

TOP 10 CLASSIC TIME MANAGEMENT BOOKS



The problem with time management is that it takes some time to truly understand how to manage your time better! To speed up this process, we've reviewed 10 excellent time-management books. No doubt one of them is tailor-made for you.

1. **Odette Pollar, "365 Ways to Simplify Your Work Life"** Dearborn Financial Publishing, 1996.

A small book that fits in your briefcase or on your desk for quick time-saving reminders. Pollar's book contains such useful nuggets as "Don't confuse long hours with productivity, they are not synonymous," and "Use only one calendar for personal and professional appointments." And the best thing about this pithy book: It doesn't demand much time to read.

2. **Jeffrey J. Mayer, "Time Management for Dummies, 2nd Edition"** IDG Books Worldwide, 1999.

A comprehensive approach to improving your organization and productivity by noted time-management expert Jeff Mayer. Mayer discusses all the major time management topics: Clutter, taking control of your daily planner and increasing your productivity with voicemail. Mayer also promotes ACT!, a contact-management system he swears by.

3. **Stephen R. Covey, "First Things First"** Fireside, 1994.

Covey's convincing thesis is that people spend too much time doing what's urgent at the expense of what is important. He stresses focusing on the important tasks so they don't turn into urgent ones. Like all of Covey's books, FTF requires a time investment. His fans will tell you it's worth it. And hey – what's good enough for Larry King, Steve Young and Richard Bolles (What Color Is Your Parachute?) is good enough for us.

4. **Michael LeBoeuf, "Working Smart: How to Accomplish More in Half the Time"** Warner Books, 1979.

A classic in the annals of time management, and there's a reason why. LeBoeuf quantifies the value of time in dollars and shows you how to plan your life so as to minimize wasting these dollars (or hours). He addresses the bugaboos of procrastination, interruptions and the paper blizzard, among others. He also takes on attitudes of fear, anger and guilt that get in the way of working effectively. Best line: "The real fun in life comes from total creative absorption in a task, not the external rewards for doing it."

5. **Don Aslett and Carol Cartaino, "Keeping Work Simple"** Storey Publishers, 1997.

A great book, "Keeping Work Simple" has a clear message – simplify, simplify, simplify – and it shows you how. Short chapters, checklists (my favorite: The Clean Slate Checklist) and boxes of texts make this book easy to skim to extract the main themes. Chapters deal with clutter, computers, correspondence, co-workers and children. This one is a keeper.

6. **Pat Roessle Materka, "Time In, Time Out, Time Enough"** Prentice Hall, 1993.

For all those superwomen out there who manage a home and a family, here's a book for you. It assesses how you manage your time and tells you how to improve that method (which we'll assume isn't working since you've bought the book!). The appropriate technique is applied to your work, home, family. Best tip: Hire a housekeeper.

7. **Merril E. Douglass and Donna N. Douglass, "Manage Your Time, Your Work, Yourself"** Amacom, 1993.

From the founders of the Time Management Center, and directors of over 2,000 seminars on time mastery, this book offers an assessment of your time-management strengths and weaknesses and gives ideas and techniques for building good time habits. Like Stephen Covey, the authors emphasize the 80-20 rule: 80% of your value comes from 20% of the things you work on, so focus on the 20%. Or, as they put it, "Stop doing the unimportant things and do more of the important things." Best tip: When someone drops in to see you, don't remain sitting. Stand up, look them in the eye and ask "How can I help you?"

8. **Arthur Robertson and William Proctor, "Work a 4-Hour Day"** Avon Business, 1994.

An enticing title to be sure – I may have my doubts about a four-hour workday, but hey, a girl can dream. "4-Hour Day" tells you how to set personal and professional priorities and then reconcile the two. Favorite tip:

Five major mini-barriers to watch out for:

1. Misuse of the telephone
2. Too many meetings
3. Proliferation of committee assignments
4. Inability to say no
5. Failure to delegate properly.

9. **Lisa Kanarek, "Everything's Organized"** Career Press, 1996.

A well-written, concise book on how to find the time-management system that works best for you and apply it to your workstyle. Topics include: common organizing habits, finding your workstyle, confusing perfectionism with organization, making the most of your office space, and five ways to say no. Best tip for procrastinators: Promise yourself you'll start working on a project for 10 minutes and then quit if you're tired or bored. Chances are that at least one half hour will pass and you will have made progress.

10. **Michael J. Gelb, "Thinking for a Change"** Harmony Books, 1996.

Not a time-management book per se, but worth noting. Gelb researched the thinking of Darwin, Michelangelo, and DaVinci and developed the concept of "synergistic thinking" – the ability to balance logic and imagination and hold seemingly contradictory ideas at the same time. You'll find exercises that show you what your priorities, values and goals truly are, so you can best shape your life to accomplish them. The book's take on time-management is that it is self-management: "If you allow yourself to be run by pressing events, you lose your center and time seems short, so pause, breathe and shift out of a reactive mode." Wise words.

