

Spend 30 minutes once a week and 10 minutes each day reviewing and scheduling your most important tasks

Why do it?

You may know what's important for you to accomplish, but are you actually accomplishing it? [Research](#) suggests that planning — specifically committing to when you'll do something — can more than double your chances of reaching any goal. The simple planning process below, from



The 5 Choices: The Path to Extraordinary Productivity, protects your time from being gobbled up by everyday tasks that feel urgent — and enables you to focus on work that truly advances your goals.

How to do it:

1. Schedule 30- and 10-minute planning sessions for yourself.

Putting them in your calendar right now helps you commit to consistent planning. Choose times that best suit your work style. For example, you could schedule your 30-minute weekly session on Friday afternoon (some people like to end the week feeling prepared for the following week) or first thing Monday morning (some people think more clearly after time away from the office). Likewise, you could schedule your daily session at the end of each day or at the beginning of the next.

2. During your weekly planning session, list the three to five most important things you need to do in the coming week to be more effective.

Some tasks will be obvious, like a big project due Thursday. But others less so. Take your full 30 minutes to reflect on what truly matters — don't just react to urgent stuff on your to-do list. For example, you might determine that one of your most important tasks is improving your relationship with your manager. To develop your list, ask yourself:

- *What do I need to do to make progress on my top goals?*
- *What could I do to better set up my team and my manager for success?*
- *What personal activities should be on this list (e.g., exercise or time with family)?*

3. Determine how long each task will take and block out that time on your calendar in the coming week.

Important tasks need not take a lot of time (for example, maybe a short meeting with your boss will help you connect on a deeper level this week). But tasks that require deep thinking tend to take longer than expected, so be realistic in your estimates. Once you've scheduled your tasks, you can add other to-do list items to your calendar. But resist the urge to fill up every minute — you'll always need time for breaks and unexpected matters that come up.

4. During your daily planning session, review your progress and adjust your schedule as needed.

Even with thorough planning, workdays rarely go exactly as expected. This is a good time to hold yourself accountable. Spend your daily 10 minutes:

- Finding time in the days ahead to complete important tasks you haven't finished
- Checking in on your upcoming tasks: Are they still the essential things for you to work on? Have you scheduled enough time to make meaningful progress on them?
- Scheduling any other must-do tasks that have popped up

More on managing your time:

- [What to do if you're unsure of your top priorities](#)
- [How to set up a productive work system](#)
- [Protect your workflow from colleagues' interruptions](#)