

July 2024

We all have times where we feel there aren't enough hours in the day or days in the week. With us all having the same 24 hours and 7 days a week, why do some people seem to be able to achieve more? It's due to good time management.

Good time management focuses on results rather than activities. Being busy isn't the same as being effective.

There are many benefits to good time management, which may include:

- Greater efficiency
- Greater productivity
- Reduced stress
- Opportunities to achieve more in your life and/or career
- The feeling of greater control
- Increased confidence and an improved reputation
- More free time to do the things you enjoy
- Feeling happier and more relaxed

If you never seem to have enough time, better time management may help you regain control of your days. Whether it's in your job or your lifestyle, learning how to manage your time effectively can help you feel more relaxed, focused and in control.

Time Management Tips

Keep a To-Do list – a to-do list is a good way to stay organised. They act as a reminder of what you need to do the next day or week, they help to ensure you don't miss any deadlines or appointments. The way you keep this list is your choice, it could be a spreadsheet, online, handwritten or on your phone.

To avoid losing track of multiple lists, just keep one or one for work and one for home. Listing the tasks will enable you to see everything in one place and help you work out your priorities and timings.

Your to do list should help you plan your day. As the saying goes, failing to plan is planning to fail. The best time to plan your day is the night before or immediately after waking up.

Recognise that you won't finish everything that you set out to do every day or week. Use a to-do list to make sure that the higher priority tasks are completed first and roll over those tasks that are less urgent.

Focus on results – good time management at work focuses on high-quality work rather than on high quantity. In other words, don't concentrate on how busy you are, but on results. Spending more time on a task doesn't necessarily achieve more.

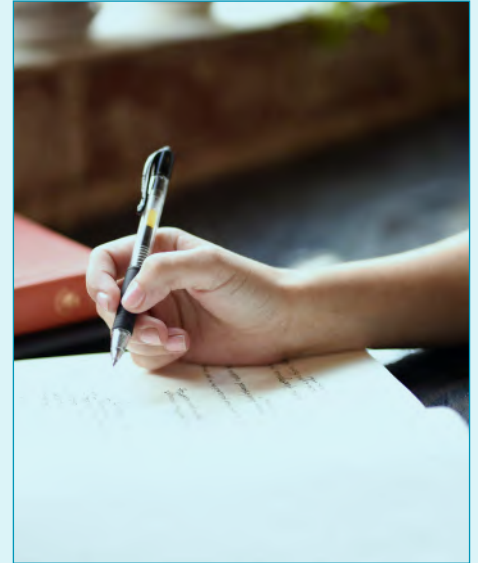
Take Breaks – scientific studies have shown that concentration starts to decline rapidly after ninety minutes of focus. This means that when you work without taking short breaks, the quality of your work could get affected.

Your body and mind need a break to refresh and recover lost energies. Taking time to recharge is extremely important physically and mentally. Use this time to move away from your computer.

As well as short regularly breaks it's also important to have a lunch break. Working through your lunch break, can be counterproductive. It's important to take a proper break from screen use, go for a walk and make sure you get something to eat. You should find you'll come back to your desk re-energised and re-focused on your tasks. You may even now have the solution to the question you had earlier, as this time away has given you reflection time.

Time management is not just about fitting as much as you possibly can into your day. It is also about building good habits that are sustainable. Rest, relaxation, good quality sleep and time for socialising and exercise will help to refresh your mind and body ready to meet your daily challenges.

When planning your day ensure you block out some time for breaks.



Eliminate Distractions – distractions can be the biggest reduction of productivity in the workplace. If you are working from home, you may find you're more likely to get distracted or procrastinate or you may find you have less distractions as it's quieter at home and there isn't the hustle and bustle of a busy office.

Reward Yourself – creating a plan for your day is easy, but following it is a lot more difficult. Each time you complete a task, give yourself a reward. This could be a snack, a cuppa, a few mins on social media or a chat with a friend.

Avoid Multitasking – you probably think that multitasking saves you time. But the human brain can only focus on one thing at a time. When you multitask, you are not doing two or more tasks simultaneously, instead, you are switching tasks. When you switch tasks, your brain takes time to refocus. Instead of multitasking, you will get better results if you focus on one thing at a time.

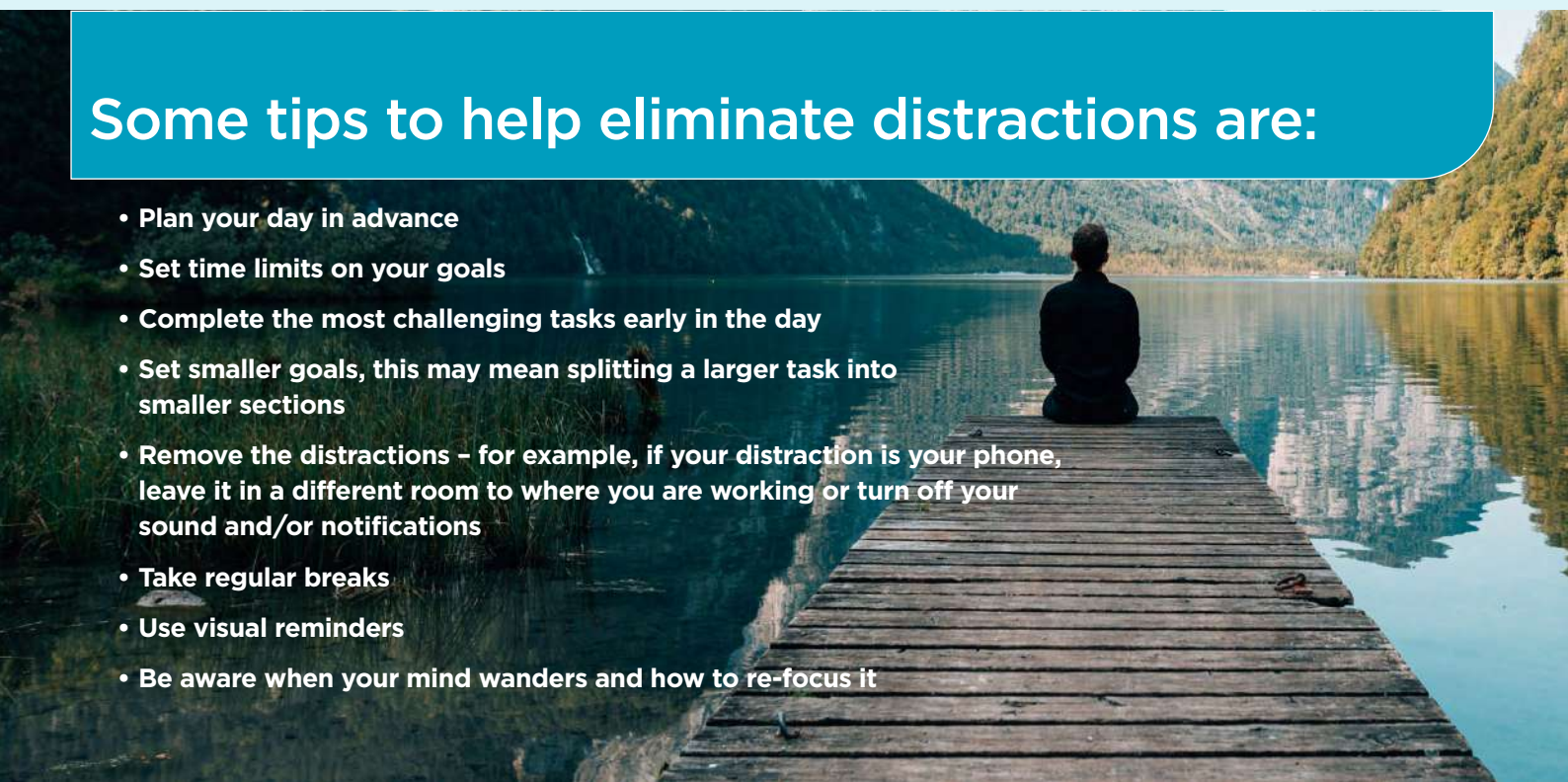
Learn to Say No – this is one of the hardest things for most people. Saying yes to your boss, your customers, or colleagues every time they need you might make you valuable, but you'll end up stretching yourself too thin. When this happens, you'll start getting stressed, frustrated, and ultimately become depressed. Saying yes to everything can negatively affect your health.

To avoid this, you need to learn to say no. Focus on the most important tasks and learn to say no to everything else.



Some tips to help eliminate distractions are:

- Plan your day in advance
- Set time limits on your goals
- Complete the most challenging tasks early in the day
- Set smaller goals, this may mean splitting a larger task into smaller sections
- Remove the distractions – for example, if your distraction is your phone, leave it in a different room to where you are working or turn off your sound and/or notifications
- Take regular breaks
- Use visual reminders
- Be aware when your mind wanders and how to re-focus it



Follow the Four Ds

The 4 D's is basically a tool which is used to assess if performing a particular task is worthy of doing. Decisions can be made quickly about present and upcoming tasks. The 4 D's are Do, Delay, Delegate, and Delete. Classifying tasks within one of each of these segments makes it easy to manage your workload.

Do - an urgent or important task must never be delayed. The moment a critical task is identified, it should be quickly completed.

Delay - Some tasks are better completed later rather than now. If the task isn't urgent, will take longer to deal with or you don't have all the information to be able to complete it, then set time aside later to complete the task.

Delegate - If the task can be better dealt with by someone else then it should be delegated to them. This should be done as soon as you are aware of the task to ensure the delegated person has as much time as possible to complete the task.

Delete - This could be an email that you've been sent and isn't relevant to you, so can be deleted. Also, some tasks may no longer need to be completed due to a change of processes.



Prioritise important tasks –

Tasks can be grouped into 4 categories:

- urgent and important
- not urgent but important
- urgent but not important
- neither urgent nor important

People who manage their time well concentrate on “not urgent but important” activities. That way they lower the chances of activities ever becoming “urgent and important”. Having to deal with too many urgent tasks can be stressful.





You may be finding it stressful to manage your time effectively and this be affecting your mental health, if this is the case read our stress awareness guide [here](#) and mental health guide [here](#).

Time management is a skill, and like all other skills, it takes time to develop and improve, so it will take time to get it right.

Worrying about money can be extremely stressful and may lead to mental health conditions. Police Mutual are here to help. We want to break down the stigma surrounding debt and get people talking about money.

We've teamed up with **PayPlan***, one of the UK's leading free debt advice providers, who offer free and confidential advice to anyone in serious financial difficulties.

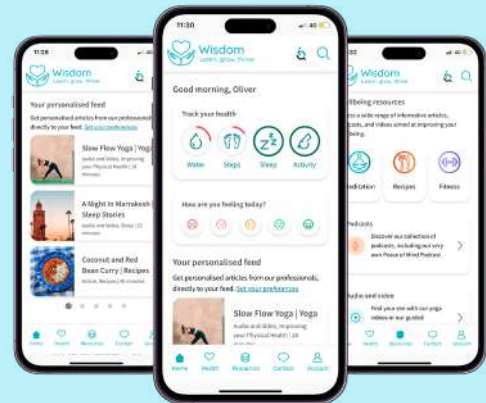
They're able to advise you on a range of debt solutions suited to your individual circumstances, helping to protect you and your family with a sustainable way to manage your debt.

Get free and confidential help to combat your debt, call **PayPlan*** on **0800 197 8433**.

Police Mutual Services

Our Care Line Service provided by Health Assured can offer advice and information, helping with a range of concerns including emotional support.

Wisdom App



Download the **Wisdom App** provided by Health Assured and register today - your code is **MHA107477**



To read more of our wellbeing guides take a look at our Wellbeing Hub [here](#).

Call us 0151 242 7640 Visit policemutual.co.uk
We're open from 9am - 5pm Mon - Fri

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