

Master Your Productivity Cycle: 4 Tips for Physicians

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Everyone has productive peaks and valleys throughout the course of their normal work week — periods of higher and lower energy and creativity. This pattern makes up every individual's own cycle of productivity.

Some people are most efficient in the morning, for instance, while others pick up steam in the late afternoon.



Productive healthcare professionals who are able to pace themselves according to their cycle of productivity accomplish more in less time and remain more vibrant. They have an internal "time grid" that charts their cycle of productivity even though no formal sketch or chart is ever made.

For instance, for all but the most urgent tasks, physicians and administrators should attempt to handle their toughest assignments on those days and at those hours that they are most productive, energetic, and thoughtful.

Here are four basic ways to get the most from yourself by working in sync with your cycle of productivity.

1. Coordinate

enough tasks so that the cycle can be used. If

you have only one task, obviously there is little leeway in undertaking that task at the most personally opportune time. With many tasks, however, you can strategically arrange your schedule. For instance, for all but the most urgent tasks, physicians and administrators should attempt to handle their toughest assignments on those days and at those hours that they are most productive, energetic, and thoughtful.

2. Remember: The more flexibility you're afforded in completing assignments, the greater the opportunity for you to execute assignments in accordance with the cycle. Next time you're

tackling a particular project, find out when it has to be done or if it could be done following something else. More often than not, given a flexible due date, you'll complete many assignments sooner than you anticipated.

3. Coordinate with others to avoid late afternoon and surprise assignments. As a productive

professional, in concurrence with your cycle of productivity you intuitively allocate tasks for the late afternoon. Frequent late afternoon surprise assignments mess up your cycle.

4. Seek advance notice of tasks or assignments. The more notice you have, the better you'll be able to schedule the new tasks in accordance with your cycle of productivity.