

5 Time Management Techniques: The Cheat Sheet

Adopt them in order: **measure, triage, structure, execute, maintain**

1. TIME AUDIT

Fixes: not knowing where your hours go.
Best for: everyone - always start here.
Learning curve: 1 week of logging, 30-min blocks.
Classic failure: auditing, getting depressed, changing nothing. Act on ONE finding: kill a meeting, batch a category, delegate a block.

2. EISENHOWER MATRIX

Fixes: working hard on the wrong things.
Best for: founders whose day is all 'urgent'.
Learning curve: 15 min/day, instant.
Classic failure: everything lands in quadrant 1. If more than 3 tasks are 'urgent + important', your definition of urgent is broken. Protect 'important, not urgent'.

3. TIME BLOCKING

Fixes: priorities that never reach the calendar.
Best for: days eaten by meetings and messages.
Learning curve: 2-3 weeks to calibrate durations.
Classic failure: blocking 100% of the day. Block 60-70%, leave buffer, replan daily in 5 minutes. The calendar is a draft, not a contract.

4. POMODORO

Fixes: focus shredded inside the blocks.
Best for: avoided solo work (writing, finance, hard email).
Learning curve: 1 day. 25 min work / 5 min break, long break after 4 rounds (Cirillo, late 1980s).
Classic failure: breaking real flow at minute 25, or quitting after one interruption. In flow? Keep going. Interrupted? Restart the pomodoro.

5. WEEKLY REVIEW

Fixes: systems that decay after two weeks.
Best for: everyone - the maintenance layer.
Learning curve: 30-60 min, same slot every week.
Classic failure: a vague 'catch-up' with no agenda. Use a fixed checklist: clear inboxes, review goals, plan next week. Skip it and the other four die.

The 7-Day Experiment Tracker

One technique per week. Score it daily. Keep or drop on day 7 - then test the next one.

HOW TO RUN THE EXPERIMENT

- 1. Pick ONE technique from the cheat sheet - the one that matches your current problem.
- 2. Use it every workday for 7 days. Judge nothing before day 7 - friction peaks on day 3.
- 3. Each evening: rate your focus (1-5), note what broke, and whether you would repeat the day.
- 4. Day 7: total the scores. 25+ = keep it and add the next technique. Under 25 = adjust or drop.

TECHNIQUE TESTED: _____ WEEK OF: _____

Day	Date	Focus (1-5)	What broke / what worked	Repeat day?	Keep?
Day 1					
Day 2					
Day 3					
Day 4					
Day 5					
Day 6					
Day 7					

DAY-7 VERDICT

Total focus score: _____ / 35 25 or more: KEEP - add the next technique on Monday.
Under 25: adjust one variable (duration, time of day, tool) and retest, or drop it and move on.
Next technique to test: _____ Starting: _____

Rule of the experiment: never test two techniques at once - you will not know which one worked.