

## 10 Ways to Work Less and Achieve More

How does a 4-hour work week sound to you?

According to Timothy Ferriss and his book *The 4-hour work week*, it is possible, even if you're someone else's employee. The idea is to reduce your work time to the bare minimum input for maximum results so you can spend more time doing things you want to do and being who you want to be.

At the moment, I have a 4-hour work day one day a week and an 8-hour work day on another. So, I'm getting there! Plenty of free time to go to *Thomas the Tank Engine* concerts with Jake during the week : )

Here are 10 ideas from Timothy's book worth contemplating:

### 1. Get inspired:

Focus your energy on doing what excites you. Don't limit your potential by pursuing only realistic, boring goals. Challenge yourself! This will give you an added energy boost and the inspiration needed to achieve your goals. It will often also take up less of your time.

### 2. Work only when you're most effective

Ever noticed how much longer even simple things can take to do when you work on them when you're feeling tired? By working only when you're most effective, whenever that might be for you, life is both more productive and enjoyable.

### 3. Apply the Pareto Principle to your work

Be effective, not efficient. There's a difference! Effectiveness is doing the things that bring you closer to your goals. Efficiency is performing a given task (whether important or not) in the most economical manner possible. Being efficient without regard to effectiveness is the default mode of the universe. Efficiency is still important, but useless unless it's applied to the right things. Use the Pareto Principle - also known as the 80/20 Principle (meaning 80% of results come from 20% of time and effort devoted to them) and eliminate anything you're doing that's a waste of your time. So, limiting your tasks to the important ones will shorten your work time and increase your productivity.

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## 4. Apply Parkinson's Law too

This law says that a task will swell in perceived importance and complexity in relation to the time allotted for completing it. It's the magic of the deadline. If you are given 24 hours to complete a project, the time pressure forces you to focus on execution and you have no choice but to strip it back to the bare essentials. Given a week to complete the same task, you now have six extra days to make a mountain out of a molehill. Given two months, it can become a mental monster. The end result of the shorter deadline is almost inevitably of equal or higher quality due to greater focus. Therefore, shorten work time to limit tasks to the important. Ideally, use both the Pareto principle and Parkinson's Law together for your best results. Identify the few critical tasks that will contribute the most to your results and schedule them with very short and clear deadlines.

## 5. Find people to work for you

Outsource as much as you can. Why spend your time on an activity that you can outsource at a cost of \$20 an hour? Outsource as much as you can to free up your time to do something else you want or need to do, or to earn several times more than that working on something else. Timothy Ferriss even outsources some of his personal life! He uses remote executive assistants from *Brickwork* for business projects and the concierge service *Your Man In India* for both personal and business tasks. (Note: Thanks Trish for researching this article for me : ) )

## 6. Emphasize your strengths instead of fixing your weaknesses

Most of us are good at a handful of things and pretty miserable at others. It's far more lucrative to leverage your strengths than to fix all the chinks in your armour. Focus on the best use of your weapons. Choose multiplication of results using your strengths over incremental improvements from fixing weaknesses.

## 7. Forget time management

You shouldn't be trying to do more in each day or trying to fill every second with a work fidget of some type. Busyness is most often used to avoid doing the few critically important, but uncomfortable actions. Instead, focus on prioritizing.

## 8. Create a 'not-to-do' list and live by it

Cut out all time-consuming, unproductive activities that you currently do to fill time to feel as though you're being productive. Be honest with yourself. What are your crutch activities?

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## 9. Stop multitasking

Yes, you heard right! If you prioritize properly, there is no need to multitask. It's a symptom of 'task creep' - doing more to feel productive while actually accomplishing less. You should have, at most, two primary tasks or goals per day. If you're not sure what these should be, practice looking at your 'to do' list and asking yourself, 'If this is the only thing I accomplish today, will I be satisfied with my day?' Work on each of these things separately from start to finish without distraction. Divided attention will result in more frequent interruptions, lapses in concentration, poorer net results and less gratification.

## 10. Practice the art of non-finishing

Starting something doesn't automatically justify finishing it. Develop the habit of non-finishing that which is boring or unproductive.

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