

## THE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

---

Over the years I've occasionally come across people who prefer to rely on memory for upcoming events and appointments. I can only imagine that they either have an amazing memory, a very simple life or are in store for a rude awakening someday. If you have any level of responsibility over other people, whether that be at work or at home, then I highly recommend the weekly schedule. In fact, the more people in your life, the more important a weekly schedule becomes.

### **The Weekly Schedule - Ugh.**

Personally, I would love to do many other things than work on my schedule each week. It's work and it requires forethought and emotional energy. However, I have NEVER regretted it once I'm done. It falls into the category of things to do that won't serve you now, but will reap great rewards later.

### **Benefits of the Weekly Schedule:**

- **Peace of Mind.**  
When you have scheduled your week really well, you will know that you won't forget or miss anything important that week. You will prioritise your time based on the allotted hours you have available and can know that you've done your best.
- **Maximised Creativity.**  
When you choose to free your memory up from having to remember basic things, you increase your brain bandwidth so that you can focus on other things. Who wants to lie in bed at night and try to think up what the schedule is supposed to be tomorrow?
- **Increased Productivity.**  
Building your schedule each week will allow you to build the most appropriate hours into your week for the most important things, which means you'll get the things done you really need to.
- **A Balanced Lifestyle.**  
If you build a great weekly schedule, then you will make sure you leave room for ALL the priorities in your life, rather than one or two. For instance, it's harder for an honest person to schedule a workweek that excludes loved ones when you intentionally choose to schedule every aspect of your week.
- **Stronger Relationships.**  
Again, a good schedule will make sure your family, friends, direct reports, and colleagues get the attention they need. It's nearly impossible to balance your relationships without the weekly schedule.

## POINTERS ON BUILDING YOUR WEEKLY SCHEDULE

### Create a New Schedule Each Week.

Yep. You heard me. Build a new schedule each week. No, wait. That probably doesn't apply to everyone. Of course, if you've read this far, it probably still applies to you. The only reason I can see for NOT building a new schedule each week is if you don't have kids or grandkids, your job is exactly the same every day, and what you do each week is also exactly the same. I know a few empty nester's and retired folk who can just build a basic schedule and live with that. For the rest of us, we will need to rebuild our schedule each week.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wed
6:00	Wake	Wake	Wake
6:30	Writing	Writing	Writing
7:00			
7:30	Get Ready Work	Get Ready Work	Get Ready Work
8:00	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:30	Leave for work	Leave for work	Leave for work
9:00	Daily Planning/Calls	Daily Planning/Calls	Daily Planning/Calls
	Work on Top Priorities	Work on Top Priorities	Work on Top Priorities
10:00			
10:30	10 minute walking break	10 minute walking break	10 minute walking break
1:00	Top Priority Work	Top Priority Work	Top Priority Work
	Email Processing	Email Processing	Email Processing

*Sample Schedule*

### Block Out Work Hours in Your Calendar.

This may not be relevant to everyone, but it is to me. I block out the hours I intend to work each day of my week. This allows me to make sure I'm staying 'in-bounds' in terms of my committed hours and it also sends a clear message to everyone who has access to my calendar when I am at work and when I am not.

### Build Your Weekly Schedule Before Your Week Begins.

I used to build my schedule on Monday mornings, when my week begins. I discovered that, by waiting until Monday, I missed scheduling out Monday. In fact, sometimes I wouldn't even get to building my weekly schedule until the day was nearly over! So now I try to build my week on Friday or Saturday at the latest.

### **Schedule Your Life, Not Your Work.**

The best way to ensure we don't go home and become a couch potato is to schedule what will happen when you get home. Make sure you set aside time for your spouse and kids, for rest and recreation, for friends, and for your health. I'll be honest, this is hard for most of us (and me). I think we often enjoy the 'spontaneity' of just coming home with little planned. The problem is that little planned can easily turn into hours of nothing.

### **Big Rocks First.**

I think you know what I mean. You figure out what is most important for you to accomplish that week (it likely changes week to week) and schedule the appropriate time in. Hint: look at least three or four weeks out when you put in your big rocks. You may discover that there is something coming up that you know you'll need to work on now that you should schedule time for. I'll talk more about project management and advanced planning another time.

### **Eat The Frog.**

Perhaps you haven't heard the analogy yet from author Brian Tracy's book "[Eat That Frog](#)". The principle goes like this: If you had to eat a frog as part of your day, when should you eat it? Answer: first thing, get it over with. Take care of whatever you have facing you and dread doing early in the week.

### **Follow Your Plan.**

Obviously, your time is wasted if you build a schedule and then just do whatever you feel like doing anyway. The point of the weekly schedule is to keep you on target.

### **Advanced Weekly Planning:**

These next few ideas are not for the newbie. If you can successfully build and follow a weekly schedule, then consider taking it to the next level.

### **Build Your Ideal Week.**

The idea is that you block out what you want every day to look like in a perfect world, and then build your weekly schedule based on that ideal.

### **Identify Your Ideal Blocks.**

You have blocks of activity that you know you HAVE to accomplish each week in order to survive. You should also identify how much time you should block out each week for 'Admin' time - that's time to return calls, handle emails, etc.

### **Treat Blocked Time Like Meetings.**

You know those blocks of time are critical to your week and will ensure you don't go overtime or compromise something important you have planned. So be very intentional about keeping your blocked time for things like admin, event prep, etc. Sometimes people will ask me if they can meet with me during a time I've blocked out; often my response is simply, "Sorry, I already have things I need to work on during that time. Let's setup a time to discuss it tomorrow or next week."

**Block Out Flex Time.**

No schedule is perfect. Leave room every day for flex time. That way, perhaps you'll be able to make the occasional trip to the bathroom and call your spouse!

**Consider Creating Themes to Your Days or Hours.**

I haven't tried this yet, but the idea intrigues me. What I like about this idea is that this principle should allow you to focus better by minimising the constant need to multi-task each day.

**Schedule Two or More Weeks Out.**

I don't always do this, but when I do, I love it. It forces me to think more long term and shows me what my limitations are in terms of time available for people and meetings. If I over-schedule in meetings one week, I can intentionally make up for lost time the following week

*Article by Wayne Hedlund*

*<http://www.transformingleader.org/2011/05/time-management-101-weekly-schedule.html>*