

by Audrey Thomas, CSP

With overflowing inboxes, an endless list of deadlines, and a finite number of hours in the day, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by the demands on your time. We all want to be more productive but instituting these three best practices will help ensure you actually get there.

1. Check email less often. It seems counterintuitive, but checking your inbox frequently makes you less productive. The most productive people know that email notifications are just another interruption. I suggest checking your inbox only 3-5 times per day. When you do check in, dedicate 20 minutes to batch process the contents of your inbox and make a series of quick decisions. You'll then be able to stay focused on bigger projects and your productivity will soar.

2. Be realistic with your to-do list. Have you ever reached the end of your workday and thought, "I feel like I didn't get much accomplished!" Count up the outstanding items on your tasks list and then consider this: The average American employee can accomplish 6 projects per day. If your to-do list has more items than that, it's time to take a more realistic look at what you are actually able to get done. In addition to the projects you have the capacity for, you'll also be managing a steady stream of interruptions, which divert your time and attention. Release yourself from the guilt of items left unfinished—tomorrow is a new day!

3. Get up and move. The key to improving time management, concentration, and motivation? Move your body. A University of Bristol study found that employees who exercised before work or during lunch breaks reported greater mental and interpersonal performance (79%), improved productivity (72%), and better workload management (74%). So be encouraged: Prioritizing those lunchtime walks actually increases your productivity!

**THE AVERAGE
AMERICAN
EMPLOYEE IS
INTERRUPTED
EVERY FOUR
MINUTES.**



Source: University of California