

12 Timepower Tips for Managing Interruptions

1. Eliminate “drop-in” visits by using a visual barrier at your work space. Putting tall plants in direct line of vision of a door or window is one of many ways to accomplish this.
2. Keep a minimal number of seats in your office to discourage “drop-ins” and long visits. Put your briefcase or some files on those that remain. People are less likely to hang around if they are standing.
3. Schedule cooperative time among colleagues. If each colleagues phone is covered by the others for a hour or two a day, the productivity and satisfaction of each person and their boss will greatly increase.
4. We are better at giving advice to others than to ourselves. You will come up with just the right answer to move through your own procrastination if you think of it in terms of what you might tell someone else.
5. Estimate the time for a task and double it to accommodate interruptions. If you finish earlier than you estimated, it will feel like a bonus and a breather.
6. Use another office, conference room, library or somewhere other than your office to work uninterrupted.
7. Use a phone headset to free your hands whilst making or taking a call. Lightweight Bluetooth or Plantronics headsets are great whilst working on the phone.
8. Allow voice mail or an answering machine to take your calls when you want uninterrupted time. That is one of the many reasons the technology exists. Leave a clear indication of when you will action the messages left and remember to change your message daily.
9. Inform a caller you would like to talk to them and ask them “when would be a better time than now?” You will be both gracious and in control of your time in this way.
10. Write yourself a note about where you left off for easier re-entry when you come back to something. The time you take writing the note will often be less than reading back to where you left off.
11. Work earlier or later than others in your business to minimise interruption. Take breaks at different times to others. The adjustment might well be minor inconvenience.
12. Put time aside to “catch up” with your key relationships. If you make time to focus on them they are less likely to be put out when you have to focus on other priorities.