

## **How to Spend Less Time on E-Mail**

One of the biggest drains on your time and your productivity of all is undoubtedly e-mail. Not only does answering e-mail simply take time out of your day that could be better used doing other things but it also has the additional downside of interrupting your current workflow and putting you in a 'reactive' state rather than a proactive one. In other words, you are now at someone else's beck and call, responding to messages at a time that suits *them* rather than a time that suits you. This is what makes compulsive e-mail checking so destructive and this is why it's something you need to change as soon as possible.

Here are some good ways to do that and to spend less time mailing.

### **Pick up the Phone**

Depending on the nature of the communication you need to make, phoning can sometimes be a better method of getting in contact versus e-mailing. That's because e-mails force an immediate response and they allow you to set the 'when'. If you just have a quick question, then pick up the phone and get the answer faster.

### **Set Times to Respond**

Another useful trick is to only respond to e-mails at set times. Rather than constantly checking every time your e-mail 'pings', make a habit of checking twice at 12pm and 4pm (you choose the best time for you).

Many of us have a kind of neuroticism around e-mail where we worry that not checking them will mean missing an important message that ends in disaster.

In reality, most problems can go ignored for at least a few hours and especially if you let your colleagues know to call you in emergencies. This way, you can stop interrupting your work flow and instead work at a time that suits you. Checking e-mail after lunch is one particularly good strategy as this way you aren't going to be in the middle of something when the time comes around.

### **Play E-Mail Game**

'E-mail game' is a web app that challenges you to work through your e-mail in a set amount of time. By 'gamifying' the process, this forces you to work through your messages more quickly and the upshot is generally that you spend a lot less time marking everything as read *and* learn to check your e-mails more quickly for future.

### **Use Tools**

There are other tools and utilities you can use as well. One particularly useful function is the ability to add labels and categories in Google Mail which is a great way to categorize your messages for future reading.