



LEADERSHIP LIFT 2025

Time Choices Tips: Reclaim 1 Hour This Week

"There's no such thing as time management — only time choices. Every minute reflects a decision. Make it intentional." — Justine

🔥 Justine's Time Truth Bombs

- **Busyness ≠ Productivity** — It's often a sign of overwhelm, not effectiveness.
 - **Focus is Finite** — Your brain works like a battery. Protect it.
 - **Interruptions = Brain Drain** — Each one costs ~23 minutes of focus.
 - **You Make Time** — Not by doing more, but by choosing what matters.
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Justine's Top 5 Time Choice Tips

1. **Inbox like a Mailbox** — Check it twice a day and clear it with purpose.
Why it works: Reduces decision fatigue and keeps your cognitive load light.
 2. **Meet With Purpose** — No agenda, no meeting. Clear purpose and outcome.
Why it works: Clarity reduces anxiety and primes your brain to focus on outcomes.
 3. **Start With What Matters** — Begin your day with your most important task.
Why it works: Your prefrontal cortex is sharpest in the morning — use it to tackle high-impact work.
 4. **Block Deep Work** — 90-minute focus blocks when your energy peaks.
Why it works: Ultradian rhythms mean your brain naturally works best in 90-minute cycles.
 5. **Batch Shallow Work** — Email, admin, and comms in a single daily window.
Why it works: Task-switching drains mental energy — batching improves productivity by up to 40%.
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Quick Wins by Time Challenge

Why This Matters Time is your most finite leadership resource. When you reclaim even one hour a week, you open space for strategic thinking, meaningful connection and purposeful action. These shifts aren't just about doing less — they're about choosing better.

Each challenge below taps into how your brain naturally works — or fights against it. The following tips aim to work with your brain's wiring to reduce cognitive load, protect attention, and increase productivity in meaningful, sustainable ways.

1. Feeling Overwhelmed

What: You're juggling too many demands and not protecting time for what matters.

Why: When your brain is overloaded, your prefrontal cortex struggles to prioritise, leading to decision fatigue, stress, and inertia.

Behaviour Shift: Let's stop doing too much and protecting too little.

Try This First:

- If it takes less than 2 minutes, do it now.
- **Always ask:** *"When do you need it by?"* — including your manager, to establish timeframes and negotiate if you need to
- Write a **"1 Thing To-Do"** on a sticky note. Do it. Toss it. Pull the next from your parking lot.

Tips:

- Cancel or delegate one meeting this week that doesn't need you.
- Set a daily 3-task limit — if everything's a priority, nothing is.
- Ask: *"What happens if I don't do this?"* before saying yes.
- Use "yes, however..." to set clear boundaries without guilt.
- **End each day by naming one thing you're grateful for or proud of** — this boosts dopamine and strengthens your brain's resilience to stress.
- **Keep a 'Wins' journal** and review it weekly to shift from pressure to perspective.
- **Celebrate progress, not perfection** — even small wins fuel motivation.

2. Constant Interruptions

What: You're constantly being pulled away from what matters by other people or notifications. **Why:** Interruptions spike cortisol and trigger the brain's stress response, breaking concentration and draining focus.

Behaviour Shift: Let's stop letting noise run our day.

Try This First:

- Turn off notifications for 2 hours daily.
- Use headphones or a desk signal to reduce disruptions.
- Switch your phone to aeroplane mode during meetings.

Tips:

- Turn off all alerts for 2 hours a day — protect your peak time.
- Schedule a daily “No Interruption” block and let your team know.
- Wear headphones (even silently) to reduce casual walk-ups.
- Use a desk signal or sign to show when you're in deep work mode.
- Establish team “focus hours” — mutual respect = fewer pings.
- **Switch your phone to aeroplane mode during meetings** to stay fully present.
- **Have a backup person** delegated to cover urgent decisions when you're unavailable.
- **Bookend each day with a moment of gratitude** — even in chaos, this stabilises emotional regulation.

3. Easily Distracted

What: You struggle to stay focused and are pulled into low-value tasks.

Why: Your brain is wired to seek novelty — so every ping and pop-up hijacks your attention. **Behaviour Shift:** Let's stop giving our best energy to distractions.

Try This First:

- Use a Parking Lot List to offload ideas, tasks etc that can wait. I use a whiteboard but it could be a notebook, an online document or even notes on your phone
- Turn off all notifications
- **Batch like tasks together** — context-switching reduces efficiency and increases cognitive load.
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Tips:

- Block distracting sites during focus sessions (Freedom, Cold Turkey).
- Keep your phone out of sight — even seeing it reduces recall and presence
- Work in 90-minute cycles, then take a deliberate 10–15 min reset.
- **Batch like tasks together** — context-switching reduces efficiency and increases cognitive load.
- **Theme your days** — focus on similar types of tasks (e.g. client day, admin day) to maximise flow and reduce mental fatigue.
- **Use visual triggers** (like a whiteboard or colour coding) to signal what matters.
- **Do a 3-minute breathing reset** when your mind starts to wander — it resets the nervous system and restores attention.

4. Spending Too Much Time in Meetings

What: Your calendar is full of meetings that don't always need you.

Why: Long, unstructured meetings tax working memory and reduce your capacity to focus on real work.

Behaviour Shift: Let's stop filling our calendar and emptying our impact.

Try This First:

- Cut 1-hour meetings to 45 minutes - you will be amazed what you can achieve in 45 minutes
- Include this in every invite: *"Here is the purpose, and this is the outcome we need from the meeting."*
- Identify one meeting that you does not need your specific input and either decline or delegate

Tips:

- Never attend a meeting without understanding why you're there.
- Spend 15 minutes preparing before any meeting to gain maximum value.
- Block "no-meeting zones" (e.g. before 10am or after 3pm).
- **Take one minute before a meeting to set your intention** — this primes your brain for focus and emotional control.

- **Start each meeting with a micro-win acknowledgement** — even small wins create a dopamine boost and set the tone for the meeting
- Spend 5 minutes at the end of each meeting clarifying key takeaways and action

5. Lacking Clarity or Focus

What: You're constantly switching tasks and unclear on your priorities.

Why: Cognitive overload makes it harder to plan, think strategically, or make intentional choices. **Behaviour Shift:** Let's stop living in mental fog and start choosing clarity.

Try This First:

- Block time to think (not just do).
- Write your Top 3 priorities every Friday.
- Create a recurring meeting with yourself for deep work.

Tips:

- Plan your Top 3 priorities each Friday for the coming week.
- Start your day with your #1 task — not your inbox.
- Schedule thinking time each week — not just doing. Do a weekly “Start / Stop / Keep” scan to stay clear.
- **Make meetings with yourself** for important work — protect the time as you would for others.
- **Set recurring calendar blocks** for predictable tasks like reports or planning.
- **Do a “joy audit”** — list one thing each week that gave you energy and one thing that drained it.
- **Take 5 mindful breaths before switching tasks** — reduces mental drag and restores clarity.

Reflection & Action

- Which section describes your current reality best?
- Which three tips feel most doable this week?

Take Action Prompt: Choose two tips and commit to reclaiming at least one hour of your time this week. Write them down, share them with someone, and notice what changes.

Ready to lead with more clarity, calm and control? Let's go.. Track what changes — you may find more than time opens up.

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