

Calendar Tricks that will help Productivity

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Nearly all of us are connected to electronic calendars these days. Although this article references Microsoft Outlook, these tricks will work with any electronic calendar and will help make you more productive.

What's the secret to maximizing productivity and efficiency? There's no single silver bullet, but one sure-fire way to make gains is with calendar tricks that will keep you organized and focused. From scheduling "no meeting" time blocks to integrating mobile so you never miss a meeting—the art of calendar optimization is crucial.

Here are seven simple calendar tricks you can use to bring your productivity to the next level:

- 1. Schedule "no meeting" time blocks**—Instead of multitasking, set aside time without interruptions. "When people multitask, often they do multiple things badly," says David Sanbonmatsu, University of Utah professor of Psychology. "A lot of times, the people who multitask the most are the worst at it...it's individuals who lack impulse control." (From [Forbes](#).)
- 2. Set out-of-office (OOO) time**—Identify blocks of time on your calendar as "unavailable," "not working" or "OOO" if you're not working a certain day or are traveling.

Pro hack: If you have a regular non-work appointment or commute time when you're unavailable, schedule it as recurring OOO time. To do this in Outlook, just open the meeting you want to set as recurring and on the Meeting tab (in the Options group), click **Recurrence**. Select your desired frequency, set options for the frequency and click **OK**.
- 3. Connect your calendar on your mobile**—It happens to everyone: You're not on your laptop and a meeting runs late, you forget when and where your next meeting is and you end up shuffling in with a flurry of apologies five minutes after the next meeting begins. Integrate your calendar on your mobile device to stay up-to-date on all your meetings.
- 4. Install buffer time**—Whenever possible, schedule an extra 10 minutes on either side of every meeting, so that you have enough time to clean up from the current meeting and then prepare and set up for the next meeting. This will also help you avoid the feeling of "running" from meeting to meeting.
- 5. Schedule breaks**—When you're completing tasks like a do-it-all, it's easy to plow through and work till you're fried. "Getting up for a few minutes and getting our blood flowing and some more oxygen to the brain is a necessary piece of the work day," according to the [Huffington Post's Healthy Living team](#). Schedule breaks into your calendar to avoid burnout and boost creativity and let your calendar reminders hold you accountable.
- 6. Set check-in reminders**—As major deadlines approach, schedule check-ins with reminders for benchmarks along the way. This avoids end-of-project stress and ensures you're checking off tasks before they've passed. Include team members on your calendar reminders to encourage team check-ins as well.
- 7. Integrate business contacts**—Simplify inviting business contacts by integrating your calendar



with your contact list.

Pro hack: You can add a contact from an email message in Office 365. Open the message so that the person's name is shown in one of these lines: From, To, Cc or Bcc. Right-click the appropriate name and click **Add to Outlook Contacts**. A new window opens, where you can fill in the details you want and then **OK** when done.

Use your calendar to stay on top of your day by optimizing organization and ultimately making you more productive.