



Supervisor NEWSLETTER

Employee Assistance Program
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5 Simple Ways to Free Up Time on Your Calendar

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You get to your daily finish line with your tongue hanging out. Then, you fall asleep before your head hits the pillow. You are exhausted and depleted, physically and emotionally.

Sound familiar? As you rewind everything you accomplished throughout the day, you realize you were busy but did not accomplish much. This story of work and exhaustion is familiar to millions of people in the workforce.

The likely reason is that we are not leveraging our peak performance hours for accomplishing more without feeling so depleted.

Leverage your peak performance hours

We have all heard of the high achievers who wake up at five in the morning and seem to get more done before the rest of the world has their first sip of coffee. That tactic might work for the early birds, but if you are a night owl who does not go to bed until three o'clock, waking up at five will not allow you to function during the day.

What we can learn from them is how they manage their time. It is not waking up before sunrise that makes people successful. Instead, it is what they focus on during their peak performance hours, the time of day when they are most focused and able to get into a state of flow. It is when, while getting things done, time melts

away as distractions become background noise.

Leveraging the timing of your flow state to align with the tasks that require considerable cognitive focus is pivotal. For example, if you are a morning person, consider which tasks require the most significant concentration and do them during those hours. Conversely, during those hours, do not schedule passive functions that do not require so much attention, such as responding to emails, Zoom meetings, or checking social media. Instead, save those tasks for the hours when you are more sluggish.

Utilize work sprints

Sitting for three hours and focusing on one task will quickly deplete your energy and make it difficult to concentrate on anything else for the rest of the day. Instead, consider working in sprints. The Pomodoro Technique, conceived by Francesco Cirillo, encourages you to work in 25-minute sprints. Then take a five-minute break, followed by another 25-minute sprint and a five-minute break. Do this cycle three to four times, and then take a longer break.

During your 25-minute focus time, shut off all distractions, such as notifications on your phone. Give yourself the gift of fully focusing on one task for a brief period. You will be amazed at how much you can accomplish if you couple the Pomodoro Technique with working during your peak cognitive hours.

Conduct a goal audit

Consider your goal and make a list of every committee, task force, working group, and special project to which you belong. Review how the commitments are directly related to your goal. Then, ask yourself why you are part of it. If you cannot come up with a good answer, consider shedding that responsibility.

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Recommend someone else

Shedding responsibilities might free up time on your calendar and can boost someone else's career. Consider recommending someone else to take your spot. Agree to train them so that they can quickly get up to speed.

Shut off all notifications

Do you really need to know when someone likes your social media post? Is it so urgent that it cannot wait? Instead of being notified every time someone engages with your social media, consider shutting off all notifications and just look at them when you choose to. By chunking your engagement on social media, especially if done during your more sluggish hours of the day, you will not eat into your peak cognitive hours.

We all have the same number of hours in a day. Leveraging your peak performance hours and shifting the time of day you handle specific tasks can make you more productive and efficient and still have energy at the end of the day.

References:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/optimizing-success/202209/5-simple-ways-free-time-your-calendar>