



POMODORO TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

You have heard about the pomodoro technique and want to know more.

Is it just another productivity hack? Does it really work? Will it work for you?

Implementing the pomodoro technique is simple and requires minimal setup. That is why it will work Wonders for your productivity. Grab your pen and paper, plan your day, then start your timer for 25 Minutes. Easy!

INTRODUCTION



Based on our Brain 2008 University of Illinois study showed that being tethered to your desk for long hours actually reduces your productivity; while regular short breaks keep you focused and energized.

I notice the truth of this study when I have my “desk days” at work. I lack focus. I procrastinate. Psychologists tell us that procrastination is a mechanism for helping us cope with anxiety.

There are generally three sources of procrastination:

- (1) Pressured by others, you are doing something against your will,
- (2) You feel pressured to be perfect, or
- (3) You are afraid of making a mistake.

The problem with procrastination is that it feels like a reward. It gives us a temporary relief from stress. To counter this, the Pomodoro Technique gives a reward for focused work. After completing a 25-minute pomodoro period, there is a small break. This break gives our brains small moments of offline time which in turn allows new logical insights. Doing work in a pattern like this – 25 minutes of focused work followed

by a five-minute break – provides a productive rhythm throughout the day.

Plan-Do-Check-Act

The Pomodoro Technique is also supported by the Deming-Shewhart Cycle (Plan-Do-Check- Act). If you are unfamiliar with this cycle, it’s crucial to Lean, Continuous Improvement and Agile.

What is Pomodoro technique?

Sometimes the hardest part of getting things done is just starting. However, often once you’ve started you realize the task was not as bad as you thought. If you find it hard to get started, try the Pomodoro technique (named after a tomato-shaped kitchen timer).

You will need:

- A timer.
- A task to complete (e.g. a course reading for your next lecture).
- Something nice to do in a 5-minute break (e.g. Have a coffee, watch a funny video).

Step 1: Choose a task to work on.

Step 2: Set a timer for 25 minutes. (Focus)

Step 3: Work solely on the task until the timer buzzes.

Step 4: When the timer goes, take a 5 minute break. (Short Break)

Step 5: Repeat.

Step 6: After four rounds have a longer break.



1. CHOOSE A TASK

You know that task you have been trying to tackle for ages? Let's do that.

2. FOCUS

Minimize distractions.

Close emails, shut social media, switch your phone to do not disturb, close the door. Learning to manage distractions is one of the key skills the pomodoro technique will teach you, it is only 25 minutes after all.



3. WORK

Pick a task, start a 25-minute timer and get to work. When using the pomodoro technique there is no concept of pause, stick to your chosen task for the full session and note any distractions you need to come back to.

4. SHORT BREAK

Well done. Session complete. Step away from your desk for five minutes, clear your mind, stretch your legs or grab refreshment.

5. REPEAT



Start the timer again for another session.

6. LONG BREAK

After your fourth session take a 20 minute break and come back completely refreshed.

How can this technique help us?

It helps you breakdown your tasks into manageable chunks and rephrases your work. Rather than thinking "I have to write 1,000 words in 2 hours", you can say "I'm going to spend 25 minutes working on a paragraph" (and repeat).

How the Pomodoro will change you

- By applying the Pomodoro Technique you can Handle interruptions
- No more mistakes due to lack of concentration.
- No more wrong estimates, rework, stress and overtime.
- Reduce the length and number of meetings
- No more long, exhausting and useless meetings.
- Reduce estimation errors
- learn to simplify and organize tasks
- No more wrong estimates on complex, undefined and uncertain tasks.

- Improve motivation by improving the content of work
- learn to understand the effort a task will take, reduce the complexity of tasks that need doing, organize your time
- No more lack of confidence, lack of responsibility and lack of trust between team members.
- Transform time from being an enemy to being an ally in order to achieve your goals
- take regular breaks, learn to observe yourself and your team and improve your work process
- No more work under pressure.
- No more tensions between team members.
- No more fear of being accountable.
- Meet deadlines without time pressure
- learn to transform a complex goal into a series of simpler goals to be reached and hence increase your motivation, the precision of the estimates and the probability of final success
- No more missed deadlines and costly delays.

Variations

There are many variations on the Pomodoro Technique. These allow individuals to tailor the principles of the Pomodoro Technique to better suit their personal working style.

Some variations include:

Work in 90 minute time periods. Rather than a 25 minute focus period, work in 90 minute blocks. This reflects a natural concentration cycle

Work in natural time periods. There may be natural time markers in your life - for example the period between meetings, or the time until your kids or partner come home, or the time until the dishwasher finishes. Use these to define focus periods.

Flowtime. Monitor your natural productivity periods, and from this data work out the best productivity system for yourself.

All of these approaches preserve the core Pomodoro Technique principle of working in specific time blocks - but they adjust the periods to better suit individual needs.

Who doesn't it work for?

The pomodoro technique doesn't work for people who can't see themselves taking regular breaks. Although you can alter your session time and break to make them longer if that suits you. Breaks promote mental agility, focus and flow, without them you risk burnout.

Also when using the pomodoro technique you aren't supposed to pause or context switch (no



distractions), so you need to keep this in mind when considering the technique.

Don't put your goals off any longer.

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