

PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

I. Self-Management

This eBook is designed to complement training on the topic of personal effectiveness offered by the European Administrative School (http://europa.eu/eusa/index_en.htm). It is also a self-paced learning tool that you can use at any time, independently of the training. It contains a number of models, explanations, media and exercises that will help you develop your personal effectiveness.

Before jumping right into the topic, we would like to emphasize that everyone may profit from developing their personal effectiveness skills, even those whose desks are impeccably tidy and whose files are neatly ordered. However effective these people may be, if they browse this document, they stand to discover ways to further increase their effectiveness.

Whether or not you are one of these people, we invite you to begin by examining your motivations. It is undoubtedly easier to undertake a change process when its goal has been identified clearly. Ask yourself **why you wish to become more effective**:

1. To have **more time for yourself**?
2. To **perform** better?
3. To have the time to work on **issues you find more interesting**?
4. To **reduce your stress level**?
5. With what **personal objective** in mind are you reading this eBook?

We are about to discover that there are many different paths to effectiveness...

While **efficacy** is “the ability of an entity (person, group or system) to achieve a given goal or objective (its own or those set for it)”, it is important to point out that another dimension should also be taken into account, that of **efficiency**.

If you are **efficacious**, you reach your goals (you do the right thing). If you are **efficient**, as you act, you expend no more effort than that required by the most economical path (you do things right). In short, **effectiveness** results when **efficacy** is complemented with the “energy saving” aspect of **efficiency** (doing the right thing right).

1.1 Know thyself

The first step towards developing your effectiveness is self-knowledge.

- Do you know what enhances or limits your ability to concentrate?
- What distracts you (whether external stimuli or your own thoughts or emotions)?

The point is to learn to self-manage.

- Are you more inclined to write in the morning? Devote your mornings to writing.
- Do you need order to begin working? Set the stage by tidying up your desktop.
- Are you effective under stress? Why not work under artificial stress? We'll discuss this later...

Analysing your particular way of working will help you identify those small changes that are easy to implement and that will produce tangible results immediately.



Exercise: Your feeling of personal effectiveness

Use this test to estimate your feeling of personal effectiveness

(http://www.brandeis.edu/roybal/docs/GSE_website_PDF.pdf) which is also known as selfefficacy (EN).

1.2 Organise yourself

Another key step towards effectiveness is **to correctly evaluate the time required** to complete a given task. We overestimate the time some tasks require. They take over our minds and yet only require a short amount of time to complete.

Conversely, activities such as filing, creative writing and communicating with others can often take longer than expected.

We therefore suggest that you make a realistic assessment of both the time you have before you and the time required by your tasks, obtain the right equipment, be familiar with the most useful software, and divide up your time by planning time slots.

1.3 Managing procrastination

Dealing with procrastination is one of the most effective ways to become better organised.



There is, of course, no miracle cure for this common phenomenon. It is however feasible to overcome it gradually by implementing these few simple strategies:

- **Know why and when you procrastinate**

It's helpful to identify the reasons why you don't tackle a given task.

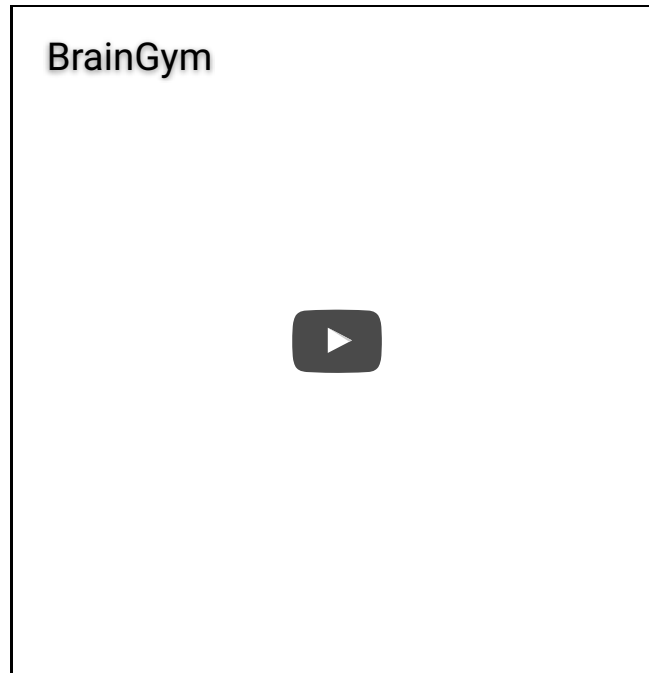
1. **Are you missing a key element?**
2. **Must you, before you begin, make a phone call to someone you are not fond of?**
3. **Is your objective unclear?**
4. **Does your goal seem too distant or even unattainable?**
5. **Are you concerned that you may not be competent enough to accomplish this task?**

There is an appropriate solution to each of these situations.

Note that when undertaken at the wrong time, some tasks take much longer than necessary. A speech that is difficult to write at two o'clock in the afternoon may literally flow at eight in the morning. There is no point in persevering if you are not in the proper mental state.

So know yourself, identify your strengths, weaknesses and signs of fatigue, and know when it is imperative to take a break.

La Brain-Warm-up (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VL4an7UC3wA>) (EN) is a simple exercise routine that will allow you to quickly return to optimal concentration levels.



- **Eat the elephant bit by bit**

Research has shown that the hardest part is to get started. It may be worthwhile to carefully set the stage for working: gather together the documents and telephone numbers you need; find and reserve a place where you know you will not be disturbed. In short, prepare for your work effort just like a climber prepares his ascension: with care. Then, move step by step. Don't forget to comfort yourself, for example, with a coffee, a piece of chocolate, a walk around the neighbourhood, a lunch, a phone call to a friend or some music that makes you feel happy.

- **Recognize your internal distractions**

Observe yourself in your everyday life. What are you busy thinking about? Do you tend to look at your mailbox too often? Do you spend too much time daydreaming? The inability to focus is a widespread problem in our society. Fortunately, your ability to focus responds well to training, much like muscles respond to exercise. Meditation is a very effective tool for developing the ability to concentrate.



Exercise: Mindfulness meditation

Here is an exercise

Mindfulness Meditation Instruction



- **Create rituals**

Rituals are those activities we do not procrastinate around because they are an integral part of our lives. They have become habits. Have you noticed that, before brushing your teeth in the morning, you don't question for hours whether or not you're going to do it?



You can ritualise some activities in order to integrate them as habits. On Friday at two, I tidy my desk, every morning I set aside 45 minutes for reading difficult cases, Monday morning is reserved for planning the week, I always take notes in the same notebook, and my task list is always to the right of my keyboard. Ritualising prevents your brain getting bogged down in useless internal negotiations.

- **Produce artificial stress**

Perhaps your procrastination is related to the lack of a sense of urgency. Nobody is pressuring you to write that note or report, but you know that somebody will require it sooner or later. Artificial stress might just be the solution in this situation.

The idea is to create a deadline, a due date, or time limit that makes you compete against the clock. It's almost fun to set constraints up so that, for example, you have 45 minutes and not a minute more to do what you have to do. Just start your countdown timer and notice how, with the right energy, you are able to blast right through many nagging tasks.

It may well be that one hour is enough to write 1000 words, ten minutes are enough to schedule your week, and you can mind-map a project in twenty minutes and make a phone call in eight.

• **Sooner or later, you gotta do what you gotta do...**

In the end comes THAT moment when, whether hounded by social pressure, fear of reprisals, desire to perform, sense of duty, responsibility, or necessity, or simply because you cannot do otherwise: you just do the thing you have been putting off.



Links to my work?

Set an alarm to ring in 20 minutes and file your latest files as fast as you can. Are you satisfied with the work you accomplished in that short time? Adjust the duration based on your evaluation of this exercise and repeat it next week, same day, same time.

I.4 Concentration

Many related factors contribute, or not, to making you feel more or less effective.



Many people are concerned by their ability to concentrate. Modern technology seems to push us to pay superficial attention to ever more things, so that concentrating fully on way fewer things may require a rehabilitation of sorts. Like a muscle, your ability to concentrate can be strengthened through training, and, like a muscle, you must use it or lose it:

6 BOOSTERS TO BE MORE

1. **Natural light**: The light spectrum helps you to stay awake.
2. **Water**: Dehydration interferes with memory. Drink a lot when you work.
3. **Air**: Negative ions present in the air affect your serotonin (the “pleasure hormone”) levels. They also facilitate mental tasks that require quick thinking and calculation. They are most abundant at higher altitudes and in pure, fresh air. Try to air yourself out, and to keep your workspace at a temperature between 18 and 20°C.
4. **Calm and silence**: Find a quiet spot or use earplugs. Sit with your back straight and neck properly aligned.
5. **Prepare for work**: Tidy up your desk, close the door, gather everything you need for work at the outset (documents, notes, water, markers, paper, calculator, green tee, alarm, dark chocolate, etc.).
6. **Stimulate your five senses**. For example: Touch: rub the surface of your chin, the region between your chin and lower lip (“mustache zone”), and the back of your ears to stimulate attention; Smell: lavender reduces stress and increases concentration; Taste: chew mint leaves; Hear: listen to music and to the environment.



Exercise: Improve your concentration

Use the above list of suggestions to improve your concentration to choose the three suggestions that suit you best. How could you turn them into rituals?

Start with **just one habit**. Once you have completely integrated it into your routine, you may then add another. Do not add another if the first habit still requires some effort.

You must **prioritize** the habits you want to integrate. Here's how:

- Review the **the habits** you have in mind. Give each a rating from 1 to 10 representing your motivation to start.
- Now think of your **needs** and once again rate each proposed habit from 1 to 10: 10 means this habit addresses your most urgent needs and is most likely to help you progress.
- Add up the two numbers. Keep the 2 habits that scored highest and pick the one that inspires you the most. Start with that one.

1.5 Emotional intelligence and effectiveness



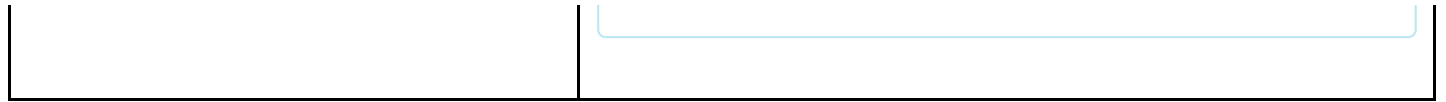
According to Bar-On, emotional intelligence and cognitive intelligence contribute equally to the overall intelligence of a person. Their degree can therefore indicate that person's potential to achieve success in life.

Reuven Bar-On is the founding director of the Institute of Applied Intelligence in Denmark and consultant to many organisations in Israel. He developed one of the first measures of **emotional intelligence** (see the relevant chapter in the [ebook on Oral Communication \(http://www.aim-associes.com/eusa/ebook/oral-en/book.html#chapter06\)](http://www.aim-associes.com/eusa/ebook/oral-en/book.html#chapter06)) using the term “emotional quotient” (EQ). His model revolves around a process that includes:



Emotional Intelligence	Effectiveness
<div data-bbox="98 1850 635 1966" style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; padding: 5px;">Self-regard</div> <div data-bbox="98 2011 635 2067" style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; height: 25px;"></div>	<div data-bbox="673 1850 1493 2011" style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; padding: 5px;">Ability to look inward and accurately perceive, understand and accept ourselves</div> <div data-bbox="673 2022 1493 2067" style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; height: 20px;"></div>

Reality testing	Ability to objectively validate our feelings and thinking with external reality
Emotional self-awareness	Ability to be aware of, identify and understand our emotions
Self-expression, assertiveness	Ability to effectively and constructively express our feelings and ourselves in general
Empathy	Ability to be aware of and understand how others feel
Interpersonal relationship	Ability to establish and maintain mutually satisfying relationships and relate well with others
Independence	Ability to be self-reliant and free of emotional dependency on others
Impulse control and stress tolerance	Ability to effectively and constructively manage and control emotions
Flexibility	Ability to adapt and adjust our feelings, thinking and behaviour to new situations and conditions
Problem-solving	Ability to effectively solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature
Social responsibility	Ability to identify with social groups, among friends, at work and in the community, and to cooperate with others in a constructive and contributing manner



Bar-On describes emotional intelligence as a **set of attitudes**, abilities and skills used to cope with life effectively. The adjective “emotional” is used in opposition to “cognitive” to qualify intelligence..

According to Bar-On, emotional intelligence **develops over time**, and may be increased through training and therapy. Bar-On hypothesizes that people who have an above average EQ generally perform better when coping with environmental demands and pressures. He adds that deficiency in emotional intelligence can prevent success and indicate the existence of psychological problems. For example, according to him, problems adjusting to the environment are particularly prevalent among people who score low on the subscales of reality testing, problem-solving, stress tolerance and impulse control.



Exercise: Personal list

Arrange the elements of the model outlined above into a personal list that reflects your abilities and predispositions. How could you improve on those elements that are lower down in your list? Be specific: what concrete action can you take within the next 7 days?



Links to my work?

- Do you have a highly-organised colleague? Describe this person, analyse the nature of their system of organisation.
- Are you equally satisfied with the way your private life and your professional life are organised?
- Have you participated in a organisational structure change in the last few years? What have you learnt about yourself and what was difficult for you? What has dramatically changed in your organisation over the past three years?

1.6 Manage your energy



- **Schedule a rendezvous with yourself**

This may seem obvious, but setting aside moments in your schedule for yourself to take care of yourself is a great way to work on personal effectiveness.

You might devote the time to massages, reading, films and documentaries, and developing your social life, or you might take care of yourself by doing NOTHING.

Doing nothing (in small doses) allows you to:

- develop your creativity
- reconnect with your desires
- recentre yourself
- want to connect with others

- **Keep your diet balanced**

Food is the vital and necessary fuel that your body and head require. Besides providing sensuous pleasure, fresh, local, seasonal products contain an energetic potential: the nutrients of some build cell walls, those of others feed your muscle tissue or maintain your brain.



Behaviours such as eating too much, too fast, too sweet, too salty, or too fat, or getting by on a stress-coffee-tobacco-alcohol diet both have the effect of reducing your vitality.

Allergic reactions or intolerances to certain foods (gluten, lactose) might be behind a lack of energy. Do not hesitate to consult a specialist to investigate this possibility.



Exercise: A journal of what you eat

Why not keep a journal of what you eat (<http://www.wsj.com/articles/new-reasons-why-you-should-keep-a-food-journal-1463419285>) (EN) and make a daily evaluation of the link between your diet and how energetic you feel?

• **Get enough sleep**

Click on the blue boxes.

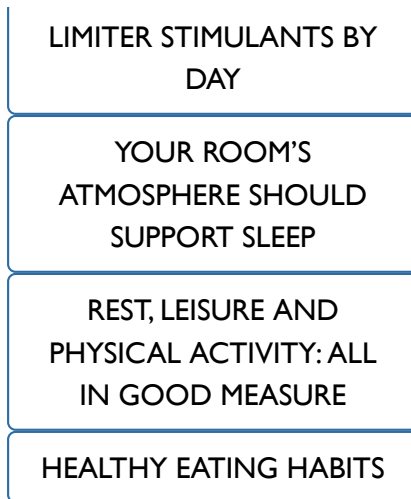
KEEP REGULAR SLEEP
HOURS

GET REGULAR EXPOSURE
TO LIGHT

AVOID USING DRUGS
AND ALCOHOL TO PUT
YOURSELF TO SLEEP

DO NOT STAY IN BED

DON'T LOOK AT THE
TIME AT NIGHT



Exercise: Questionnaires about your sleep

These 3 questionnaires about your sleep will allow you to evaluate its quality:

- how well do you sleep? (<https://www.worldsleepsurvey.com>)(EN);
- evaluate your PSQI (http://uacc.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/psqi_sleep_questionnaire_1_pg.pdf) (EN);
- agenda du sommeil (<http://sommeilvdk.cluster020.hosting.ovh.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Agenda-du-sommeil.pdf>) (FR).

- **Be physically active**

How to boost your vitality and mental performance through sport:



- **Sport boosts your energy**

When you exercise you burn calories, yet your energy level increases, and toxins are eliminated. What counts when practising a sport is not skill or performance. What matters is to **go about it in a way that eliminates tension** and negative energy.

Sport heals the mind and, if you practise it properly, after your session you will end up with a refreshed and available cognitive system, a calm and positive state of mind, and a relatively high level of confidence.

- **Sport boosts mental functioning**

Effective physical effort requires a precise and intelligent coordination of one's movements, management of one's breathing, concentration on specific parts of the body, and the mental strength to maintain effort. Doing intense sport requires **intense brain activity**. All this helps to develop your cognitive abilities. For example, sport has been shown to substantially improve memorisation.

Sport also allows you to exercise different states of mind such as perseverance. If you stick to practicing several times a week at fixed times, regardless of conditions, it will significantly develop your willpower. After a workout, your mind will seem restored, ideas will flow to you much more easily, you will think better, and reflect better.

- **Sport facilitates social contact**

It is extremely stimulating to practise sports with other people.

Of course you still have to choose with whom you practice. Choose your gym, your club, and your sporting partners with the same care you would apply to building your network of contacts.

Socialising “well” is good for mental health and emotional intelligence. Socialising **develops brain connections**; it develops your amygdala. The amygdala is involved in the recognition and evaluation of the emotional dimension of sensory stimuli. It is your amygdala that allows you relate successfully when in the company of others.



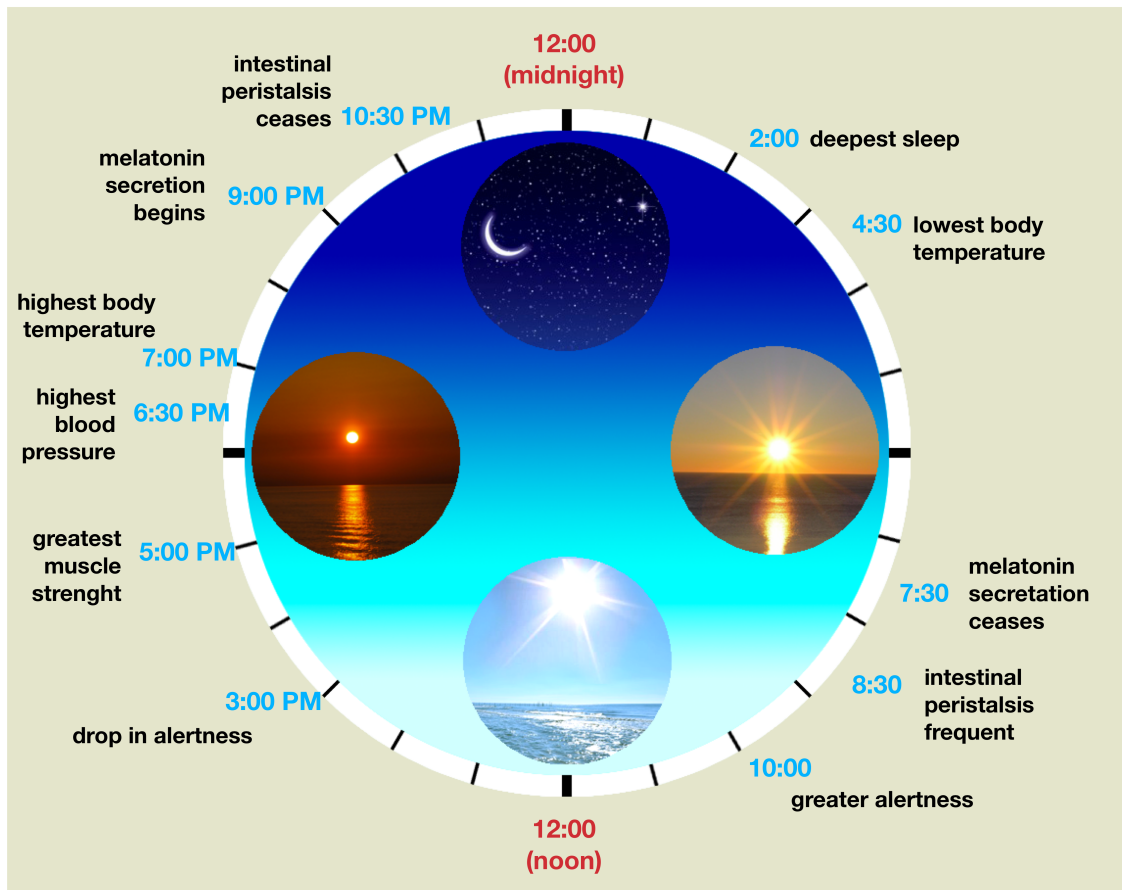
Exercise: 45' walk

Treat yourself to 45 minutes of brisk walking in the park nearest to your office. Notice if this has a positive influence on your efficiency.

- **Be aware of your circadian rhythm**

A circadian rhythm is a biological rhythm that repeats approximately every 24 hours. This sleepwake rhythm is the one that most influences our day-to-day lives.

Try to identify, over a week or two, those times of day when you feel the most productive, as well as the periods when you succumb to fatigue.



Links to my work?

To assist you in better identifying these periods, here are a few rules of thumb. On average, the human body:

- is at its peak efficiency four hours after waking
- experiences three productivity peaks in the daytime
- expends most of its energy on digestion one hour after a meal
- generates sleep cycles every 2 hours (most likely when you feel like yawning)

Once you've clearly identified your body's periods of high and low efficiency, all you need to do is to distribute your day's activities optimally based on your biological rhythm.

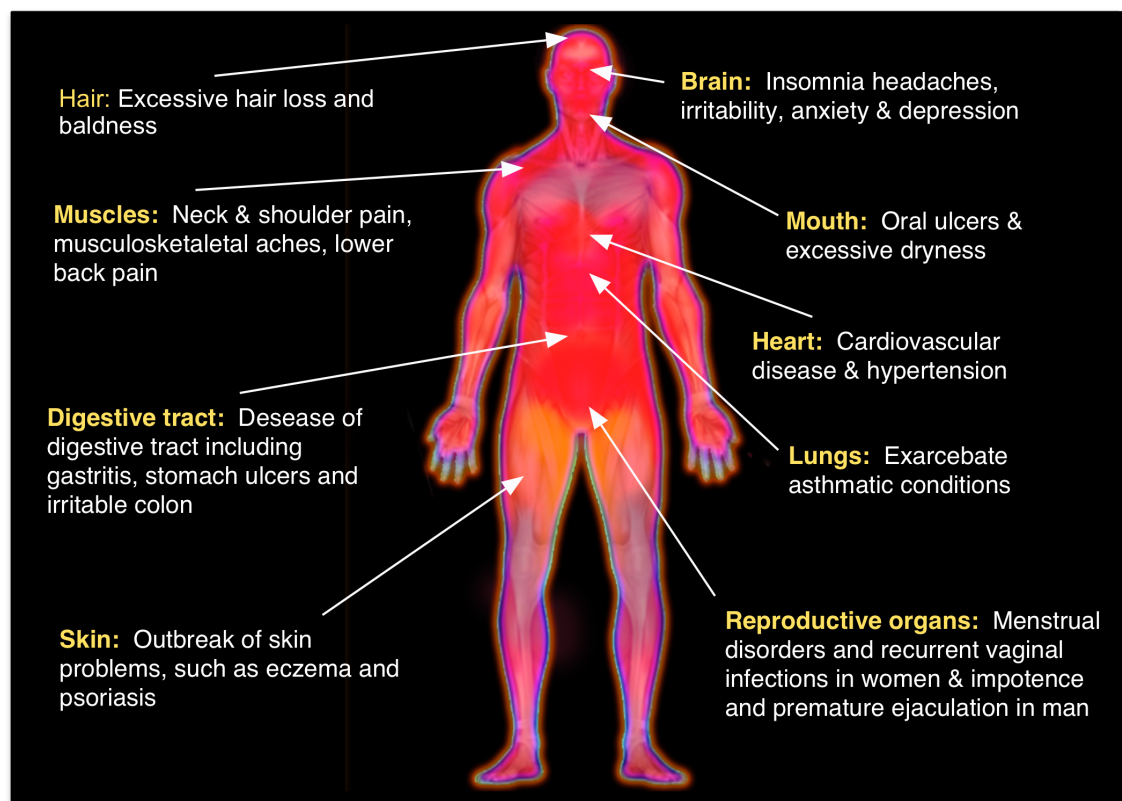
Your circadian rhythm can be disrupted by:

- a timezone change that forces your organism to re-synchronize (jetlag)
- nocturnal exposure to artificial light (most notably in the case of working at night, but also when using smartphones or tablets in bed), or intense "light

pollution”

- a diet rich in fat, alcohol or caffeine, which disrupts sleep

- **Regulate your stress level** (Resilience: chapitre 5.1) (<http://www.aim-associes.com/eusa/ebook/resi-en/book.html#chapter05>)



Each stressful situation is unique. You probably agree that it may not be appropriate to snap into the lotus position in the middle of a team meeting. Here are some simple, easy to apply tricks to quickly reduce your stress levels.

The primary purpose of your body's stress response is to mobilize your energy for a possible fight or flight. Obviously you are not going to wrestle your boss or turn your back and run for your life! Yes, your body prepares you for these options. You just have to outsmart it. Take a few minutes to use up your accumulated energy. You don't have to run a marathon; simply walking up a flight of stairs may do the job. Alternatively, you could walk at a brisk pace to a restaurant a few blocks away instead of going down the hall to the cafeteria.

When triggered, the trick is to prevent your brain from believing that the situation is threatening. Orient your thoughts to something positive, pleasant and soothing (an image, an event, a special moment) so as to reduce your body's stress response.



[Links to my work?](#)

This Forbes article offers 12 Ways To Eliminate Stress At Work

(<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jennagoudreau/2013/03/20/12-ways-to-eliminate-stress-at-work/#2176c0cb7ff7>) (EN).

Know how to identify stress warning signals:	
troubled vision	troubled sleep
dizziness	sexual difficulties
difficulty swallowing	high glucose levels
neck and back pain	eruptions
indigestion/ulcers	excessive perspiration
hyperventilation	

It's also useful to adopt a long-term approach to stress management. Strategies that have been shown to lead to effective stress regulation include maintaining a healthy lifestyle and developing one's ability to manage emotions and communicate calmly.



Exercise: Stuck in traffic

The next time you're late for an important appointment and stuck in traffic, try this: Breathe deeply several times. Or, tense up and then release your stomach several times or simply bend your arms and legs. Your brain expects you to spend this stress-generated energy in fight or flight. You can choose to use it to relax.



Going deeper...

- A test ([Analysing and Solving Problems - Chapter 6](http://www.aim-associes.com/eusa/ebook/prob-en/book.html#chapter06)) (<http://www.aim-associes.com/eusa/ebook/prob-en/book.html#chapter06>) which allows you to determine whether you are more inclined to 'Action, Method, Relating or Innovation..
- Here is a flowchart (<https://www.parcelhero.com/blog/marketplace/what-kind-of-procrastinator-are-you>) (EN) to help you identify the type of procrastinator you are
- Yves Morveux's TED TALK on another way of dealing with complexity (https://www.ted.com/talks/yves_morieux_as_work_gets_more_complex_6_rules_to_simplify?language=en) in organisations (EN)
- Here is a test to help you identify the type of procrastinator you are (<http://www.bringyourchallenges.com/procrastinator>) (EN)
- Tim Urban's humorous TED TALK on his insights into procrastination (https://www.ted.com/talks/tim_urban_inside_the_mind_of_a_master_procrastinator) (EN)
- This article by James Clear discusses the science behind the answer (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-clear/forming-newhabits_b_5104807.html) (EN) to the question: How long does it take to establish a new habit?
- How to be more effective (<http://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/5-incredibly-effective-ways-to-work-smarter-not-harder.html>) (EN)
- In this talk, Paolo Cardini questions the effectiveness of multitasking (https://www.ted.com/talks/paolo_cardini_forget_multitasking_try_monotasking?language=en) (EN)





PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

2. Managing interruptions

This chapter is devoted to external interruptions, as internal interruptions were discussed in Chapter One.

2.1 External interruptions



- **Inform your colleagues**

To avoid the unpleasant experience of having to interrupt a person who is confiding in you in mid-sentence, we recommend that you inform the people around you of what you will be doing the day before. At the latest upon arriving at your office, inform your colleagues of your unavailabilities due to your scheduled tasks. Those receiving advance notice are likely to react more appropriately to your unavailability.

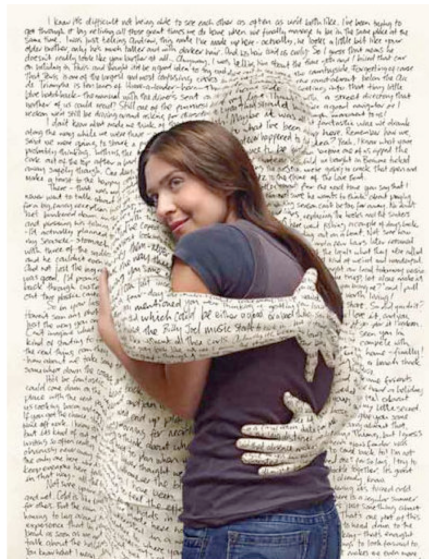


[Links to my work?](#)

Anticipate interruptions

This morning you have a lot to do and so have begun to dread the various individuals around you who have gotten used to interrupting you on a regular basis. The proactive solution is to preempt the problem by going to see them to tell them that today you won't be available, and ask them how you might be of help to them in the coming days.

- **Interrupt... with a smile**



It isn't always possible to anticipate your unavailability. An emergency hits your desk at the same time as three colleagues are giving you a hard time. The trick once again is to express your unavailability while offering availability later: "Right now, I have an emergency, Gisele expects my email by 14:00, but would you be available for Thursday lunch?"

- **Don't (always) answer the phone**

It's ok not to answer all calls, and in certain circumstances it's preferable to postpone the moment at which you respond to a request. Know how to gauge and defend your priorities at any given moment.

- **Shorten meetings**

Many people complain about the time consumed in meetings. A good meeting is a guided meeting. It includes a previously shared agenda, a person taking notes, and the meeting should end with the list of action items. During the meeting, the chair must be able to interrupt those who are off topic or speaking too long. You may not be chairing the meeting but you can certainly contribute to making it more effective ([Working in Teams - Chapter 7](http://www.aim-associates.com/eusa/ebook/wit-en/book.html#chapter07) (<http://www.aim-associates.com/eusa/ebook/wit-en/book.html#chapter07>)).

- **React to new priorities**

What do you do when you've been working for weeks on a dossier and suddenly, out of the blue, your Unit Head announces that from now on you're going to be working on a new priority. Here are three tips to better manage this potentially frustrating situation:

1. **Negotiate time:** What is the deadline for delivering on this new priority?
2. **Negotiate resources:** What resources are available (colleagues?) to help you on this new dossier or on the one you were working on until now?
3. **Negotiate quality:** when asked to start up a new project with a tight deadline - and to do it now - it might be wise to inform your hierarchy that you will not be able to produce work of equal quality as that which you would have produced had you been given sufficient time.

- **Clarify objectives... reformulate!**



Communicating becomes more perilous when you are under stress. To avoid misunderstandings, try to restate your understanding of what you are asked to do in your own words. You might also email your summary of the task you are taking on. Doing this might reassure your colleague or supervisor, preventing regular surprise visits designed to check that everything is under control...



[links to my work?](#)

Interruptions versus effectiveness

We suggest that you look at the relationship between those work periods vulnerable to interruptions and your periods of peak effectiveness. If you notice that your periods of effectiveness coincide with periods where you are most frequently interrupted, you could rethink the way you organise your days.

2.2 Say No

See the chapter in the ebook on [Oral Communication \(http://www.aim-associes.com/eusa/ebook/oral-en/book.html#chapter03\)](http://www.aim-associes.com/eusa/ebook/oral-en/book.html#chapter03).



2.3 Coordinate the work effort

Your individual effectiveness is sometimes constrained by collective ineffectiveness. It is paramount that each team member's roles and priorities be clarified with the goal of reaching a common perspective on objectives. Knowledge of what each of your colleagues is doing and what their priorities are is useful when managing unwanted interruptions. It could also help to establish rules governing communication, shared working methods, to know where the skills are, and to develop team spirit.



Exercise

This exercise is an extract from “Les leviers de l’efficacité collective” (*La boîte à outils de la gestion du temps* de Pascale Belorgey, Editions Dunod, 2014).

Even if you aren't the department or unit head, you can still suggest ways to improve collective efficiency

Answering the questions raised below should lead to your better managing - and ultimately curtailing - external interruptions.



Steps

- The headings below are elements of organisation that impact collective effectiveness. For each one, check if your workplace presents any of the symptoms, and if so, develop a customised action plan.

Roles and priorities

- There are conflicts linked to conflicting priorities; tasks are duplicated or on the contrary not taken up; tasks seem superfluous.
- Clarify your team's common goal, each member's brief, set criteria for establishing priorities.

Work methods

- Output sometimes requires rework or harmonisation; lack of traceability makes absences problematic; collective work feels chaotic; processes aren't fluid; deadlines are missed; frequent lastminute rushes or down time.
- Use participatory methods to facilitate a group meeting where common methods will be agreed.

Information flow

- Lengthy emails are sent out indiscriminately; information is poorly structured or outdated; time is lost in sorting, and in searching for vital information, conversely, some essential data are not transmitted.
- Establish rules for sending mails: choice of recipients, limitations on those in copy, subjects explicit, texts concise and to the point.
- Organise shared information on a server accessible to all.

Skills and versatility

- Time is lost due to a lack of skills; there is disparity in workloads, and difficulty in coping with peaks in activity and unforeseen absences.
- Identify the skills whose development must be prioritised in order to save time, form pairs to facilitate the skill transfer and ensure backup in case of absence.

Solidarity

- Little sense of team identity and spirit; unwillingness to lend a hand; scapegoating and rumors. Introduce rules to protect individual concentration. Regularly work together to solve individual team members' problems: "One member's problem is everybody's problem."

- See the chapter 5 in the ebook Working in Teams (<http://www.aim-associes.com/eusa/ebook/wit-en/book.html#chapter05>)

2.4 Adapting to open offices

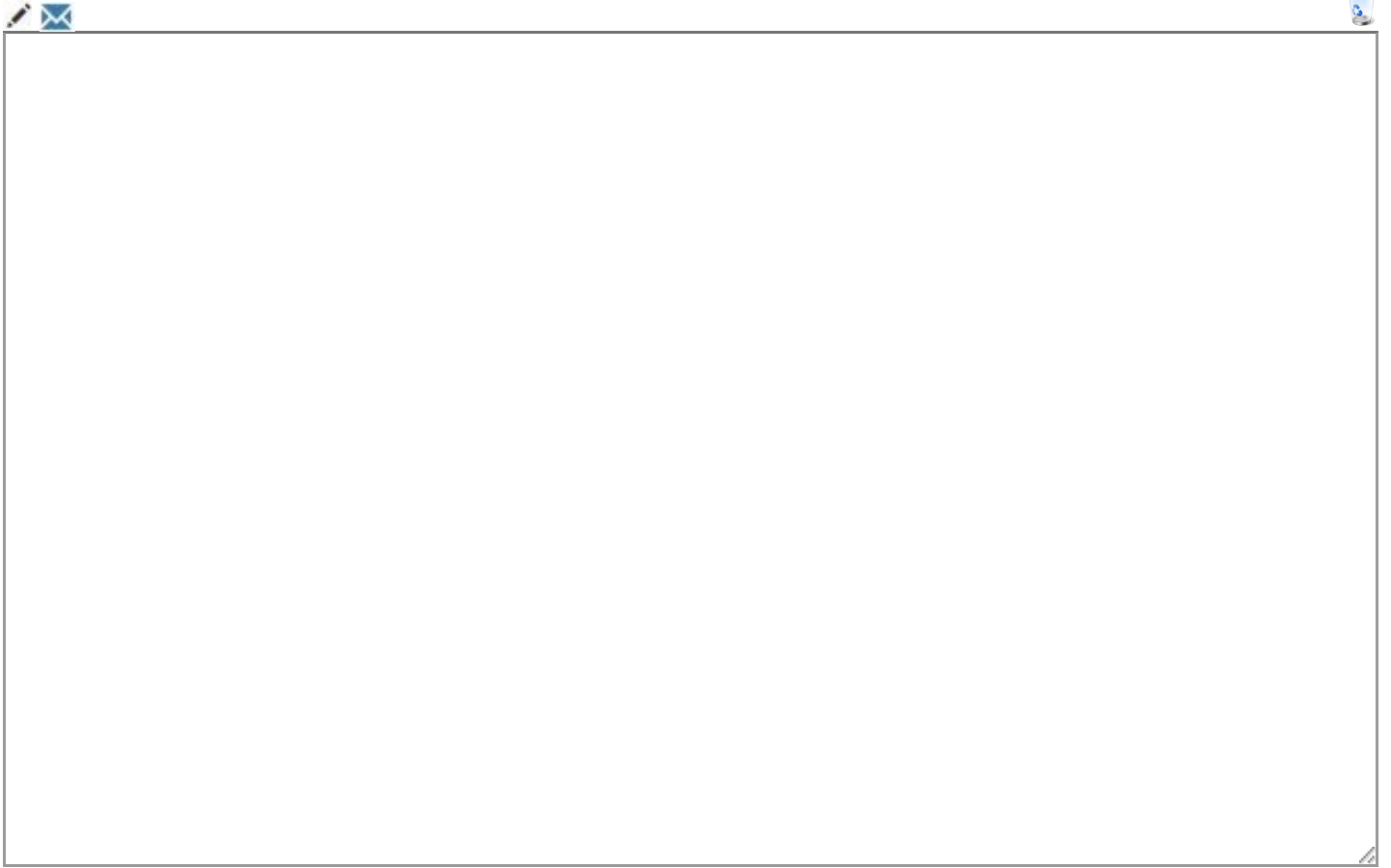
In an office set up as *an open space*, it is potentially more difficult to manage interruptions.

Here are some tips to help you cope better with this layout:

- **Speak in a hushed voice**
Ask your neighbours to help you find the right level.
- **Manage the noise** generated by your visitors
Reserve the meeting room as needed.
- **Reduce ambient disturbances**
Vibrations, flashing lights, alerts and ringing noises.
- **Be discrete**
Do not intervene in other's conversations.
- **Use written signs and messages**
Establish the rules of your common culture.
- **Deal with staggered arrival times**
Manage arrival greetings so as not to not be constantly interrupted.
- **Occupy your space wisely**
Depending on your duties, you might speak more or less on the phone, or need more or less calm, take this into consideration!
- **Get involved in enforcement**
Participate in efforts to ensure calm if one of your colleagues needs it.
- **Cultivate solidarity**
Decide group rules together ...

Going Deeper...

- An article on the scourge of interruptions (<http://lifestylers.fr/merci-de-ne-pas-minterrompre/>) (FR) in professional settings
- Some cool tools for dealing with interruptions (https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_94.htm) (EN)



PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

3. Priorities and organisation

3.1 Manage your email

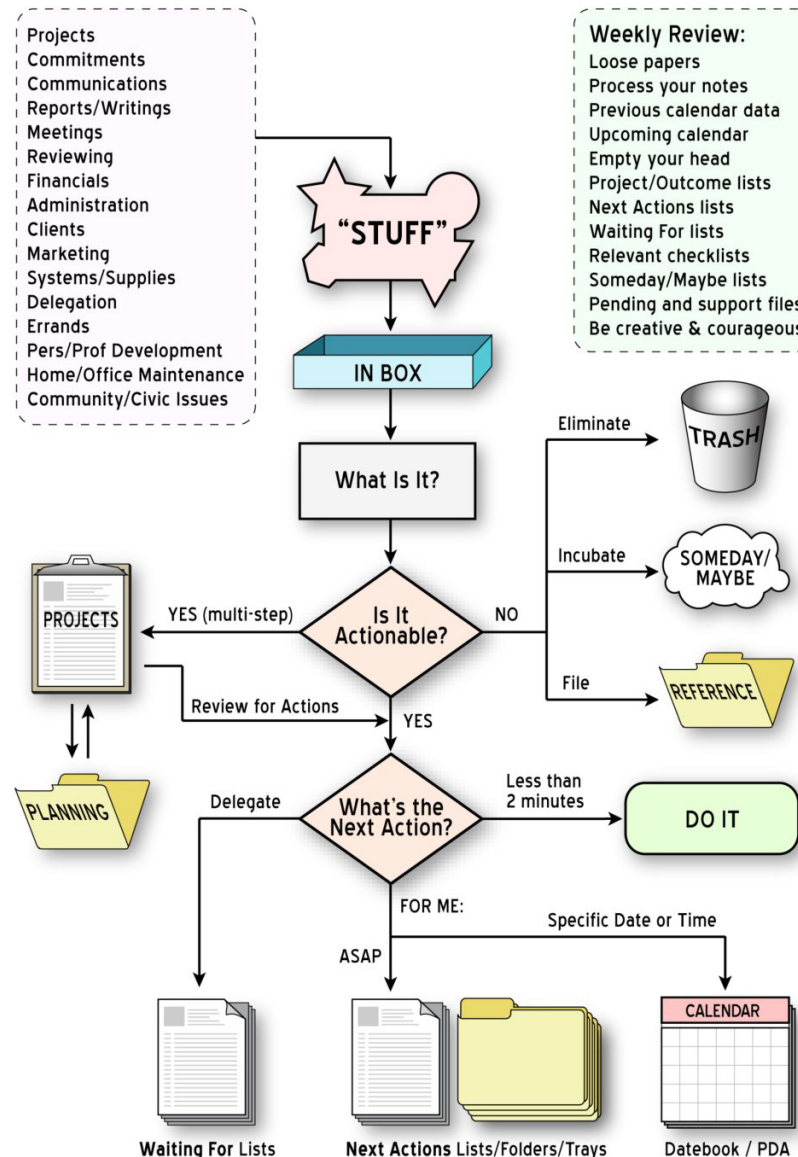


8 THINGS TO START DOING:

- **Skim through your emails** and apply the “Getting Things Done” method: Classify / Delete / Act based on the nature of each email. We suggest you work on at least 100 emails, and only on those that must be “processed”. When filing, create folders to allow you to find the information easily in case of need.

Getting Things Done

Quick Reference Card



Based upon the book *Getting Things Done* by David Allen, © David Allen
 This design by Douglas Johnston for the D*I*Y Planner (www.DIYPlanner.com)

- **Set up rules for filing** certain emails automatically. For example, send all your newsletters automatically to a particular directory for viewing when you have free time.
- **Archive** your messages automatically for easy retrieval, especially if your inbox deletes emails older than 6 months.
- **Associate colors** to emergencies, or apply the “unread” flag to know to return to important messages.
- Define one or more **signatures**, to automate your most common closings.
- Plan **autoreplies** based on certain contents, senders... as required, for example to communicate your absence.
- Pick up the phone or **go meet the sender** when messages are unclear.
- Set yourself a regular **reminder** in your electronic agenda to review your inbox and empty it.

8 THINGS TO STOP DOING

- Cancel **automatic notifications** so as to avoid being disturbed by incoming messages. Interruptions hinder your productivity.
- **Don't check your inbox too often.** Try looking at it only every one or two hours.
- If necessary, **synchronize**, your Outlook and your smartphone to maintain access to your emails, diaries, etc.
- **Don't read your emails directly** upon arriving at the office in the morning, if your responsibilities allow this. Assign higher priority to processing them.
- **Don't maintain different directory trees.** Copy the structure of your "Outlook" message tree onto the hard disk of your PC to simplify searches.
- **Don't subscribe to too many unnecessary newsletters** so as to keep only essential information in your email folders.
- Stop making spelling mistakes and typos. **Set up automatic spell checking.**
- **Don't react too quickly.** Take the time to think (overnight?) when you get emotionally triggered by an email.



Links to my work?

Take the time to count how many emails you send per day. This will give you a rough estimate of your productivity.

3.2 Organise your workspace

Eliminate unnecessary things

If you have a particularly cluttered workspace, start by assessing the value of each object:

- Do I really use that document archiving box?
- Do I really need this document close at

Clean

Spend a few minutes every evening to keep your surroundings pleasant. Clean your displays and keyboards.

Organise your things efficiently

- Set up convenient storage spaces that fit your way of working.
- Organise your drawers and their contents by importance.
- Keep essential supplies close at hand.
- Use easily recognizable colorcoded folders.

hand?

Sort everything and discard the superfluous.

- Store your media alphabetically, using self-adhesive letters to create labels.



Exercise: your workspace

Take a picture of your workspace to get some perspective on it, and answer these questions about what do you notice? Answer YES or NO:

	YES	NO
Do I really need that document close at hand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do I really use that document archiving box?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do I sort everything and discard what isn't needed once a month?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have I cleaned my keyboard in the last 6 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have I cleaned my display in the last 6 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does my filing system fit my way of working?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are my drawers organised by the importance of their contents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do I keep my essential supplies close at hand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are my folders colour-coded or otherwise easily recognizable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On my bookshelves, is my media filed alphabetically, and identified with self adhesive labels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



3.3 Speed reading

Your job may require that you to read a lot. Whether or not this is the case, reading lots will allow you to become a veritable expert.



The ability to read quickly is a competency that can be developed. There are methods and classes to help you improve in this area.



Exercise: speed reading

The Tim Ferriss method allows you to double your reading speed in 10 minutes:

- For 2 minutes, **train yourself to read** by following along each line with your finger or with a pen. The “visual guide” thus created will prevent your eye from backtracking or jumping around the page.
- For 3 minutes, **read each line by beginning with the third word** from the beginning and ending with the third word from the end of the line. As you get better at this, gradually try to focus your gaze directly on the middle of the line.
- For 2 minutes, from the beginning and ending with the third word from the end of the line. As you

get better at this, gradually try to focus your gaze directly on the middle of the line, **two “anchors” per line** at most.

- During the last 3 minutes of your express workout, read a few pages at random and **force yourself to apply these techniques**, even if you do not understand everything yet. This will accustom your eyes and your brain to a new pace of reading, which you will quickly learn to master thereafter.

3.4 Get things done before breakfast

In her book entitled “*What successful people do before breakfast*” (<http://lauravanderkam.com/books/successful-people-do/>) (EN), Laura Vanderkam shares her observations of exactly that. Here are her five tips:



1. **Get up early**

Of the group of 20 people interviewed by Vanderkam, 90% said they got up before 6 am during the week. As time is a very valuable commodity, and once they go to the office, theirs is easily consumed by phone calls, meetings and sudden crises, this habit gives them precious morning hours under their control.

2. **Exercise or meditate**

The added value of a very early start seems to be the possibility of time for meditative or physical activity, such as lifting weights at home, jogging or going to the gym. Vanderkam states that besides the fact that exercising early avoids their skipping it due to running out of time later in the day, physical activity before breakfast reduces stress, prevents the effects of a diet rich in fat and improves sleep.

3. **Work on a top priority project**

The quiet hours in the morning may be the best time to focus on important work without being interrupted. Also, spending time on it early in the day allows your project to benefit from your attention before other concerns eat into your time (children, employees, employers).

4. **Work on a personal project**

It is easy to give up writing a novel and / or artistic creation when you've been in meetings all day, are tired and hungry, and need to think about what to make for supper. That is why many successful people spend about an hour

on their personal projects before officially starting their day.

5. **Make plans and develop strategies while “fresh”**

Having a plan for your day, your week or your month is an invaluable resource for staying on track in the heat of the action. Ideally, use the morning to get an overview of your situation and to set the course of your day.

3.5 Use every bit of time

We tend to underestimate how much we can accomplish in an hour. Between appointments, just before leaving the office or upon arriving early in the morning when all is quiet, you may:

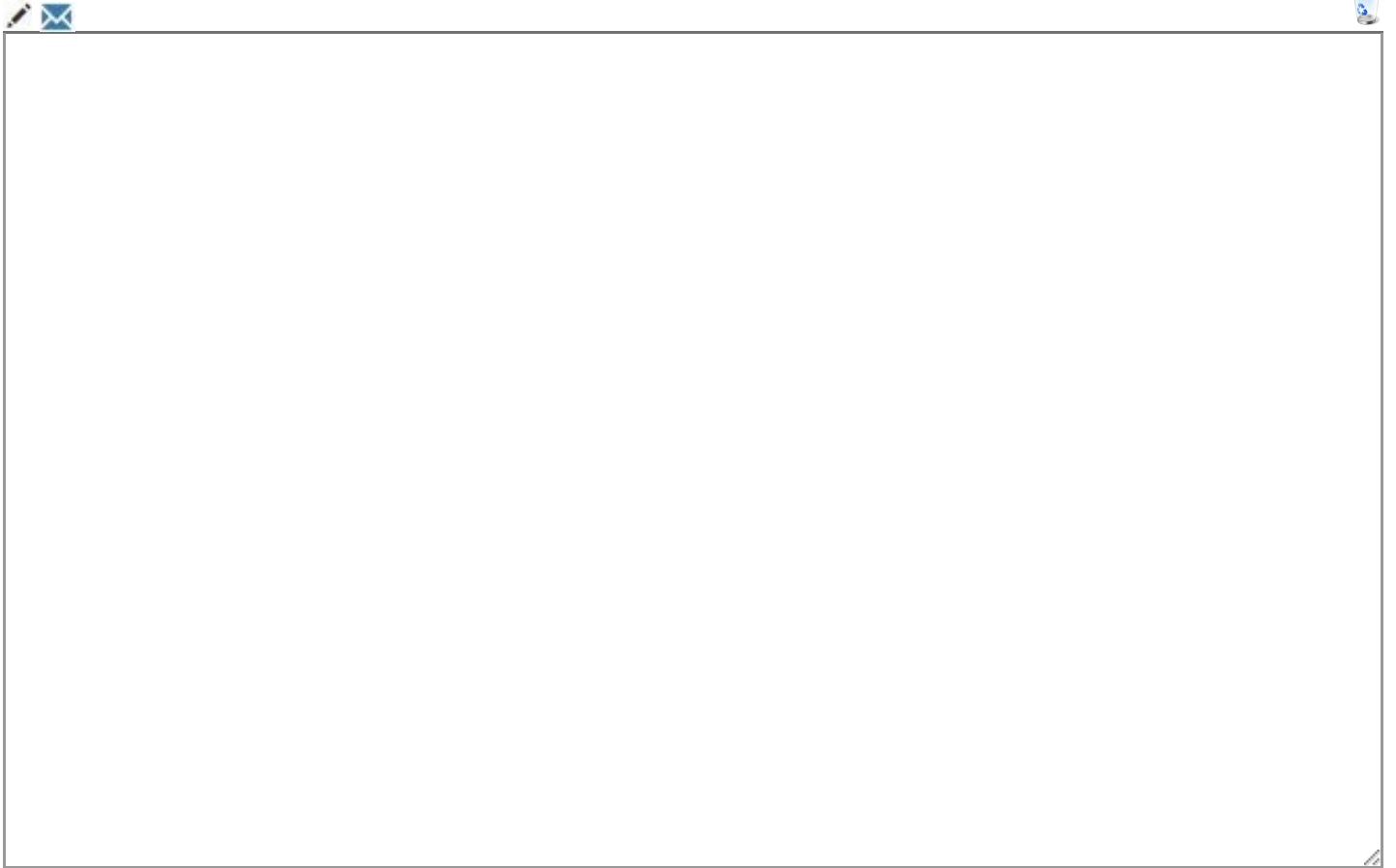


- develop the structure of a document
- respond to emails
- get an overview of a complex issue
- tidy up your desk
- clean up your inbox
- prepare next week's schedule
- prepare an important meeting
- write a memo
- ...

That bit of “spare” time could be much more useful than you think. Just go ahead and start something, given that once begun, a task always easier to complete.

Going deeper...

- This is a fun small exercise (<http://www.journaldunet.com/management/efficacite-personnelle/muscler-son-cerveau/sens-de-l-organisation.shtml>) (FR) to develop your brainpower
- You will find a speed-reading course here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5sKOW45sYg>) (FR)
- A useful set of Tips and Exercises (<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/memory/how-to-improve-your-memory.htm>) (EN) to Sharpen Your Mind and Boost Brainpower
- A list of fun apps to train your brain (<http://dailyburn.com/life/tech/train-your-brain-apps/>) (EN)
- Useful tips on how to improve your speed-reading (<http://www.wikihow.com/Learn-Speed-Reading>) (EN)
- Here a Chrome extension (<http://www.spreader.com>) (EN) that lets you blaze through online articles. Regardless of your platform, Spreader (<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/spread-speed-read-the-web/ipikiaejblmdopojhpejjmbedhlibno>) (EN) is a fun instrument to practice speed reading on your own screens.
- A useful tutorial video on How to remember what you read (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNf56jzKT7w>) (EN) including the memory palace technique



PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

4. Planning and Time

4.1 Define your objectives

It seems that it's easier to be effective when you set a clear goal. To achieve your goal is to be efficacious, but to achieve your goal using an adequate amount of resources is **to be efficient**.

Is **your goal** to:



- save time?
- use fewer resources?
- better collaborate with your team?
- make fewer mistakes?
- be more responsive?
- be less of a perfectionist?
- be more precise?

4.2 Use SMART objectives

How do you define your goal accurately? A very simple checklist can prevent you from embarking on projects with unclear, unspecific or intangible goals.

The word SMART will remind you of the essential criteria you should keep in mind.

Your goals or objectives must be:

Specific: the specificity of the goal must be clearly established. You could also say “simple”.

Masurable: your objective must be measurable, the indicators of its fulfillment must be unquestionable and recognized as such by all parties.

Achievable: it must be attainable; it should be feasible. If changes in the context render it infeasible, it should be readjusted.

Relevant: it should be pertinent, directly linked to the concerns of the person responsible for reaching it.

Time-bound: it should include the time dimension, as a deadline, or duration.



Exercise: a motivating personal objective

- **Set yourself a motivating personal objective**

- Syntax is important. Use: **I + PRESENT TENSE verb**. Never use the verb “to want”. Use “I am”, “I have”, “I do”.
- Use precise, positive terms as the brain cannot picture the negative. Transform: “I do not want this mess on my desk” (negative, inaccurate and based on “want”) to “I can find my files in less than 30 seconds.”
- Explore your motivation. Ask yourself “why ...” several times in order to find the real needs and deeper objectives behind your initial formulation.

- Include the time factor, perhaps through a deadline.
- **Check your goal's "ecology"**
 - Is it acceptable to you in terms of personal investment?
 - What choices, sacrifices or renunciations will it require of you?
 - Are you willing to accept these?
- **Adjust it as required**
 - By extending its deadline.
 - By making it less ambitious.
- **Make it powerful**
 - Take the time to visualise yourself achieving your goal. Flesh it out to make it real: Where are you? What are you doing? Who is with you? What words are spoken? How do you feel?
 - Display your powerful personal goal or an image that represents it in a visible place.
 - Affirm your goal and repeat it.

(Adapted from the exercise « l'objectif personnel puissant » (*La boîte à outils de la gestion du temps*, Pascale Bêlorgey, Editions Dunod, 2014)

4.3 Visualise your success

Visualisation strengthens your ability to achieve your goals by helping you imagine the steps that will lead you to success with great precision.



This prepares your brain to deploy the required resources to repeat the experience... in reality!

Our brain habitually cluttered by thoughts of unexpected events, pending files, various emergencies, and unfinished tasks, when we should ideally just be serenely focused on our objective.

The “desired states method” is an exercise of the imagination derived from NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming). It consists of travelling mentally through the time between now and our successfully completed project.

It is used by top athletes or by musicians before their public performances to:

- appropriate their goal and give it form and consistency;
- check that the consequences of attainment (emotional, physical) are acceptable;
- make sure that every step has been properly taken into account and prepared by “seeing” it.

4.4 Apply the 80/20 rule, or Pareto principle



The Pareto principle (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pareto_principle) (EN), also known as the « 80/20 rule », was named after Vilfredo Pareto, a 19th century economist and sociologist, who conducted economic studies on the distribution of wealth between social groups, and found that 20% of the population help 80% of the wealth (at that time).

The broader empirical principle suggests that 20% of causes are responsible for 80% of effects. Of course this is only a model and a rule of thumb.

As explained by Joseph Juran, the pioneer of the total quality approach that first floated this principle, it is a “general method for sorting any aggregate into two parts: the central issues and the peripheral issues”.

It is therefore a rather intuitive “universal analytical tool” that can be used to separate sets of items into two subsets: the essential and the non-essential. For example, 80% of a company's turnover is achieved with 20% of its customers, but above all, **80% of your results are achieved by 20% of your work effort.**

To easily apply the Pareto principle to the daily organisation of your work effort, simply answer this one question: if you were to work only two hours a day, which task(s) would be truly essential?



Exercise:

Excerpt from “L’escalier mécanique de Pareto” , *La boîte à outils de la gestion du temps*, Pascale Belorgey, Editions Dunod, 2014.

Steps:

- **Place your foot on the first stair.**

Give priority to planning that 20% of your activities that will contribute to achieving 80% of your results (the A and B tasks of your Eisenhower matrix).

- **Get unstuck from the bottom of the first stair**

- List the tasks you will stop doing;
- Decide not to respond to certain messages;
- Decide to remove the tasks that add little value relative to the time they require;
- Give up on maintaining those contacts that produce nothing.

- **Streamline the stair’s internal structure**

- Give up on perfectionism and fix a limit on your file’s quality or time investment:
 - accept not having full information;
 - stop re-reading your writing three times;
 - decide not to deal with everything;
 - negotiate deliverables with your partners.
- Set yourself the goal of reducing certain tasks by 50% even if this requires an initial investment of time:
 - shorten processes;
 - simplify your tools;
 - standardise (procedures, replies, checklists);
 - automate;
 - delegate.

- **Climb onto the second stair**

- The time saved will allow you to focus on higher value-added activities, as well as on those projects that matter to you.

- **Repeat !**

- Well-poised on the second step, repeat the process. Off you go to the third step.

4.5 Use time log



Where does your time go? To get a more realistic view of your project and time management skills, it is helpful to compare what you planned with what actually happened in reality. This will provide you a more accurate picture of your use of time, allowing you to better estimate your future projects.

- **Chose the right level of detail**

An insufficient level of analysis won't allow you to get the most out of your time logs. However, a level that is too detailed will overly complicate log entries.

We suggest you make entries at the project management level, which will tell you how many half-hours of effort have been spent on each project.

This is a good level of detail to start with. You can always go into greater detail on deliverables later on, when this information might be required. Always bear in mind that recording time use is time-consuming.

- **Determine which activities belong on your time log**

Depending on the level of detail you want, identify the projects, activities, deliverables, and tasks for which you would like to record your use of time. Then, consider including headings for the operational activities that aren't necessarily related to a specific project, such as team meetings, language training, filing, assisting colleagues.

If you don't require greater precision, you might simply pick the label "other" for these.

4.6 Plan for the

unexpected

Under the effect of technological change, shrinking deadlines, increased demands for efficiency, or any number of other pressures, your work parameters are always changing.

Everyone is not equally comfortable handling the unexpected. Even though you may believe you've foreseen all possibilities, something unexpected often happens. What if, instead of striving to anticipate everything and control everything, you develop your **capacité d'adaptation**?



Firstly, being able to adapt to change so as to deal quickly and flexibly with unexpected events requires the ability to accept the new situations that arise. It also requires knowing how to flexibly manage multiple demands, shifting priorities, sudden reversals and changes in strategy while lacking all the necessary information...

Successful adaptation involves:

- Practising good management (<http://www.aim-associes.com/eusa/ebook/oral-en/book.html#chapter06>)
- Knowing how to foresee the unexpected:
 - Anticipate;
 - Spot early warning signs;
 - Identify events;
 - Interpret the situation;
 - Chose an appropriate response.
- Knowing how to draw on the team:

- Trust the person you delegate to;
- Don't make the mistake of defining the "what", delegate to "who";
- Take into account your co-worker's:
 - Capacity to complete the task
 - Current workload (don't overload them either!)
 - Frame your delegation activity
 - Interest in completing the task
- Provide adequate support and guidance;
- Keep control of the delegation process:
- Evaluate your delegation process' performance.

4.7 Distinguish between important and urgent

This task-prioritization method was inspired by Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th President of the United States of America, who is claimed to have said: "What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important".



The **Eisenhower Matrix** is based on this saying, and serves to help people prioritize their tasks.

A	Urgent and important	B	Important and not urgent
----------	-----------------------------	----------	---------------------------------

<p>Complete these tasks immediately and personally. These tasks are most essential. They need to be done immediately, so start on them even if this doesn't please you.</p> <p>We too often procrastinate to avoid tasks we don't care for.</p>		<p>Plan and carry out these tasks yourself. If you can, delegate these tasks to your subordinates.</p> <p>Otherwise, complete them now unless you've urgent and important tasks on your "to do list". But complete these soon!</p>	
C	Urgent and not important	D	Not important and not urgent
<p>Delegate these quickly. These tasks must be performed before a given deadline. You don't have to dive in today, but you should schedule the time required for each important non-urgent task right now. This is a good way to remember them.</p>		<p>Tasks that are neither important nor urgent are the only ones you can postpone until later. For once you have permission, please: procrastinate! These tasks can also serve as a "breather" between tasks that require greater concentration and effort.</p>	



Exercise: Prioritize your tasks

- 1) Establish the list of things you have to do next week.
- 2) Arrange the items on your list according to the logic of the Eisenhower matrix.
- 3) Consign next week's schedule into your Outlook calendar. You could even color-code tasks according to priority level!

Going deeper...



Several years ago during a TED talk (EN), Peter Skillman shared a design exercise called the Marshmallow Challenge (http://marshmallowchallenge.com/TED_Talk.html) (EN). His goal was simple: in eighteen minutes four must build the tallest freestanding structure they can with 20 sticks of spaghetti, a piece of tape, a piece of string and a marshmallow.

Time logs allow you to track and analyse your usage of time. Download a template (http://www.printablee.com/post_printable-weekly-time-log_334596/) (EN) from here.

Once you've identified anomalies, you will be poised to set yourself time reduction targets on non-essential activities...

Here you'll find advice from Philippe Perrenoud de l'Université de Genève on "Gestion de l'imprévu". Is it possible to learn to manage the unexpected

(http://www.unige.ch/fapse/SSE/teachers/perrenoud/php_main/php_19 action analysis and competency-building (FR)

12 rules of delegation (<https://www.projecttimes.com/articles/12-important-rules-of-effective-delegation.html>) for project managers (EN).

A longer video with a detailed presentation of delegation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdfbidYuetI>) (EN)

