



11 Tips for Attorneys on Mastering Time Management to Find a Better Work-Life Balance

Effective time management is critical for a successful business. But running a successful practice requires not only knowing how to manage time but also how to manage energy. If you know how to manage your time and energy, you will be able to better focus on the practice of law, thereby generating more income.

Use these 11 tips to help you operate more efficiently and alleviate unnecessary stress as you navigate your week.

1. Use a calendar.

Digital planners (or even print planners) are a great tool for having a continuous snapshot of your day — including time spent, availability and priorities — right at your fingertips. Sync your digital calendar to multiple devices so that whether you are in the office, at home or on the go, you always have access. Consider assigning colors to distinguish business meetings from family priorities or appointments.

2. Make lists.

A key to great time management is simply being aware of everything you have to do. Create a list of all your tasks for the day and the week, including deadlines. By writing these down, you free your mind from having to expend energy on trying to remember everything that needs to be done. Color coding, numbering or dating items helps you rank the tasks by urgency and see what still needs to be done.

3. Time block your day.

Block time on your calendar for activities based on priority and your availability. Plan your most challenging tasks for when you have the most energy. For most people, this is generally in the morning. Combine similar tasks, such as responding to emails, to help you be more efficient and expend less energy throughout the day.

4. Limit your distractions.

Many things will pop up during your day with the potential to distract you and derail your schedule. To help limit distractions, determine appropriate times for sending a call to voicemail. When you are working on something that you really need to focus on, close your email and turn off notifications on your phone for social media. Let others know you are working on something time-sensitive and close your door or post a note asking to not be disturbed if necessary.

5. Get organized.

Disorganization directly and negatively impacts your ability to manage your time. To combat disorganization, first de-clutter your space — studies show that people with tidy work environments are more focused and more productive. Then, establish a filing system (or revisit your existing system to make sure it still works for you). What can you store digitally? What do you need to keep paper copies of?

6. Create shortcuts.

Although every day brings new challenges, there are also certain activities that we are destined to repeat multiple times a week or throughout a day. Save time by creating shortcuts for web pages you visit frequently, spreadsheets for data that is compiled regularly or templates for emails, letters and documents you prepare on a recurring basis. For your clients, create simple forms and checklists to help them gather important information or documents that are relevant to their case.



7. Rely on reminders and alerts.

Don't expect yourself to remember everything you need to get done throughout the day. Take advantage of the built-in reminders and alerts that come with digital calendars that can be customized to your varied needs. Use reminders to give yourself plenty of notice for a deadline tomorrow or even next week. A 15-minute alert can be helpful for gathering last-minute items or thoughts before a meeting. A quick pop-up can also nudge you on to the next task on your calendar.

8. Plan to be early.

Even those of us with the best of intentions can be delayed by a last-minute phone call or email or the urge to get that one last thought on paper before leaving. The best way to ensure you are on time for meetings and appointments is to target being a few minutes early. Being able to start meetings on time will allow you to stay on schedule throughout the day — and you may even gain time back if you wrap things up early and get ahead of schedule.

9. Delegate.

If you are swamped and there are other people around that can help you get things done, don't hesitate to ask for help! When delegating duties, always be mindful of others' time and their skills. For example, if spreadsheets aren't your strong suit, rely on a teammate who is particularly advanced in writing or working with them. This is a more productive use of everyone's time.

10. Don't overcommit.

Learning to say "no" may not come easily for you; however try not to take on more than you can handle at any given time. Sometimes giving a firm no is necessary because you simply don't have time or aren't the right person for the task. At other times, you may want to avoid committing or declining until you've had time to think about it or check your schedule.

11. Leave time for self-care.

Decompress by taking breaks and caring for yourself. Self-care means eating well, getting enough sleep and exercising. It also means doing things that will help you de-stress – like listening to music, having coffee with a friend, taking a walk, etc. – whatever will help you recharge and be able to focus better during the work week.



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About the Author

Cecilia Armenteros, Esq., is an experienced attorney with over 22 years in practice in Florida. She is the owner and founder of Armenteros Law, P.A., where she currently practices primarily in the areas of family law, probate, real estate and bankruptcy law. Cecilia received her B.A. in political science from Florida International University in 1991, and Juris Doctorate degree from St. Thomas University School of Law in 1993. She is admitted to the Florida Bar (1994) and the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida Bankruptcy Court.

Cecilia has served on the Executive Board of Directors for the First Family Law American Inns of Court, and is presently immediate Past President. She is also a member of the Florida Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, and the Collaborative Family Law Institute, as well as a member of the Attorney's Title Insurance Fund. Cecilia has also appeared in the "South Florida Legal Guide" as a South Florida Top Lawyer; recipient of the Martindale-Hubbell Client Distinction Award (2012) as well as the ARAG-Elite Service Award (2015).



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