

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE ON

**How to
Design an
Ideal
Schedule**



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Schedules have always been the most lucrative choice when it comes to time-management or having an organized lifestyle. But they don't work equally for everyone. Most of the schedules taper off within the first week or a month

So should we say that the idea of creating a schedule is useless?

Maybe not.

The reasons behind frequent failures of schedules are simple. In short, they aren't crafted properly.

If you're on the side of having a schedule, even if a simple one, then this E-book is made to support your purpose.

Let's start with a story which might reflect your situation (I'm somewhat a storyteller and I love doing that).

It's just another normal day, but not for you. You're overwhelmed by your hectic lifestyle and all the mess happening around you. So you decide to properly manage your time to make the most out of the 24 hours which you get each day.

You think for some time and then come up with an idea of creating a schedule for yourself. You do it because it seems the best idea to you. And why wouldn't it be like that? After all, everyone's making a schedule, and all the experts are asking people to do the same.

So you tear off a page from your notepad, pick up a ruler and a pencil to draw a table on it, write down the hours of the day in the first column, and think about the things that you can include in it. Then you fill up the empty spaces with the names of tasks and activities that you want to do.

Wow! You had finally made a schedule. You were excited and thought that your life will be much easier now. For the first few days you happily followed the schedule which you had made. Each day you tried to act according to it to maintain its purpose.

But soon you realized that it isn't working effectively for you and making you tired, yet you try to keep doing things as you had planned. Some days pass and you realize that you aren't following your schedule the same way you did at the beginning.

As days pass, you forget about the schedule and your life becomes the same as before. The piece of paper that you had written a schedule on gets crumbled and lost somewhere inside your drawer, until you discover it again someday.

Looking at that paper reminds that you had once made a schedule but failed to follow it. You feel guilty about yourself for not doing what you were meant to do. But you don't decide to make a new schedule either, since you knew that it hadn't worked for you before, and perhaps was a bad idea.

If you're somewhat like most of the people, including me, then you might have definitely made a schedule at

least once and failed badly at it. Although the idea of designing a schedule sounds unattainable and beneficial at the same time, it's something which is capable of bringing a significant change in your life.

The underlying purposes of creating a schedule

All schedules are made to attain certain core purposes and to achieve the planned goals.

However, if you closely observe the intentions of people willing to create a schedule, you'll find out they're all eager to achieve something higher. They're trying to bring a change and balance in their lives, for which they use a schedule.

What I've learned after observing people is that their fundamental motives while creating a schedule are:

- Discipline
- Consistency
- Focus

These three things are the ones which most people struggle with in life, and try to achieve by means of a

schedule. It's hard to be disciplined, consistent, and focused when you already have a lot of things going in your life.

Hence it becomes crucial to find out a way to keep up with these objectives. When all these objectives seem unattainable, a schedule seems like a good option to bring them back onto the track.

Understand these three intents in detail before you read further:

Discipline

Discipline is when you do something even if you don't want to. You might need to be a bit harsh on yourself to sustain discipline in your life. But you won't mind the discomfort caused by being disciplined because you recognize that it's there to benefit you.

Consistency

It is the essential habit which keeps you going in the long run. Lost consistency leads to great losses and missed opportunities. Consistency is the same value

that complements perseverance. Consistency is about doing your work without stopping in the long haul.

Focus

It helps to decide the areas of consideration and to act on them accordingly. Focus is critical in the selection of priorities and in being decisive about choices. Lack of focus doesn't give the desired outcomes in spite of working hard.

All these three factors are entwined with each other. Neglecting one can lead to the ineffectiveness of the other two, and make your life imbalanced.

A good schedule reduces the risk of this imbalance and hence is preferable.

If you're thinking that these things are what we strive for, then you're mistaken. If you dive even deeper into the matter to know the purpose of having a schedule, then you'll find out that all schedules are made for the same reason and have only one ultimate purpose.

This is what a schedule is made for

What's the need for a schedule?

Here's the straight answer – Schedules are made for **GETTING THINGS DONE.**

That's all.



You're reading this E-book because you want to make an ideal schedule for yourself. But you want an ideal schedule for yourself so that you can *get things done*.

It's simple.

You might have become irritated because no matter how hard you turn things around or experiment with your habits, things don't work for you. The 24 hours

don't seem enough. You don't get time to do your leisure activities. Life seems to pass quickly.

You work but fail to get the desired result. The time you require always exceeds your predicted duration.

So frustration comes quite naturally, and even more when you plan things but they don't work.

But it's not your fault.

Even if you're in the habit of taking the blame on yourself and calling yourself a dork, let me tell you again that it isn't your fault.

Then what might be the obvious reason behind your failure?

Probably your schedule itself.

Either you believe it or not but the reason why schedules of most people fail is that their schedules are crafted improperly (I know I've said that before). These people jot down everything they can think of in that tiny space until it becomes enough crowded.

Soon they find themselves tumbling behind and fail to keep up with the pace of their schedules. This makes them feel guilty and gives them the sense of being irresponsible. They're willing to do things, they're ready to change their lifestyle, but their plans miss the mark when they put themselves into trouble by creating a schedule which they aren't capable of following.

Although scheduling looks like a good option for organizing your life, it isn't the most effective way.

You still need to do all the management of events by yourself, plan how to react towards instant problems, and find the most appropriate approach to deal with difficulties.

In fact, your schedule isn't at all enough to contain your whole life. It's just an outline to guide you.

"The more crammed your schedule is, the more chaotic your life will be."

The most basic mistake people make while designing a schedule

There are plentiful reasons why your schedule isn't working. But there's one largest myth which is quite popular and widely accepted. This belief is a big slayer of effectiveness and productivity.

That myth is – a schedule should be rigid.



This kind of schedule is like a burden of two ton rock on you trying to crush you each day. I know that a two ton rock might not only be a burden but also kill you, but spare my metaphor and try to understand.

Each and every schedule is accompanied by this myth and its existence is barely questioned.

People make a tough schedule, jump in it with all their might, and fail. You're unlikely to follow a schedule which you're forced to follow. Even if somehow you do, either it loses its purpose, or it makes your life miserable.

A stiff schedule ties your hands. It takes away your freedom. It forces you to do things irrespective of your will. It makes you a prisoner of your own decision.

So be mindful while creating your schedule, and make sure that it gives you enough space to breathe.

A few major reasons why most schedules fail

The obvious reason is that you focus more on creating a schedule instead of getting things done.



If you feel the urge to fit everything into your schedule then try to resist that urge. That habit opens doors for new mistakes. Also, most of the times your estimations are inaccurate when you try to do everything and think

that your plans will work. This is a good way to shoot yourself in the foot.

I'm pointing out some of the mistakes which are commonly made. Just make sure that you don't make any of them, because that's what smart people do. They avoid making mistakes. Congratulations if you don't make any of them, because in that case, you're smart by default.

Ignoring small things

While it seems fair enough to consider only major activities and events of your life in a schedule, ignoring the small ones creates problems later. If you plan to go to your office, then you have to consider your 15 minute drive and maybe 5 minutes for filling the gas as well.

Your whole day is filled with such little things that aren't much significant but take your time. Sort out these things and do or don't do them as per your needs. Like if you check your mail for 5 minutes, 10 times a day. Then you eventually spend 50 minutes of your day in just reading mails. This time can be decreased by reducing the frequency of checking mails.

Pay heed to small things, because ignoring them can prevent you from making a schedule that is good enough by creating holes in it.

Not focusing on outcome

One big reason why scheduling doesn't seem advantageous to some people is that they don't focus on outcomes.

You plan to study for one hour of the day and do it, good. You decide to learn a guitar for 30 minutes each day and do it too, awesome.

Then what's the reason why things aren't in your favour? The natural reason might be that you aren't focusing on the outcome.

You study but don't care if you've learned what you were supposed to. You play the guitar but don't try to track your progress and keep hitting the strings anyway.

So how should you get a better outcome from what you do? Here's a tip - Don't just focus on what you're doing but also on what you're getting.

Trying to do everything at once

Even if you work without even wasting a second until you become entirely exhausted, you cannot get everything done.

A better approach is to divide the tasks that require more time into parts, and assign some time to each of them for a few days, instead of trying to them all at once.

If you even attempt to do everything at once then you'll find yourself exercising for 5 minutes, reading a book for 15 minutes, creating office presentation for 30 minutes, learning French for 10 minutes, playing an instrument for 10 minutes and watching news for 5 minutes. However without getting anything done and creating a complete disorder out of your time.

Take up a task, complete it within a few days, and move on to another one. Keep it this way instead of thrashing upon everything at once.

Not planning at all

How can you expect yourself to do things without having a proper idea about how you're going to make

them happen? You need to know what you really want and what kind of expectations do you have from your work.

Will your actions benefit you? Are you doing the right things? Is there another good way for doing what you do?

Keep all your doubts, questions, and requirements in mind while creating a plan and write it down accordingly.

These were just the straightforward mistakes which are made frequently by people.

However the complexity increases with the way you try to build your schedule. So be prepared to face a few unexpected problems and to find your own ways of vanishing them.

If you just stop making most of these mistakes then you can remarkably increase the usefulness of your schedule.

Nevertheless, success of your schedule not only depends upon doing less wrong things but also on

doing the right things. Actually, it greatly depends on doing the right things.

Now go and create your own ideal schedule.

Oh no. Wait. Wait. Wait. Please wait!

Thank God you're still here. I thought that you'll go away.

I forgot to tell you those right things which you should do in order to design an ideal schedule.

Use these tips to make your schedule work for you (Remember them)

The next few words which you're about to read are invaluable. Remember them all. If you think you can't, tattoo them on your brain (I really have no idea how you're going to do that). If that's not possible, then grow your memory by solving puzzles or whatever things that scientists ask people to do, and then read these again so that you could remember them all.

You're allowed to forget your name and birth date, but not these tips.

Pay attention, I'm about to start. You may even call your whole family to read these along if you feel like it.

Decide your priorities

What's it that you're working for? Better grades, money, self-improvement or new skills? Before you start working on anything identify what it is that you want and set your priorities in life on its base.

Build most of your schedule around your priorities and make them your subject of attention. Do more things

that help you to grow in what you want to achieve or push you closer to your goals.

If you succeed in finding out the things that matter, then you'll already have saved a lot of your time by separating the less important things and the ones that are important.

Keep your schedule weekly

In case you're planning to make a daily schedule, don't! A daily schedule is too tiny to give you enough space for doing things and will definitely fail. You may include a few things which you're supposed to do daily but your whole schedule shouldn't be formed to repeatedly do the same tasks daily.

Instead, try making a weekly schedule. It'll give you sufficient freedom for doing additional activities which can be worthwhile to you and will keep you productive throughout. Assign each day to a specific set of activities. This approach helps in getting several jobs done within a week.

Make your schedule flexible

I've already mentioned the faults of a rigid schedule. A flexible schedule works quite differently as it doesn't imply any obligations on you. It lets you work at your own pace and merely helps you without causing any resistance.

Schedules aren't concrete walls within which you can trap yourself. They're meant to be there for you, to work for you, and are required to be changed if they fail in their purpose.

When you make a schedule, don't keep following it for weeks or months without paying any heed to it. Keep checking whether it's assisting you in your motives, making you productive, or helping you in getting closer to your goals.

If it isn't, you always have the option to change it.

Focus on being productive

A schedule performs its sole duty of getting things done quite effectively. However, getting results out of your work still depends on you. You need to somehow

keep experimenting with things until you find out the finest method of doing them.

Be innovative, make things simpler, and emphasize on getting results. Sometimes you're working hard, but the wrong way. It's like a form of directionless energy which gets wasted without causing something to happen.

Change your methods and habits of doing things from the root to achieve some lasting benefits.

Do what works for you

Know what? Here's a truth – all the advice that I and other people give you is useless.

Please don't get me wrong. What I really mean to say is that the advice is useless if it doesn't work for you. What's the purpose of everything that people keep asking you to do if it can't be implemented in your life?

Find out the lifestyle that works for you and live it. Are you comfortable being a night owl or an early riser? Act the way you feel is right for you. Your diet? Whatever you like and keeps you healthy. Multi-tasking or single-

tasking? It doesn't matter as far as you're getting your work done and reaping good outcomes.

Don't get into the complications or else they'll drive you completely insane. You don't need to know everything that the researchers talk about like how many hours of sleep is good for you, what's the proper way to increase concentration, and all other stuff like that. Focus only on what is useful to you.

Keep things simple, and do more often what works for you.

Make your schedule detailed

The more detailed your schedule will be, greater the chances of its being successful will be. You're more likely to act on details instead of general activities. Suppose that you're a student who includes 'studying' in his schedule. The word 'studying' seems quite unclear as it doesn't define itself very well and hardly leads you to take a specific action.

Study – You sit on your desk thinking about all your subjects instead of actually studying.

Study physics – You sit on your desk on your desk with your physics textbook. Good!

Study chapter 3 in physics – You already know what you should be doing so you just open the chapter 3 in your physics book and start studying. Great! Give yourself a pat on the back.

Study thermodynamics from chapter 3 in physics – You must be so awesome to be already so clear about your plans. This made me your fan. Here, take this cookie as your reward.

So you see? Details make you act instantly on them, save a lot of time of yours, and make things simple. Divide your tasks into small bits and make them detailed.

Keep some gaps in your schedule

I'm not talking about the breaks which you take between your work to eat snacks and to watch TV, or maybe I am.

What if you were working on your assignment and your mother sent you to fetch grocery? The groceries eat up

the time allotted to your assignment and spoil your plan.

Avoid making any two things too constricted in your schedule and keep some small gap between them. The work you thought might require 15 minutes may take 20-25 minutes to get completed, and hence probably borrow the extra few minutes from the activity that you were supposed to do next.

This way your whole schedule may get disturbed. So rather be wise and keep some gaps between your activities. If you think that something might require 25 minutes, then consider 30-35 minutes for it and plan accordingly.

Also try to keep the last hour of the day free so that you get time to do your usual work in case you're interrupted by any sudden urgent tasks, or use it for leisure activities.

If you're interrupted by something unexpected, you'll still have some free time to do it later. Even if your neighbour dies unexpectedly (Sorry! God bless him with a long life.) And you're required to attend his funeral, yet you'll have time at the end of the day to do what you couldn't.

Have some gaps between your chores to avoid making your schedule too restrictive. It'll give you enough freedom to make choices and hence makes you more productive.

Switch your priorities

Sometimes you should change your priorities slightly to create a balance between things. This habit helps to outline the importance of what you do, decide their usefulness, and to work on what matters more as per the situation.

Your life remains normal most of the time, but when some important event gets closer, your focus is automatically transferred to it. And when nothing much is happening, you allow yourself to spend more time in doing what you want to do.

Like, when a deadline of your work or exam gets closer, you spend less time doing leisure activities and switch to learning, studying, or working. Against this, when you have vacations, you don't stress out much about your work, and simply travel or enjoy. The idea works similarly in daily chores too. You can spend less time doing not-so-important things and use the same time for something more significant.

If you use all the methods listed above while designing your next schedule then there are hardly chances that it might fail. In fact, it'll make you more productive, and assist you in making your life better.

Although the above stated ideas are enough, I'm adding a few extra elements to assist you in your schedule. I could've explained them briefly in detail, but avoiding it for now. That's going to be another long post on my **blog**.

A few additional tips to assist your schedule

Keep a checklist which contains almost everything in it. It'll keep reminding you to do things until you do them and get them off it. Want to visit the museum? Include it. Want to buy an iron-man T-shirt? Include it. Want to learn a new language? Include it. Include everything that you want to learn, visit, eat, try, or do. Divide your checklist into various categories if you don't want to get confused.

Keep a to-do list of things. I suggest you to keep two to-do lists. One for a day and another one for a long term, maybe weekly or monthly. This way you'll have a definite plan for doing things instead of heading over to any kind of random activities.

Plan another day before going to bed. This way you won't wake up anxiously like a person who has no idea about what is his day going to be like or what is he going to do. A few minutes you plan can save hours of your day and keep you away from mental fatigue.

Take things one day at a time instead of trying to finish them all at once. If you focus on doing things bit by bit,

each day, consistently, then you have greater chances of finishing them instead of leaving them incomplete somewhere in the middle.

Forget perfection and learn to be a bit careless. While perfection is attractive, it isn't always necessary. If you pay too much attention to perfection it starts working negatively and adversely affects your work by slowing you down. Try to do everything as nicely you can, but stop letting the habit of perfection become an obstruction.

Assign time to upcoming events to avoid any kind of confusion between them. If you've decided to go to a movie, good. But make sure that it doesn't fall on the same day of your friend's wedding. It's obvious that things might get jumbled sometimes, but try to make attempts from your side to avoid them.

I just hope this E-book to bring a positive change in your life so that it helps you in making it worth living.

Feel free to share it!



About me

I'm Vishal Ostwal.

A writer, blogger, and the kind of person whose name rhymes with his surname.

I'm an ordinary human, just like everyone. Apart from that, I am a dreamer, doer, a fan of superheroes, and a storyteller who can talk about life tirelessly.

If you wish to connect with me (I want you to) then you can simply join me on my **blog**, which I also call my online home, and help me in my mission of 'making life worth living.'

Or you might join me on social media by clicking on the links below:

Facebook, **Twitter**, or **Google+**.

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