



# My Healing Program

## Time Management Activity

We all have the same amount of time each day, ie. 24 hours, and there is nothing we can do to change that. How we utilise the time available to us, however, is entirely within our control.

It is easy to 'lose time' in the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, especially when we're working and time seems to pass so much quicker than usual because our minds are otherwise occupied. We often look back at our days and wonder what we were so busy with, yet we didn't manage to do the specific tasks we set out to complete during the course of the day.

### Here are some important questions to ask yourself:

- What makes you think you have a time management issue?
- Take yourself through a typical week day, then do the same for a Saturday and Sunday
- What do you spend most of your time doing in the week? / and then over a weekend?
- What do you do with your time when you are not at work?
- Do you have any sport / hobbies you pursue?
- Do you set boundaries with other people? (ie. are you specific with what you allow yourself to do for others, what you give to others, including your time?)
- Do you set boundaries for yourself? (ie. if you have work to do, but feel you need a break. Can you limit the 'break period', possibly playing video games or watching TV, and revert to the work that is waiting for you?)

### Here are some tips that may assist you in getting your time better organised:

- Learning to prioritise for business + personal responsibilities
- Within the above, learning to prioritise activities based on the urgency and complexity of each of those responsibilities
- Getting organised – being methodical, working in an orderly fashion, at a pre-planned pace on pre-planned tasks
- Delegating, where possible, if the task is not meant for you, or if you have too much to get through within the specified time
- If need be, mentor and upskill staff to assist you in the workplace, or for family members / friends to support you in your personal capacity

### Eisenhower's Principle

In a speech given by the former U.S. **President Dwight D. Eisenhower**, to the Second Assembly of the  
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World Council of Churches in 1954, who quoted **Dr J. Roscoe Miller**, the then President of Northwestern University. He said: "I have two kinds of problems: the urgent and the important. The urgent are not important, and the important are never urgent." This, according to his staff, "Eisenhower Principle" is said to be how he organized his workload and decided which tasks were or weren't priorities.

## Eisenhower's Principle



**Stephen Covey**, the world-renowned author, educator and businessman, who penned the well-known book, '**The 7 Habits of highly effective people**', published in 1989, added a different take to the above principle in his book by inserting the four categories into a quadrant, arranged specifically to emphasise the two main characteristics of the tasks at hand, ie. **IMPORTANT** or **NOT IMPORTANT**.

See below the diagram of his arranged quadrants as per the above:

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<b>Quadrant I:</b> Urgent & Important	<b>Quadrant II:</b> Not Urgent & Important
NOT IMPORTANT	<b>Quadrant III:</b> Urgent & Not Important	<b>Quadrant IV:</b> Not Urgent & Not Important

Source: Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

Here is a summary of the meaning of each quadrant:

- **Quadrant I – important deadlines with high urgency**

The first quadrant contains tasks and responsibilities that need immediate attention.

- **Quadrant II – long-term development and strategizing**

The second quadrant is for items which are important but do not need immediate action. This quadrant should be used for long-term strategizing.

- **Quadrant III – *distractions with high urgency***

The third quadrant is reserved for tasks which are urgent, but not important. Covey recommends minimizing or even eliminating these tasks as they do not contribute to your output. Delegation is also an option here.

- **Quadrant IV – *activities with little to no value***

The fourth quadrant focuses on tasks and responsibilities that do not yield any value—items which are unimportant and not urgent. These time wasters should be eliminated at any costs.

## **1. The four time management quadrants**

### **Quadrant 1 – Urgent and important**

These activities can be sorted into items that could not have been foreseen, and those items that could (the latter can be eradicated by planning ahead and paying close attention to their execution) and should include only those activities / responsibilities that require your immediate attention.

The space is reserved for emergencies and extremely important deadlines. Should a major crisis arise you will have to postpone other tasks.

- Crises
- Pressing problems
- Projects that are deadline driven
- Emergencies
- Last-minute preparations
- Direct relation to time-sensitive goals
- Involve alleviating immediate risk

### **Quadrant 2 – Not urgent but important**

These tasks do not have a high urgency ***but can play an important role in the future***. This quadrant is not only reserved for strategic planning, but also to items related to health, education, exercise, and career.

***Investing time in these areas might not be urgent at the present day, but in the long term, it will be of the greatest importance. These tasks must be in direct relation to your overall goals.***

Pay close attention that you have scheduled enough time for quadrant 2 activities, in order to avoid them becoming quadrant 1 items.

- Plan
- Prepare
- Train
- Exercise, health, and recreation

### **Quadrant 3 – Urgent but not important**

These items appear to have a high urgency but are not at all important. They generally do not contribute any value. They are obstacles that stand between you and your goals. If possible, try to delegate these items or reschedule them. They are generally:

- The result of poor planning in Q1 + Q2
- Interrupting productivity
- Distractions
- Meetings
- Small talk

If another person is causing you quadrant 3 tasks try to decline their request politely. If this is not an option, try to avoid being constantly interrupted by appointing timeslots to those that often require your help. This way, you can address all their issues at once, without regularly interrupting your concentration.

### **Quadrant 4 – Not urgent and not important**

This quadrant contains all those activities that do not contribute any value at all—the obvious time wasters. All these activities are nothing more than distractions so try and avoid them at all costs and generally have the following qualities:

- Cause the least amount of stress
- Not directly related to overall or time-sensitive goals

**Try to eliminate all the items in this list, no matter how entertaining:**

- Trivia
- Time wasters
- Surfing the Internet without purpose / social media
- Watching TV for hours

### **How to apply the time matrix?**

Try to maximize the time spent on quadrant II activities. This will reduce quadrant I activities as many of them could have been quadrant II activities if better planning had been implemented. Using the matrix allows one to question whether a certain activity brings you closer to your goals or not. If so, these responsibilities need to be prioritized over those tasks that demand your time but do not contribute to your goals. Delay activities that do not contribute any significant output until more important tasks are finished.

### **Reprioritizing your current 'to-do' list**

Apply the matrix to your current and upcoming tasks. By sorting the tasks and responsibilities into the appropriate grid you will be able to quickly identify activities that need your immediate attention.

## Once weekly assessments

Reassess your matrix weekly or at the very least monthly. You will need six blank copies of the matrix, five for each workday and one for your weekly assessment. At the end of each workday, you list all tasks and responsibilities and the amount of time spent. At the end of the week, you summarize the five days of your week in one matrix. Make sure to summarize the amount of time spent on a given task.

After you have summarized the week you can then evaluate how well the time was spent and whether or not you need to make any adaptations. **The below diagram is credited to the Brefi Group** [www.brefigroup.co.uk](http://www.brefigroup.co.uk)

### The time management matrix – activities

	Urgent	Not Urgent
I m p o r t a n t	<b>I</b> ACTIVITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crises</li><li>• Pressing problems</li><li>• Deadline-driven projects</li></ul>	<b>II</b> ACTIVITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prevention, capability improvement</li><li>• Relationship building</li><li>• Recognising new opportunities</li><li>• Planning, recreation</li></ul>
N o t  I m p o r t a n t	<b>III</b> ACTIVITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interruptions, some callers</li><li>• Some mail, some reports</li><li>• Some meetings</li><li>• Proximate, pressing matters</li><li>• Popular activities</li></ul>	<b>IV</b> ACTIVITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trivia, busy work</li><li>• Some mail</li><li>• Some phone calls</li><li>• Time wasters</li><li>• Pleasant activities</li></ul>

Based on 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen Covey

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30 years  
of excellence

## Benefits of using the Covey Time Management Matrix

- **Increased productivity:** Improved efficiencies, reduced wasted time. Having an organized and prioritized list of tasks helps you complete more of the most vital tasks quicker.
- **Clear habits:** Using this matrix helps you identify which quadrants you spend most of your time in, assessing your own behaviour. You can then develop new habits of focusing only on Q1 and Q2 items.
- **Work-life balance:** With more productive habits at work, you are better able to find time for the things that matter most to you outside of work.
- **Improved planning skills:** Prioritizing tasks can also help you determine clear short-term goals that can be completed within certain timeframes. This helps you better plan projects and long-term goals.

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## How to use the Covey Time Management Matrix

### 1. List the tasks you need to complete

Whether prioritizing tasks for the day or for the month, write out every task you have yet to complete. These tasks should be brief and clear statements.

### 2. Include deadlines

Next to each task, include their deadlines. Knowing when things need to be completed helps you prioritize what must be done first and what can wait until later.

### 3. Identify the most urgent tasks

Highlight deadlines that are quickly approaching to determine the urgency of your tasks. This allows you to put your tasks into perspective and to plan what is needed for the completion of each task.. It also provides a clear view of what your responsibilities are collectively.

### 4. Then organize by importance

After determining how urgent each task is, order your tasks according to their importance. This allows you to fully realize which tasks are tentative and which tasks can wait.

### 5. Place tasks in the correct quadrant

You have determined which tasks are urgent or important so now you need to organize them into groups in your list by placing them in their corresponding quadrant. You can begin using this organization of the matrix to complete tasks throughout your day, week or month.

### 6. Assess your productivity

Repeat this process for your daily and weekly activities. After using the method for a few weeks or months, reflect upon your performance. Determine how completing tasks in order of their location in the matrix improved your efficiency, workflow and stress management. You can use your findings to figure out how best to adjust your schedule to accommodate your needs or assess if certain items in your matrix need to be moved to a different quadrant. If you discover some items are not as important as others, consider re-organizing your matrix, schedule or work methods to put more meaningful tasks first.

### Always remember the three P's:

Plan

Preparation

Production

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References: Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/covey-time-management-matrix>

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IMPORTANT	Q1 Urgent & Important	Q2 Not Urgent & Important
NOT IMPORTANT	Q3 Urgent & Not Important	Q4 Not Urgent & Not Important