Research and Development - Time Management Tips

Time is the one commodity we all have in common. No matter how hard we try, we really can't "save" time or "buy" time. Yet, we can learn to "spend" our time wisely to avoid "losing" time. Here's a baker's dozen of time management tips to help you "find" and keep track of your 24 hours today!

- ***Use a To Do List*** — It's not only a good reminder, but also a time management tool to help you see what you accomplish and how long it takes.

- ***Get set in your ways*** — Good time management is synonymous with good organization. Put your daily routines into detail. While you don't need to schedule every move you make, listing routine tasks helps you to remember each step you need to take to meet your goal, whether it's getting to work or school on time or doing Saturday morning chores.

- ***Break it up*** — Divide large tasks into small ones to get a better sense of accomplishment as you complete each step. In addition, when you're interrupted in the middle of a task, it's much easier to get back on track and regain your focus.

- ***Be realistic*** — Don't under or overestimate time. Over estimating time makes it difficult to fit all your tasks into your daily schedule, while under estimating "cuts your day short" and makes it impossible to complete your schedule. However, do be generous with your time allotments. It's much easier to fit a small task into "extra" time than it is to try to make up for "lost" time.

- **Pick up a good habit** — Try to keep something in hand going both to and from a destination. If you need to run copies, pick up some office supplies while you wait for the copy machine to finish.

- **Big messes start with little piles** — Completely finish your circles. Put things away as you finish using them. Aside from keeping you out of clutter and giving you a big clean up at the end of a project, you'll know where things are the next time you need to use them.

- **Start tomorrow tonight!** — Get in the habit of preparing for the next day at the end of your day. Write out a "to do" list for tomorrow's tasks. Leave keys, wallet (or purse), and your To Do List all in the same place. For optimum time management, you can even lay out tomorrow's clothing before you go to bed.

- **Don't forget** — Write yourself a note ("Don't forget your lunch") or put reminders at the top of your to do list.

- **Round to-its** — The easiest way to get "a round to-it" is to schedule a task. If the lawn needs mowing, put it on your to do list.

- **First things first** – Prioritize your tasks and then schedule each one at the appropriate time. For instance, you may have to wait until after work to mow the lawn. Although it may be your "top priority" for the day, it needn't be at the top of your list!

Research and Development - Time Management Tips

- **Learn to say no!** — Frequently, we consider that saying "no" is discourteous, but you can be frank without being rude. "I can't now, but I could (insert when) "or "I'm sorry, but I just can't manage that today" is just good time management.

- **The pause that refreshes** – Do make breaks a scheduled part of your day. A small break at the end of a large task or series of small tasks refreshes you and helps you to wind down and focus on "what's next?"

- **Be flexible** — Effective time management will take some time to get used to. No matter what you did or didn't get done today, there is always tomorrow.