



Time Management for Research Coordinators and Other Really Busy People

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Outline

- Broad concepts of time management
- Assess your own strategies to meet your goals
- Time and goals
- Helpful tips to make best use of your time
 - General tips
 - Specific tips: Meetings, controlling your environment
 - Deliverables: manuscripts, other products
- Dealing with procrastination
- Dealing with perfectionism

Question

What are your biggest hurdles and concerns with time management?

Broad Concepts of Time Management

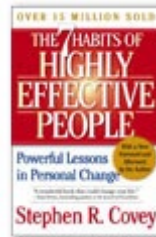
Time management is:

- All about meeting your short, medium, and long-term goals
- A behavioral issue- managing your behavior
- Not about increasing your work hours- rather making better use of your hours

Broad Concepts of Time Management

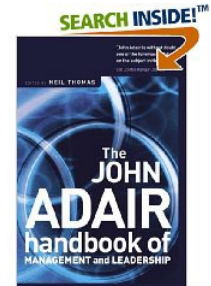
Covey: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

- Be productive
- Begin with the end in mind
- Put first things first
- Think win-win
- Seek first to understand; then to be understood
- Synergize
- Sharpen the Saw
- Schedule the important things



J Adair: 10 Principles of Management

- Develop a personal sense of time
- Identify long-term goals
- Make medium-term plans
- Plan the day
- Make best use of your best time
- Organize office work
- Manage meetings
- Delegate effectively
- Make use of your committed time
- Manage your health



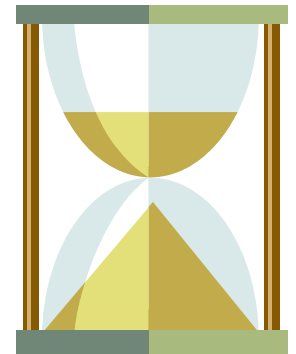
Themes

- Value your time (and others')
- Identify long-term goals
- Make medium-term plans
- Optimize your behavior with respect to time
- Take care of yourself



Value Your Time

- Time is your most precious natural resource
- Time is a renewable resource – you can start fresh everyday
- How do you spend your time?
 - - Do you know?
- How do you spend other peoples' time?
- How do you manage when you don't feel like it's your choice?



Assess how you spend your time

- Are you aware of how you spend your own time?
- Are you aware of how you use other people's time?
 - Tracking/logging
- Do you often feel you have not accomplished enough?
- Do you frequently miss deadlines?
- Do you give others work to do last-minute?
- Do your actions reflect your attitudes toward time?

Fill out a Time Diary

- Pick 2-3 days
- Best way to see how you spend time
- Tell the truth
- Mark how you spend your day in 15 min blocks

Name:	Date:					
	:00 to :10	:10 to :20	:20 to :30	:30 to :40	:40 to :50	:50 to :00
7.00am						
8.00am						
9.00am						
10.00am						
11.00am						
12 Noon						
1.00pm						
2.00pm						
3.00pm						
4.00pm						
5.00pm						

Screenshots [iPhone](#) [Apple Watch](#)



Time Management

- Is really Time Behavior Management
- Managing your attention to tasks
- Managing your priorities
- We all have the same day
 - 24 hours
 - 1440 minutes
- How do you CHOOSE to spend it?

Covey and Adair said it well...

- Begin with the end in mind
- Put first things first
- Identify the long-term goals
- Make medium-term goals

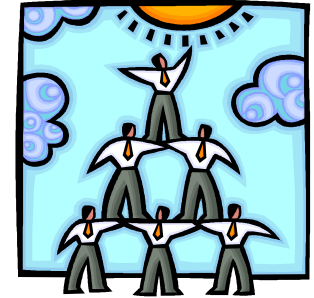
What are your priorities?

- What are your goals?
 - Today?
 - This week?
 - This month?
 - This year?
 - Over the next 5 years?
 - Before you die....



- Easier to reach goals when you know what they are....

Long-Range Goals



- This takes thinking time
- What is your purpose? What do you want out of your professional life? Out of your personal life?
- Who are your role models? Why?
- Write down your own goals
- Reflect on what you hope to accomplish in 5 years, 10 years, upon retirement
- Dream a ~~little~~-LOT!

Medium Range Goals

- Duration depends on you
 - 6 months, 1 year, 3 years
- Even more specific than long-term goals
- Specific deadlines
- Strategic steps in a focused direction
- Re-evaluate at each step
- Reward yourself



Weekly and Daily Goals

- Align your weekly and daily priorities with your medium and long range goals
- Must know your long range goals in order to do this effectively
- Can be challenging



Identify Your Priorities

Example



Long range goals

- Become a project manager

Medium range goals

- Complete SOCRA CCRP certification
- Get promoted to HSRCII

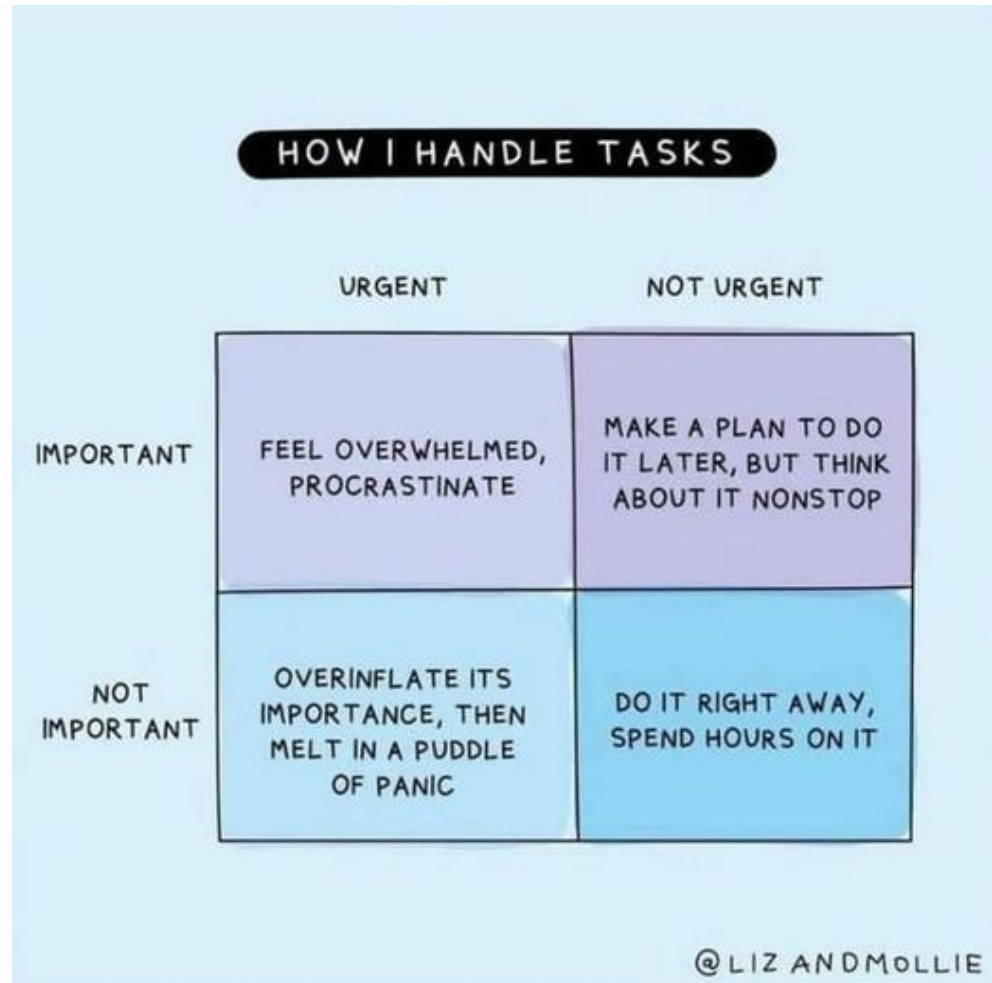
Weekly goals

- Complete weekly recruiting tasks
- Attend IRB workshop
- Meet with PI to clarify weekly tasks and priorities

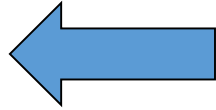
Daily goals

- Review current studies and assess progress
- Communicate with study PI

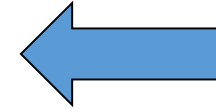
Time management matrix



Time Management Matrix



Urgent



Firefighting

Quality Time

Urgent

Not urgent

Important

Important

Distractions

Time wasters

Urgent

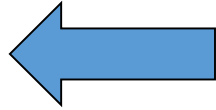
Not urgent

Not important

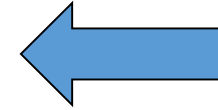
Not important

Important

Time Management Matrix **FILL IN**



Urgent



Firefighting

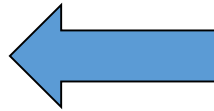
Quality Time

Important

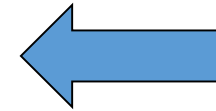
Distractions

Time wasters

Time Management Matrix



Urgent



Firefighting

Recruiting eligible patients
Grant deadlines
Crises (can be PI made...)

Quality Time

IRB protocols
Products with distant deadlines
Career: meetings, networking
New things: training, projects

Distractions

Some emails, calls
Many conversations
Some requests by others
Some of the daily office stuff

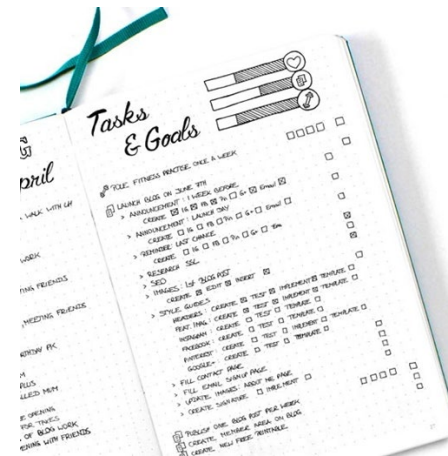
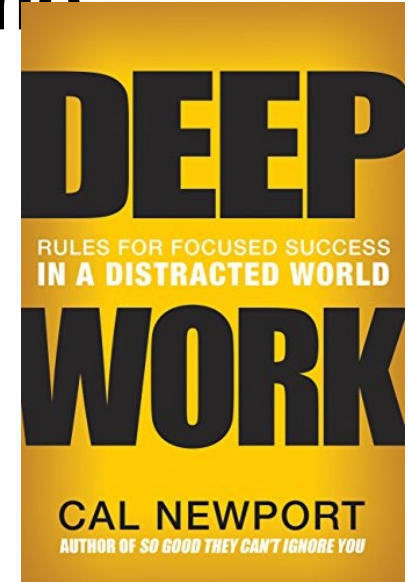
Time wasters

Some emails, meetings, calls
A lot of busy work, mail
Procrastination

Important

Tips to make best use of your time

- Try to maintain control over your agenda
- Optimize meetings
- Recycle and reuse
- Grabbing control of your work environment
 - Control paper flow and clutter
 - Filing
 - Email
- To-do lists
 - Apps
 - Outlook
 - Bullet journals
 - Post it notes



General Tips

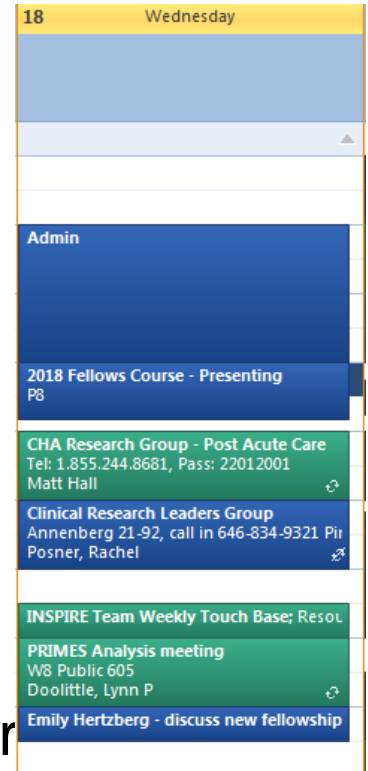
- Understand how you spend your time
 - Say no when appropriate (work with your PI)
- Plan ahead. Protect your time, don't waste it.
 - Set early deadlines to avoid last-minute crunches
 - Communicate with your PI about potential upcoming deadlines
- Be proactive with your best time
 - Use best cognitive time for the intellectually challenging tasks
 - Drafting manuscripts
 - Use your least best times for less important items
 - Data entry
- Complete tasks before moving on to another
- Get rid of things that don't serve you or your goals

General Tips

- Group similar tasks together
- Batch necessary but low personal priority items and put them into your “down time”
 - E.g., returning calls, opening mail, phoning in refills, dictations

Strategies for managing agenda

- Assess your calendar each week
- Determine what tasks need to be done
 - Project specific
 - Personal development
 - Tasks->subtasks
 - Rank urgency and importance
 - A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, Z1
- Finish urgent and important tasks
- If you can, block time for important and not urgent
 - Close the door
 - Turn off email notifications
 - Plan ahead for how you will use the time
 - Tell your supervisor



Maintain your Agenda

- Set daily goals
- Take 2 minutes to review your agenda at the beginning and end of each day
- Take 5 minutes on Friday and Monday to look over the week and month ahead
- If you have a blocked time one day, take 5 minutes the prior day to plan it out
 - A few minutes of planning makes a huge difference

Develop expertise at the hard things

What are the skills you need to get you where you want to go?

- Project management
- Presentations
- Writing
- Statistics, study design
- Understanding the IRB
- Powerpoint
- Excel

Optimize Meetings

- **General Tips**
 - There are different type of meeting. Know the mandate.
 - Each member plays a specific role. Know yours.
 - Prioritize your involvement
- **Tips to Optimize Meetings**
 - Clear mandate, goals, agenda
 - Clear roles for participants, with accountability
 - Starting and finishing on time
 - Clear leadership
 - Clear decision-making process
 - Atmosphere of respect
 - Effective communication
 - Accomplishment



Recycle and Reuse

“Don’t give the same speech once”

- Harvey Mackay

- Reuse talks, teams, products, parts of manuscripts, techniques



Grab control over your environment

- Control
 - Paper flow
 - Clutter
 - Filing
 - Email
 - Overall environment



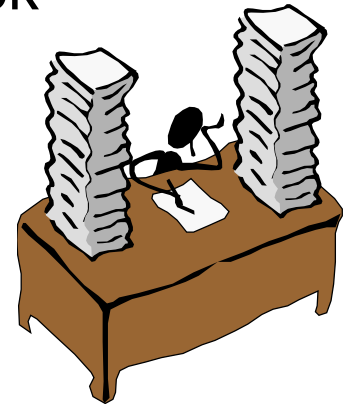
Control paper flow – The Four D's

- Do it: Perform the necessary items; then file, re-route, or discard
- Delay it: Further action needed but not now. Note in your agenda and file for easy retrieval
- Delegate it: Give immediately to someone else
- Dump it: Discard immediately



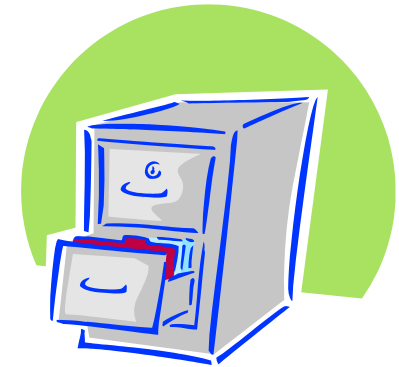
Control Clutter

- Keep a central agenda with all reminders, notes, etc. rather than bits of paper all over
- Separate your home and work agendas
- Spend a few minutes organizing
 - Clear your desk (at least a bit) each evening
 - Take 2 minutes each day to prioritize the next day
 - Take 5 minutes Fridays to plan for next week



Filing

- Have a system that works for you
 - Within project/sponsor constraints
- File for retrieval, not storage



Email overflow – The Four D's

- Do it! Perform the necessary items; then file, re-route, or discard
- Delay it! Further action needed but not now. Note in your agenda and file for easy retrieval
- Delegate it! (Forward button)
- Delete it! Discard immediately

- Email strategies:
 - Attempt inbox zero
 - Use folders to organize email
 - !Today
 - !Scheduled tasks
 - Subfolders
 - Filing folders
 - Archives
 - Automatically send certain emails to a folder



Optimize environment for efficiency

- Minimize distractions (headphones, music)
- Don't multi-task
- Optimize workspace (desk, etc.)
- Pay attention to habits (e.g., routines)
- Turn off email, phones, interruptions
- Others?

Beware of Becoming a “Happy Helper”

“Lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part.”

- Part of the job?
- People who can't say no
- Work on others' problems (priorities) rather than their own
- Interruptions rule their day
- Why???...a form of procrastination
- The subtle art of managing up

Procrastination



Do you Procrastinate? Are you Hiding Out?

Rita Emmett, *The Procrastinator's Handbook*

- Shuffle through some paperwork over and over again
- Play computer games, surf web at work
- Chatty phone calls, emails
- Let yourself be interrupted a lot
- Work without explicit goals
- Say yes when it should be no
- Do things that don't need to be done or could be done by someone else
- Prepare excessively
- Push yourself to work to the point of fatigue
- Try to do too much, complete very little
- Attend unnecessary meetings

Procrastination- Key learning points

- People tend to procrastinate over important things
- Fears are the basis of procrastination
 - Fear of mistakes, imperfection, failure, change
- Procrastination is a behavior, not a personality trait
- Behaviors can be changed

Conquering Procrastination

- Know your primary reasons for procrastination
- Protect your important times
- Break up jobs into smaller, manageable pieces
- Set realistic, time-limited goals for each piece
- Reward yourself for completing small & large goals
 - Small rewards for achieving small goals
 - Larger rewards for larger goals

Positive Procrastination

- It actually exists!
- Save some jobs that might not need doing
 - E.g., preliminary projects that are low priority
- Keep them organized, for easy retrieval and reactivation, as needed
- Good for non urgent, semi-important jobs-auto-expiration
- Caution: Don't overuse this method

Perfectionism



Are you a Perfectionist?

- Do you delay completing projects because you try to make them perfect?
- Do you fear taking responsibility for decisions because you're afraid of being blamed if something goes wrong?
- Do you demand perfection in your work?
- Do you expect to be above mistakes and criticism?

Perfectionism

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”

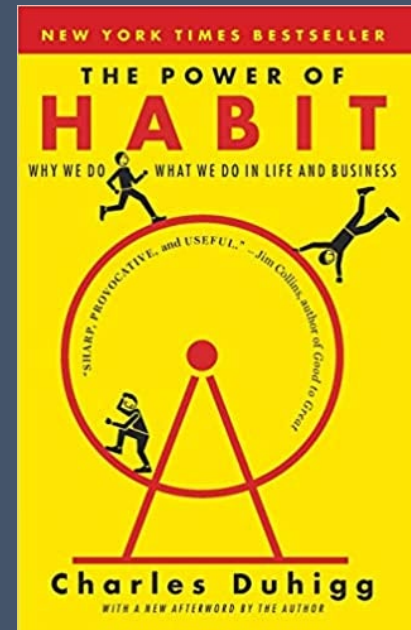
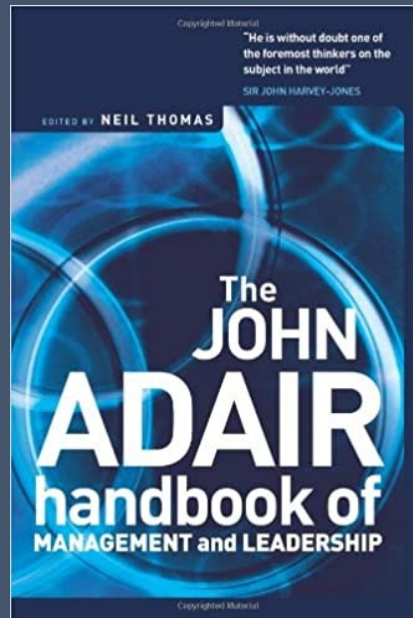
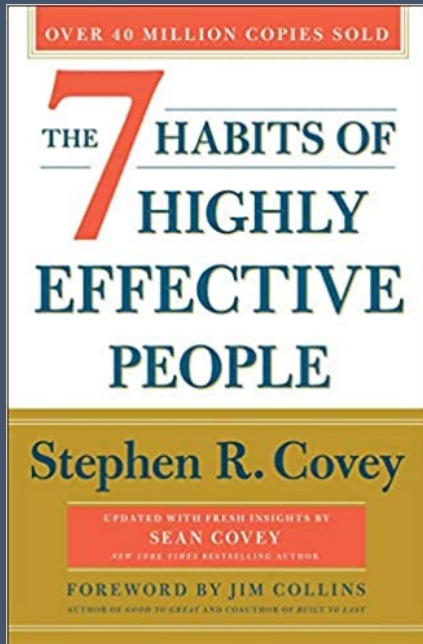
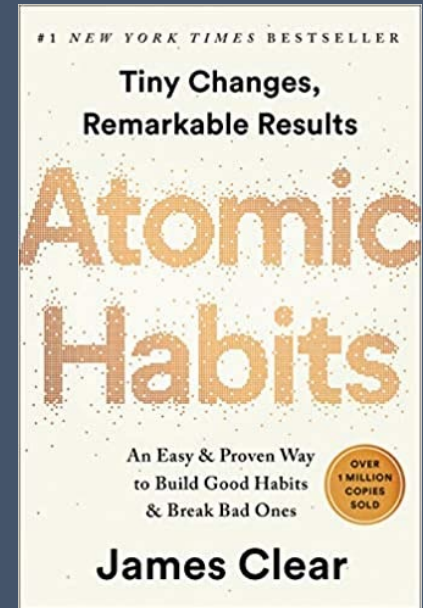
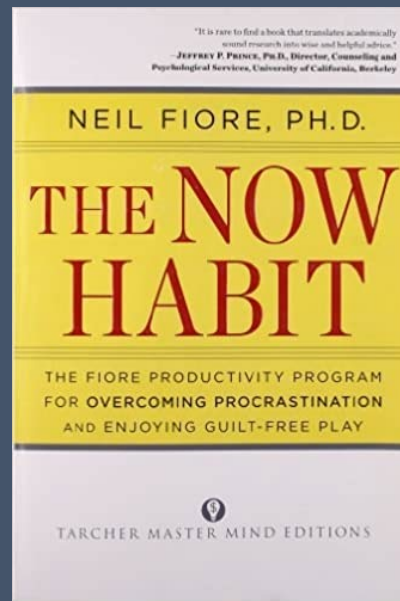
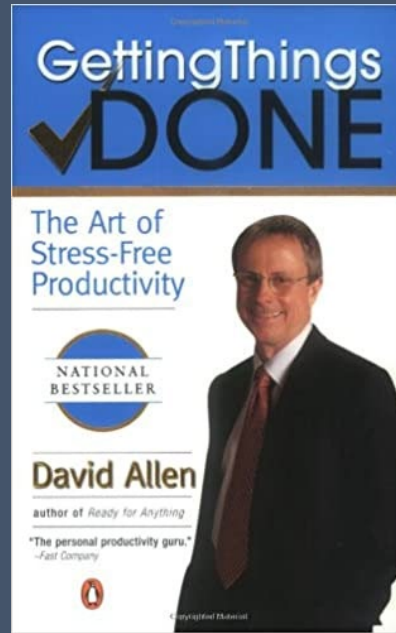
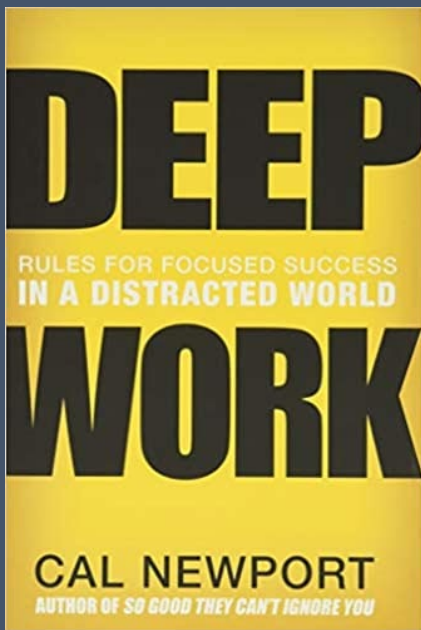
Chinese Proverb

“Protectionism is not a quest for the best. It is a pursuit of the worst in ourselves, the part that tells us that nothing we do will ever be good enough – that we should try again...”

Julia Cameron

Recognize Imperfections

- Perfectionism helped us get where we are
- But recognize when perfectionism is becoming self-defeating
- Fight ‘perfectionism paralysis’ at all stages
 - Early: Don’t aim for perfection.
 - Middle: Plan for mistakes.
 - Late: Learn to welcome input and critique.
Learn when to finish.



SUMMARY – Time Management

- Actively work on time management
- Start with goals and priorities
- Assess your own time management
 - Use the time-management matrix (urgent-important)
- Use tips to improve time management
 - General tips
 - Specific tips: meetings, your environment
- Avoid procrastination
- Conquer perfectionism
- Enjoy your work life

