

Life can move at a rapid pace and can feel chaotic particularly if you fail to manage your time. We all lead busy lives especially when we consider our work commitments, family commitments and social commitments. It can almost feel as though there is not enough time in the day to do what we need to do.

Regardless of the job you might have, [managing your time](#) can prove a challenge but this is particularly true for interpreters. This is a fast-paced career that can see interpreters moving between events, conferences, travelling the world and supporting those who are in need of holding conversations in other languages. As a result, time can feel as though it is very limited but fortunately, there are some things that you can do to manage your time better as an [interpreter](#).

Fortunately for interpreting, [unlike translation](#), it is done in real-time, so when they are on the job, they have to be in work mode and focused. In contrast, translating requires determination and commitment in order to complete work to a deadline, as a result, time management is a completely different thing. However, in this article, we are going to look at time management for interpreters to see what they can do to use their time more effectively.

What is Time Management?

It doesn't matter how fast-paced your role might be, we all have to manage our time in certain ways but for interpreters, this can be even more important. Given the necessity of their role and how they are required on a number of levels, it can feel as though their lives pass by at a million miles an hour. This is where time management becomes extremely important.

Some people might have heard of time management but might not actually understand what it means in its full entirety. Time management is the process of organising and planning how to divide your time between different activities.

Essentially, working as an interpreter requires a high level of [time management](#) and that means that you manage your time effectively so that you give each task or activity the right amount of time. Whether it's travelling to your next job or working out your schedule and the jobs that you can fit in around it, it all alludes to time management.

Therefore, when you effectively manage your time, it will enable interpreters to give the right amount of time slots to activities based on their importance. As time can be limited, it means making the best use of the time you have and of course, while family is always important, our jobs can take priority. As a result, interpreters have to recognise the importance of their role and then ensure that they allocate as much time as is needed to that task, even down to the time it takes to travel to and from jobs.

To ensure that your time is used as efficiently and effectively as possible, time management is critical and it is easier than you might think.

Why Is Time Management So Important to Interpreters?

As we have mentioned, interpreters can lead lives that can change rapidly. From medical and legal interpreters that might be required during the early hours of the morning to those that travel the world with government representatives and businesses as well as those that offer community interpreting, each day can be different which means that they need to be flexible and adaptable.

This essentially means that their job has to take priority but they should ensure that they manage their time around their role. It will enable them to keep their diary as streamlined as possible while acknowledging that they might be required at short notice, so anything that they have planned might need rescheduling. However, having a set schedule and managing time makes it easier to move things around when an interpreting request comes in at short notice.

Top Time Management Strategies

Time management can be handled in a number of ways and what might work for one person, might not work for another. What this means is that it can help to try a number of strategies to determine what might work best for you. Perhaps the strategy you choose might align with your preferences in terms of how you like to be organised.

Let's take a look at some time management strategies:

- [Effective Planning](#) - it is important to plan your day in advance and even a to-do list can help you to see how your time can be used

effectively. Make sure you put your main jobs at the top of your list but remember that you have to give yourself time for interpreting. When you put high priority jobs at the top of your list, you are more likely to get those jobs completed first and that can make a difference.

- **Set Yourself Goals** - [Goals and targets](#) can give you something to work towards. Make sure they are realistic and achievable and you will be able to reach them and fit them in around your role.
- **Set Deadlines** - Deadlines are always good to have in place but don't stress too much over them as you do have the power to move them as you see fit. Make sure you give yourself time to meet any work-related deadlines and then make sure that all other tasks are placed around this in terms of priority. Learn the importance of taking ownership of your work, so, ask yourself how much time needs to be devoted to certain tasks and for how long, factoring in any planned work time that might already be in your schedule.
- **Prioritise Tasks** - This is something that forms part of the other strategies but prioritising tasks in terms of urgency can help to create clarity. You will understand the difference between those tasks that need to be completed urgently and those that are not so urgent. What this will provide is greater control over how you use your time and on what tasks you use that time.
- **Use Time Wisely** - Time management is about using your time wisely because spending too much time on one task can have an impact on another. When you carry out work at the wrong time or spend too much time on it, you will waste time and lose track of what matters.
- **Remove distractions** - Can your phone be placed on silent? Can you shut down your social media whilst you are working? What about email...it can be very distracting when a notification for a new mail appears. Consider closing down all but your essential tech and apps whilst carrying out important jobs.
- **Be mindful of your most efficient time of day** - different people will be more and less effective at different points of the day. Some say they are at their best in the first two hours of the day - this is quite common. If this applies to you, then ensure that you are using these hours for your most important work.

Useful Tools to Help With Time Management

Fortunately, technology makes it a whole lot easier to manage our time because we can use our smart devices to plan, schedule and manage effectively. There are countless time management tools out there that you

can turn to, to help you keep track of tasks and improve how you work as an interpreter.

- Toggl Plan- This tool will provide you with a clear overview of what you have planned and you can monitor progress and assign time to each task. Furthermore, you could also share this with family members or even colleagues in order to make sure that everyone understands what you have planned and what is a priority.
- ClickUp - If you are looking for a powerful time management tool then ClickUp has all that you need. This customisable tool is rich in features and enables you to set goals, deadlines and keep on top of tasks with precision. There is a time tracker and a time estimator so you can choose how much time you should spend on tasks and where you need to put your time.
- RescueTime - One element of time management that people need to control more than ever is the time they spend on social media. There are multiple reasons why they might use social media but on average, people spend around two hours per day browsing their chosen platforms. This is a lot of time that can be used elsewhere and this is where RescueTime comes in. You can install this app on your computer or mobile device and it will enable you to set time limits and alerts while it will also provide you with weekly reports showing you where you use your time.
- Focus@Will - If you are someone that needs some sort of additional element to your life that will help you to focus, this app is the ideal option for you. Whether you are carrying out work admin or you are doing another home-based task, this app will provide music based on your personality and this can help to enhance concentration and that can also help you to improve your time management.
- Trello - Once again, this is another project management app but it enables you to create cards that are based on tasks. So, you can divide the board into columns with to-do tasks, in-progress tasks and those that you have completed.

Conclusion

Working as an interpreter is a hugely rewarding career but your time can prove difficult to manage. Your days can seem varied, some jobs can run on longer than planned and that can make managing your home and social life a challenge. Of course, you have to be able to juggle work and personal life with your interpreting job being a priority given how important

it is and so, it can help to implement the right strategies and the right tools to manage your time more effectively.