals and Priorities

The next step is to set goals and priorities for ourselves. Our long and short range goals tell us what we want to do with our lives. But we won't accomplish our goals if we don't work on them, and work takes time.

We all know people who seem to be charging off in all directions at one time. They constantly complain they don't have any time, they're out of time and they're too busy to do anything. They forget the fundamental paradox of time: No one has enough, yet everyone has all there is.

Goals motivate us to ACT. Not many of us spontaneously volunteer to write a five page report for a history class. However, a deadline creates motivation and incentive. The same is true for our lives. Goals help us to focus our lives toward a purpose.

We don't like to write goals because we're afraid of failing. We may find that our lives are driven not by real priorities but by a desire to stay busy and occupied.

Goals help us overcome the barriers to our personal and business productivity. Common barriers are: attempting to do too much, personal disorganization, inability to say "no," a lack of self-discipline, procrastination, leaving tasks unfinished and unnecessary socializing.

Successful people have a clear set of priorities and goals. They are able to say NO. In a word, they are able to *prioritize*.

Prioritization is the process of doing the IMPORTANT things FIRST. If we had all the time in the world, then we'd be able to do everything we wanted to do before we died, or left this job, or before our children grew up and left home.

A "To Do" list is the main tool to help you set goals and priorities. Use a pad of paper. Avoid small pieces of paper - they create clutter and get lost. Remember to:

- Write one item per line
- Put a date on the pad of paper
- Keep your list at the top of your desk or carry it with you throughout the day where you can see it.
- When you finish an item on your To Do list, cross it off - big bold strokes
- When you finish about half of the items on your To Do list, transfer your items to a new list.
- Make a new list for each day.

To compile your “Do Do” list write everything down first. Then prioritize your items according to their importance. Whether you use an “A, B, C” or “1, 2, 3” system, it doesn’t matter. They both mean the same thing:

- A = This item **must** be done today - it is very important.
- B = This item is necessary, but my future or the company’s future doesn’t depend upon doing it right away.
- C = I don’t really care if this thing gets done and nobody else cares either.

If you have a lot of items (30 or 40) on your “To Do” list, cluster items together. Letters and notes to into one category, phone calls into another, and so on. Make sure each item has a priority ranking.

The key word in this whole process is to *eliminate* the unnecessary things you don’t want to or don’t have time to do! Do the important things first. Non-important items are not important!



To consider your daily and long-term life goals, answer these questions:

1. Do you have the habit of making daily “To Do” lists? _____ YES _____ NO

If “NO” Why not? _____

If “YES” Do I prioritize my lists daily? _____

2. What barriers to setting goals and priorities do you struggle with? _____

3. If you didn’t have to worry about making a living, what would you most like to do for the rest of your life? _____

4. What would you like people to say about you at your funeral? _____

5. In light of your answers above, how will your time priorities change this next week? Next

Month? Year? _____

Your “To Do” list might look like this:

Sample “To Do” List

Number	Item - Work:	Priority
1	Read Mail	C
2	Prepare Personnel Report	B
3	Prepare for staff meeting, 10 a.m.	A
4	Fill out expense account	C
5	Return calls	B
6	Optimist Breakfast, 8 a.m.	A
7	Route Gerber report	C
	Item - Home:	
1	Clean gutters!!!	A
2	Get groceries	B
3	Karen’s practice game - 1 p.m.	A
4	Repair bathroom door	C
5	Replace car headlight	B
6	Plan party for Don & Nancy	C
7	Attend Optimist social	B

Take Action

Now that your priorities are set, the next step is simple. Do them. Do the most important things first. Work on tasks until they are done. And work with an understanding of your own sense of personality.

An important self-understanding is our own individual sense of time and energy.

It's easy to get things done and feel like we're being effective when we feel good. When things aren't going so well for us and we're discouraged or confused, then that's when we need the help of our "To Do" list and self-understanding about how we operate as individuals.



Ask yourself:

1. At what times of day do I feel most productive, full of energy, and creative? _____

2. At what times am I very mentally alert? _____

3. At what times do I start to get tired? When are certain tasks difficult to do? _____

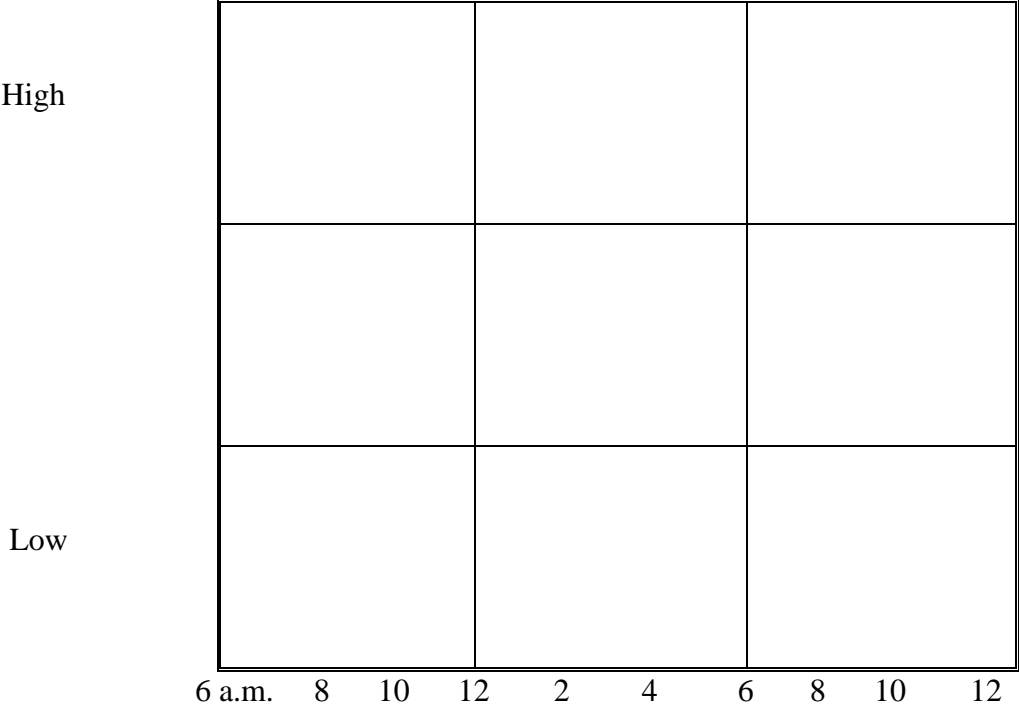
4. When do I feel burned out and tired? _____

5. When do I exercise, pursue my hobby, relax? _____

6. At what time do I want to go to sleep at night, and when do I actually go to bed? _____

My Productivity Level

Graph your productivity levels throughout the day. Draw a line showing how your energy levels go up and down throughout the day. Use more paper if needed.





Now answer these questions:

1. I rate myself as:

- I love the morning, I get up with lots of energy and I do my best work before noon but then I take a break in the afternoon.
- I love to work in the evenings. Mornings are tough for me - it's hard for me to get up and get going but I do my best work in the afternoon or evening.

2. If I have an important project to do, I always try to do it:

- First thing in the morning
- After lunch
- In the late afternoon
- In the evening
- In the very early morning hours

3. If I could set my own work day, I'd work from:

- 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- 2:00 - 7:00 p.m.
- 4:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- 6:00 - 11:00 p.m.
- 9:00 p.m. - 4:00 a.m.
- 11:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m.
- Other

Your answers help you understand your natural time rhythm. Peak productive times and rhythm is different for each of us.

Some of us are morning people - we are the most productive in the morning. If this is the case, then schedule your most important things in the morning hours. Others are owls - we love to get our work done late at night. If you're an owl, schedule your most important jobs and thinking activities in the evening.

Overcoming Procrastination

Once you understand yourself and your rhythm of working, the next step is to overcome procrastination. Despite our best intentions, we will sometimes fail to do what we know we should. Procrastination is self-defeating. The longer we put off doing something which we know we should do, the faster we begin the inevitable slide into hopelessness.

The nine phases of procrastination are:

Phase 1:	Thinking We Can Do It
Phase 2:	Anxiety
Phase 3:	Foreboding
Phase 4:	Guilt and Fear
Phase 5:	Frenetic Activity
Phase 6:	Uneasiness
Phase 7:	Secretiveness
Phase 8:	Superstition
Phase 9:	Hopelessness

At which stage are you with something you are putting off?

There are many helpful techniques in dealing with procrastination. The most important is to recognize *when* we are putting something off. Procrastination is born of fear and distaste. To overcome our fear and anxiety we need courage. Courage is the ability to take action even though we don't know how things will turn out.

There is no easy way to do an unpleasant task. The best choice is simply to begin. Once we get started on a task, however unpleasant, we find that a momentum will carry us along. Ignore your feelings of distaste and get started. The saying is true, "Yard by yard, life is hard; inch by inch, life's a cinch."



Now answer these questions about procrastination:

1. What are you putting off that needs to be done? _____

2. What are you going to do about it? _____

In Summary

There are no new secrets to time management, there are only proven techniques - techniques which will work for us if we will use them. Often we don't use them because we suffer from bad habits. The secret to overcoming a bad habit is to replace it with a good habit. Don't rely solely on willpower - none of us is quite that strong.

We can't control everything in our lives, but we can control our approach toward time. Not much of what you have read here is new, you've heard it before. What is new is TODAY. Today is a new day, with new challenges and opportunities. How will you put your time to use today?