

# Time Management Tricks and Techniques

by Michael J.P. Schewe and Courtney Ward-Reichard

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While technology has revolutionized the practice of law and our personal lives, it can also lead to a state of almost constant distraction. Whether we are avoiding a difficult brief to check email or a favorite news feed—or maybe just to play one more turn in Words With Friends—it can be harder than ever to get our work done.

There is no shortage of tricks and techniques to overcome these common distractions. We have surveyed a few of them in this article. Embrace one that speaks to you, or adopt ideas from a few. Figure out how to become more efficient with your work, and there will be more time to play—maybe even off the computer.

## **Eat That Frog**

[briantracy.com](http://briantracy.com)

Mark Twain said, “If it’s your job to eat a frog, it’s best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it’s your job to eat two frogs, it’s best to eat the biggest one first.” This simple quote is the basis for Brian Tracy’s book, *Eat That Frog! 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time*.

Your “frog” is the most distasteful task on your list—the one that you may be most likely to avoid through procrastination. If you eat that frog first, you can accomplish two goals: First, the task will be done, and second, you can work better the rest of the day because you will not experience the emotional drain of an uncompleted task. To eat the frog, you must see it clearly, which is why seeking clarity and planning are important parts of Tracy’s method as well.

## **The Pomodoro Technique**

It all started with a kitchen timer shaped like a tomato, which in Italian, is a *pomodoro*. The idea is simple: 1) Set a timer for 25-minute increments and allow yourself to work only on a single task. 2) After the timer rings, take a three- to five-minute break. 3) After four “pomodoros,” take a longer break of 15 to 30 minutes. You start by planning a list of tasks for the day, and then keep track of how many pomodoros you complete. The tools are up to you; you can acquire a kitchen timer or try one of the many mobile apps available to help you keep track.

The technique was created by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s. He wrote *The Pomodoro Technique* in 2006. The book is available for download, with numerous other resources, at [pomodorotechnique.com](http://pomodorotechnique.com).

## **The Six-Minute Rule**

[sixminuterule.com](http://sixminuterule.com)

Gregory Lois takes the principles of David Allen’s *Getting Things Done* and applies them to lawyers. The six-minute increment works well for attorneys, since that is the smallest increment of time used in most systems for billable time. Like Allen, Lois seeks to reduce stress and anxiety. The six-minute rule is simple: Do anything that can be done in six minutes or less right when it comes up. His suggestions for handling email are particularly helpful: Trash the junk, do anything you can in six minutes, file reference material, and the rest are “inputs that trigger actions.”