

Time Blocking Checklist

A practical system for structuring your day around real priorities.

BEFORE YOU START

- ☐ **List fixed commitments first**
Meetings, appointments, calls — anything with a time you don't control.
- ☐ **Identify your top 3 priorities for the day**
Write these before opening your calendar, not after.
- ☐ **Estimate task duration honestly, then add 25%**
Most people underestimate how long real work takes.
- ☐ **Block deep work during your peak energy hours**
Protect your sharpest window for your hardest task.
- ☐ **Keep every block in one calendar**
Not scattered across a notes app, a planner, and a to-do list.

BUILDING YOUR BLOCKS

- ☐ **Assign each task a specific start and end time**
A task without a time limit expands to fill the day.
- ☐ **Batch similar tasks into the same block**
Email, calls, and admin work grouped together, not scattered.
- ☐ **Leave 10-15 minute buffers between blocks**
Buffers absorb overruns so one delay doesn't cascade.

BUILDING YOUR BLOCKS (CONTINUED)

- ☐ **Color-code by category**
Deep work, admin, personal, meetings — scannable at a glance.
- ☐ **Protect one 90-minute block for uninterrupted focus**
This is the block that actually moves your priorities forward.

DURING THE DAY

- ☐ **Start each block on time**
Even if the previous block ran over — don't let delays compound.
- ☐ **Silence notifications for the duration of a focus block**
One glance at a notification resets your attention, not just your time.
- ☐ **Use early finishes for the next block's prep**
Don't backfill spare time with new, unplanned work.
- ☐ **Log what actually happened vs. what was planned**
This single habit makes next week's estimates more accurate.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- ☐ **Overpacking the day with zero buffer time**
- ☐ **Blocking tasks without estimating duration first**
- ☐ **Treating the plan as fixed rather than a draft**

MORE MISTAKES TO AVOID

- ☐ Scheduling deep work during known low-energy hours
- ☐ Ignoring recurring interruptions instead of blocking around them

WEEKLY REVIEW

- ☐ Compare planned blocks to what actually happened
- ☐ Note which task types consistently run over time
- ☐ Identify your most productive block of the week
Protect that exact slot going forward — don't let it drift.
- ☐ Adjust next week's blocks based on this data
Time blocking is a system you revise weekly, not a plan you set once.