



EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT USING MINDGENIUS

Why are you here?

Time is of the essence. Time is money. Time flies when you're having fun. You know all the phrases there are about time but that doesn't seem to bring you any more time to do the things you really want to. You're sick of feeling constantly stressed and under pressure. You feel like you need a change.

You have MindGenius in front of you and have heard of the benefits of using MindGenius for your Time Management. The only problem is, you are not quite sure how to use the software yet. This document is the key to getting started quickly.

What is effective Time Management?

Having effective Time Management means to feel in total control of your workload and your life. It leads to feeling more balanced and focused. It should mean you are able to achieve your objectives and quite simply make time for what is important to you.

Just think about how it would feel to have time for what's important. Whatever that may be. Time for the golf course, shopping with friends or playing with your children. This in turn will lead to good health, happiness and less stressful relationships.

Managing your time effectively means planning and organising to ensure you use your time productively. Time Management techniques are a way to control your activities and an aid to making decisions as to how to make the best use of your time.

Being effective at Time Management can have a dramatic effect on your life. You will find yourself working more effectively, not only at work, but also in your personal life.

Traditional Approach

Quite often there is no formalised approach to Time Management. People often develop their own methods that may or may not be successful. Sometimes Time Management is ignored until the lack of it creates a real problem. On a personal level, it can mean you feel you have too much to do with not enough time. This leaves you feeling constantly stressed and frustrated and as if you are running around in circles.

You don't have time for yourself or for your family. Partners and friends can in turn become frustrated as you cancel yet another event with them. No, you can't make dinner. Or the cinema. Or drinks. Your stress levels are through the roof. In fact, your health is beginning to

suffer. You are feeling panicked and jumpy and finding it hard to achieve what you want whether this be finishing before 7 one night a week to landing your dream role.

Maybe it's not that serious. However, it's likely there is still room for improvement.

If you have one, you probably have a paper approach to reviewing your current Time Management and to planning how you are going to manage your time on a regular basis. This in turn leads to more paper. It means you are likely to forget things and managing your time takes you even more time. You have endless scribbled to-do lists, which quickly become illegible and redundant as you are given more and more tasks that do not fit onto one sheet of paper.

How to Manage Time effectively with MindGenius

MindGenius eliminates the paper. It allows you to gather data quickly. MindGenius allows you to think quickly and come up with an approach that works for you.

This means you can monitor and manage your time easily. And get work done more quickly!

First some “up-front” work is required to make a “one-off” evaluation of the extent of your time management problem.

Step 1 - Understand your current situation

This is a questioning stage. Ask yourself how much time is available to you? There are 168 hours in a week and 8760 hours in a year. There is also an extra 24 hours if it happens to be a leap year. And when you're counting the time it could make all the difference. How do you currently spend your time? How much time do you waste?

You can do this in MindGenius by quickly brainstorming all your ideas. First of all, you need to create a new Map. This is done by simply opening the software and clicking on the white paper (new file) icon. This is also where you decide on the title for your brainstorm. You might want to name it Time Management Plan. You then just need to use the simple **Type-and-Return** function to enter the title of your map and then quickly gather and enter the answers to your own questions.

At this point, add in branches for each day of the week. Now you should break down each day into chunks. Add in each chunk as a new branch in MindGenius. Again, you just need to use **Type-and-Return**. The chunks will be personal to you but will probably be along the lines of:

- Work
- Phone calls
- Breaks
- Meetings
- Social
- Emails
- Projects
- Chatting
- Home
- Sports

Really think hard about your current Time Management situation. How long do you spend on each of the activities above? How you would like it to change and what would this mean in

your life? If you follow the questions below you will come up with a successful plan for change.

What are the most important things in life to you? Health and relationships probably come somewhere near the top. You can type your answers in as they occur to you using **Type-and-Return** but if they are not in a logical order this doesn't matter. You can quickly change the positioning later by using the **Drag-and-Drop** function to pull branches to more relevant locations.

What are the effects on your career of having ineffective Time Management? It usually affects your focus, your enjoyment of work and your career development. It can also affect your profitability as an individual, team, department or company. It can lead to lost opportunities and bring stress to the important areas in your life like health and relationships. In short, it puts obstacles in the way to you achieving important things.

Consider tasks which affect others and when you most feel like doing particular things? Your map may be getting complex now as you add more information. This will not make it difficult to navigate though as you just need to use the **Map Explorer** function. This allows you to see the big picture though as you just need to use the **Map Explorer** function. This allows you to see the big picture though as you just need to use the **Map Explorer** function. Together **Type-and-Return**, **Drag-and-Drop** and **Map Explorer** are known as the **3 MindGenius Essentials**. These 3 features are all you need to gain some valuable insight into how you currently spend and manage your time.

MindGenius has enabled you to visualise your thoughts and clarify your situation. Does it make interesting reading?

Step 2 Model your ideal schedule

Now you need to develop a model that outlines your ideal schedule. How would it look? What is important to you? What would you make time for? What would the knock-on effects of changes to it be? Brainstorm these ideas and you will come up with a good model on which to plan for change. Just type your thoughts as you ask yourself questions, in the same way as you did in the previous step. Again use the **3 MindGenius Essentials** described above. How would this change your:

- work life?
- home life?
- health?
- relationships?

Step 3 Gap Analysis

Next you need to look at the map you created first of all on your current situation, and compare it to the one which outlines your ideal schedule. What are the differences? Where are the gaps between where you are now and where you want to be? The gaps may be self-evident, simply by looking at both maps.

If you need a more formal, scientific approach, one suggestion might be to do the following:

- Using the time groupings you have used to break up your time into chunks eg work, phone calls etc, create your own **Category** list in MindGenius. Click on the category pane, then on the "**View my categories**" icon on the top right-hand side of the pane, select a category, then "edit", and rename any category icon you like.
- Now **Drag-and-Drop** your new categories across from the category pane to the branches of your map.
- Start with the map of your current situation, and finish with the map of your ideal schedule, using the same categories for each map.
- Now group each map by category, using the "**Create Category Map**" function off the main "View" menu, and compare the two new grouped maps you have created. It will

quickly become obvious where you are currently spending lots of time on tasks, which are unimportant, and not spending enough time on those which are important.

Step 4 Set objectives for change

Like most things in life you need to set specific Time Management objectives based on the information you have gathered in your model, in order to achieve real results. Again you can simply brainstorm the ideas for your objectives in MindGenius using the **3 MindGenius Essentials** features. This won't take you very long and will really help you come up with the beginnings of a plan for change.

Step 5 Develop a plan for change

You need to develop tactics and strategies to ensure you reach your objectives. These tactics should help you to overcome obstacles and to make sure critical tasks are completed. You should add a new branch called "Tactics and Strategies" using **Type-and-Return** and then brainstorm to find out what your actions are going to be.

It is tempting to address easy tasks first. Avoiding important or difficult tasks does not make them go away, however. For this reason, you should address important tasks first. This will give you a sense of achievement that will motivate you to get the other tasks on your list done. To enable you to see at a glance which tasks should be addressed first, you can assign **Categories**. You could use the coloured numbers to list priority or perhaps the day of the week the task needs to be completed on.

You should also recognise that everyone has natural highs and lows during a 24-hour period, and even over a week. This isn't a bad thing. You just need to ensure you make the most of your natural highs and lows. Use your lows to take a break and find your focus again. Use your highs to really make an impact on your to-do list.

If you manage people, you need to understand their schedules. When are their natural highs and lows? You will get more from employees if you recognise times when they do not have the energy to accept more tasks or to have pressure put on them. They will notice and it will be appreciated, which in the long run will lead to better relations and more motivated employees. Similarly, and equally as important, understanding the schedules of your peers and line manager will also make for better relationships and enhanced productivity.

Now it is time to put in place some regular activities which will allow you to create more time for yourself, every day of your life.

Avoid procrastination

To ensure you get the most out your days you need to avoid procrastination. Sometimes this is easier said than done as your mind wanders after reading yet another lengthy email or after a difficult phone call. To try and avoid this you need to break your day into blocks of time. You should take regular breaks and schedule appointments for yourself to complete different tasks. You can do this by allocating tasks in your MindGenius maps using the **Actions** function. The **Actions** can be sent to MS Outlook using the **Outlook Sharing** function.

Focus

This will help you keep your focus. Nowadays work always seems to be about multi-tasking. However, this is not actually a very productive way to work. Forget multi-tasking. You need to focus on one thing at a time. When tasks seem complex and difficult, you just need to break them down into manageable chunks.

Just to-do it

One key thing everyone should do is keep a to-do list. By this we don't mean a paper list. This will not only get lost but becomes messy to update too. You should create one in MindGenius. It won't take you very long – just a couple of minutes. Break main tasks into sub-tasks and more sub-tasks and so on. All you need to do is **Type-and-Return**. If you remember something vital towards the end of the list you don't have to start all over. You just need to use the simple **Drag-and-Drop** mouse action to pull the branches into a more relevant order. If the list is really long and you have many tasks to complete, you won't feel swamped by all the information thanks to the great **Map Explorer** function, which helps you see both big picture and the detail.

This MindGenius to-do list has an advantage over paper lists as the list can be easily updated on screen once tasks are completed or added to if necessary.

Tip: Keep the map open as you work on other things, and add to it when things occur to you.

Again, to see what tasks need to be followed up you can assign **Actions** to tasks within your maps. These **Actions** can be sent to MS Outlook using the **Send to MS Outlook** function giving you automatic reminders of what needs to be done.

You can assign **Resources** to tasks. This will help you if you need to delegate to other people. You can also **Import Resources from MS Outlook**. This means you don't have to input each name and email address by hand. You will have a ready-made list to choose from for your Resource allocation. This enables you to monitor the team workload. The best way to do this is to **Create Resource Map** from the main View menu. You can then see clearly what needs to be done and by who. Finally, to ensure that everyone stays motivated you should think about introducing competition and rewards.

Step 6 Use a time diary

To check if your new Time Management plan is working, you need to keep a time diary. You should list each task you need to do and the amount of time you spend on each one. What percentages of time you spend on urgent and on important activities? Which people do you devote most time to? Use the **3 MindGenius Essentials** to create a quick and simple map.

When this is completed, all obstacles to achieving your Time Management objectives will be clear. You should review your time diary regularly against your Time Management objectives. To do this you should keep a record of how you are doing by applying **Categories**. As described earlier, you can easily apply your own Category headings and two relevant ones might be **"Achieved"** and **"Not achieved."** You can then **Create Category Map** from the main View menu to see easily where your strengths and weaknesses lie.

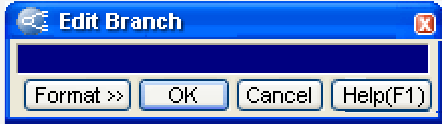








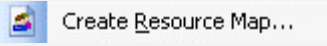


To look into reasons why you've not achieved a certain result, you can use the **Notes** function. You should also review your time diary regularly against your model to see if things have changed and to highlight gaps. If you do highlight gaps you can assign **Categories** and see if there is any sort of recurring pattern as to why you are not achieving your objectives. You could also use **Colours** or **Boundaries** here to highlight patterns.

Summary

By using MindGenius everyday, you will manage your time more effectively. You will feel as if a weight has been lifted from your shoulders as you can tackle tasks efficiently and feel in control of your workload. If you follow the process above, your Time Management **will** be more effective. And you will have time for the things that you enjoy.

Go do it

Okay, so you're ready to start. Our top tip to you would be to print out this page and keep it nice and safe next to you as you start to explore MindGenius.

<u>Features</u>	<u>What does it do?</u>	<u>Where in MindGenius?</u>
Type-and-Return	Enter information rapidly	
Drag-and-Drop	Move information around easily	
Map Explorer	Easily navigate around your information	
Categories	Link ideas together	
Actions	View items that need to be followed up	
Outlook Sharing	Import actions to MindGenius or export resources to MS Outlook	
Send to MS Outlook	Send emails directly from MindGenius	
Create Category Map	View linked ideas quickly	
Resources	Allocate who needs to do what	
Create Resource Map	See at a glance who needs to do what	
Notes	Add in extra information or longer sections of text to the map	
Colours	Highlight branches in different colours	
Boundaries	Highlight branches with different boundary shapes	