

Welcome to **Productivity Hacks** - enjoy the 7 excellent posts below

* **Productivity Hacks+**

From PAFSA's Royal Club

As a PA/EA we often put the needs of our Executives before our own, and end-up making sacrifices in one or more of the other important areas of our lives. The KEY to living a Productive and Balanced life, lies in managing our time realistically and caringly.

5 Steps as foundation on how to “do’ life!

Step 1: *Write down* your Long-and Short-Term personal goals and break them up into stages/time-frames.

Step 2: Start your week productively by creating a task list for each day. Add as you go along.

Step 3: *Create time blocks* for your LIFE in your weekly schedule for daily self-care; self-development and family.

Step 4: *Set up rewards* for yourself when you achieve at least 80% of your goals. Perfection (100%) is not the key objective.

Step 5: *Take regular mental breaks* every hour to give your mind a chance to reset! Also if possible, walk away from your desk and do a stretch! Make regular lunch dates with yourself and sit in a quiet setting where you can be free of noise and distractions.

It's never too late to master that 'master' called TIME!



Ansunette Fick
South Africa's
PA of the Year
2008, shares some
tips!

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After reading an interesting [@Lifehack](#) by Bruno Boksic about *Why Being a People Pleaser is Terrible for Your Productivity*, I had to ask myself:

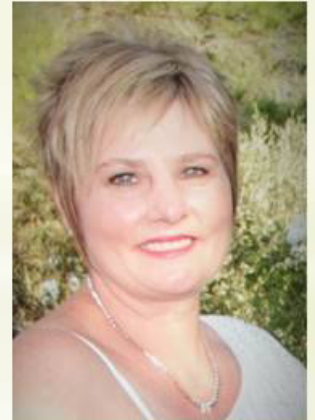
Is being a people pleaser counterproductive?

People might frown upon us 'people pleasers' but I think that this is probably one of my strongest personality traits and I try to use it to my advantage in the workplace. However, dropping whatever you are busy with to assist anyone is often counterproductive. I have had to discipline the people-pleaser in me by following a few rules:

- **Finish** what you are busy with before assisting someone.
- **Prioritize** requests if you receive more than one.
- **Delegate** tasks to the correct person so that it does not come back to you.
- **Support** and enable others to do it themselves the next time. It is okay to say **no**.
- Sometimes you just have to **do it** to get it done.

Helping others energizes me but these simple rules sometimes protect me from myself! I find that applying them increases my time and decreases my stress.

Are you a people pleaser?



Lynn Kruger
South Africa's
PA of the Year
2009, found these
tips for us!

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How many times do you open an email, read it, and then leave it in your inbox to deal with later? Don't do this!

Employ the OHIO Strategy

It's actually taking up more of your time and energy to process it multiple times.

Instead, follow the OHIO (only handle it once) strategy and deal with it immediately! Whether that's by deleting it, answering it, shooting it off to the right person.

(Only for larger messages that will require more time, add it to your to-do list right away).

Source: Erin Greenawald, themuse.com

**SAVE hours
in your DAY!**



Lizzie Mudzingwa
South Africa's
PA of the Year
2014, found these
tips for us!

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How important is ONE HOUR in your life? Let's look at some facts!

✓ *20% of the average workday is spent on "crucial" and "important" things, while 80% of the average workday is spent on things that have "little value" or "no value".*

✓ *A person who works with a "messy" or cluttered desk spends, on average, 1 1/2 hours per day looking for things or being distracted. Good Time Managers do not allocate their time to those who "demand" it, but rather, to those who "deserve" it.*

5 Top Time-Management Tips

- **Give Up Social Media** - We are not saying delete all your accounts, but when you're at work, you need to find a way to refrain from checking your phone every 30 minutes for a notification from Twitter or Facebook. This is for your breaks or own personal time.
- **Schedule Shorter Meetings** - Take charge and set up a structure for topics to discuss and give an allotted time. A good tip is to ask attendees a few days before to send you any queries to discuss in an email so you are better prepared to answer them.
- **Learn to LOVE The 2 Minute Rule** - If a task takes less than 2 minutes to complete then do it straight away. If it takes longer, then schedule in a time when you are free to complete it.
- **Exercise In The Morning** - I know it feels almost impossible sometimes, but it honestly sets you up for the day.
- **Outsource and Hire Virtual Assistants** - Are you giving up too much of your time to mundane tasks that aren't making the best use of your skills? Then look into hiring a VA to help out.

Source: [Jane Braithwaite](#)

**SAVE hours
in your DAY!**



Chelene Venter,
South Africa's
PA of the Year
2015, found these
tips for us!

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The Power of saying NO to increase Productivity

There is no doubt that **saying yes** has its advantages, but have you ever thought that you don't have to accept every opportunity that comes your way? Saying no is necessary. The key is to learn the balancing act of weighing your workload against the needs of others.

→ WHAT to say NO to

- Ineffective Tasks
- Task & Projects which doesn't contribute to your deliverables
- Unnecessary meetings
- Unrealistic deadlines on low-priority projects
- Be available electronically 24/7
- Work that could be better accomplished by someone else.

→ HOW to say NO

- **Define your priorities:** Take the time to define your highest priorities
- **Set expectations:** Inform your boss if you are bogged down projects
- **Be polite but firm:** Be kind when saying no
- **Be honest:** Don't fabricate an excuse, your no is your NO.

Resources: www.businessinsider.com ; www.cancapital.com

*Is Saying No
a challenge
for you?*



By Carine Daniels
South Africa's
PA of the Year 2016

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of the PA of the Year title

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Mindfulness may seem like a great idea, but how do you become more mindful in the context of a busy day! I came across [this article](#) which was adapted from [Mindfulness at Work for Dummies](#) by Shamash Alidina and Juliet Adams.

I have summarized it for you. It makes huge sense for all of us busy PAs.

- 1. Be Consciously Present** - When you're consciously present at work, you're aware of two aspects of your moment-to-moment experience—what's going on around you and what's going on within you.
- 2. Be a Single-Tasker** - Single-tasking is doing one thing at a time. Most people know multitasking is ineffective nowadays.
- 3. Use Mindful Reminders** - The word "mindful" means to remember. Being on auto-pilot means that you're not fully present and awake to the opportunities and choices around you. You can't be creative.
- 4. Slow Down To Speed Up** - Rest can increase efficiency. Being in a panicky rush leads to bad decisions and is a misuse of energy. Instead, pause, focus on listening, stroll rather than run, and generally take your time when at work.
- 5. Make Stress Your Friend** - Your beliefs about stress clearly affect how they impact on your health and well-being.
- 6. Feel Gratitude** - Plenty of evidence suggests that actively practicing gratitude makes you feel better and has a positive impact on your creativity, health, working relationships, and quality of work.
- 7. Cultivate Humility** - Humble people have a quiet confidence about themselves and don't feel the need to continuously remind others of their achievements. Humility is often confused with meekness or timidity but they're not the same. Humility does not mean seeing yourself as inferior; rather, it means being aware of your natural dependence on and equity with those around you.
- 8. Accept What You Can't Change** - To be mindful means to accept this present moment just as it is. And it means to accept yourself, just as you are now. It doesn't mean resignation or giving up. But it does mean acknowledging the truth of how things are at this time before trying to change anything.

Source [Jane Braithwaite](#)

8 Ways to Be More Mindful at Work



Heidi Stiger
South Africa's
PA of the Year 2017
found these tips for
us!

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The SINGLE-MINUTE APPROACH works for me!

* **Single Minute Information Retrieval (SMIR)** - If I cannot provide/find information within a single minute, I am not working the system correctly. Therefore I always have a clear understanding of how I need to file in order to retrieve successfully:-

HOW - will it be paper or electronic filing?

Paper filing is kept to a minimum and consists of very specific signed contracts.

Agendas, minutes, letters, memos, articles and attendance registers become PDF/scanned documents filed electronically as follows:-

Choose a location for the filing system

My location is the default main folder "My Documents", where most of the documents are filed

Create a main folder - this folder serves as the filing cabinet

My main folder is the name of the manager I support and I support eight, each with his/her own main folder

Create sub-folders

My sub-folders for each of my managers pertain to the portfolio he/she is responsible for, *i.e. financial, procurement, HR, production, etc.*

This method of electronic filing not only ensures that I know exactly where documents can be found - *and within that single minute* - but also provides my managers with easy access when I am not in the office.

Is filing still your Achilles- heel?



By Sharon
Künnemann
South Africa's
PA of the Year 2018

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of the PA of the Year title