

How to Be Punctual



If you're battling chronic lateness, there is hope. According to the experts, you can avoid procrastination and tardiness by changing your habits and tweaking your routines. Here are some things you can do to turn lateness into punctuality.

Steps

1. Acknowledge that you are a person who is having a hard time being punctual. As with any problem, you cannot fix it if you're in denial that it's a problem at all. But if your chronic tardiness is beginning to strain your job and/or your relationships, the first thing you need to do is acknowledge this as a weakness so you can begin to work toward correcting it.
2. Be conscious of the time.
 - Keep your watch accurate. Many people think that moving up the time on their watch will make them move faster. Instead, subconsciously they know that the time is wrong and so they just disregard it altogether.
 - Keep a clock in each room of your house. One of the easiest ways to run late is simply by not realizing that the time is going by as quickly as it is.
 - Set all your clocks and watches to the same time.
 - Don't be an optimist. Things usually take significantly longer than you'd expect, even without major delays. If you have a dinner date at 6:30 PM, don't think you can work in your yard until 6:00, then shower, change, and drive across town and make it on time. Realistically assess the time you will take on each step and then add 15 minutes more to allow for unexpected delays.
3. Wake up when you're supposed to wake up. Don't hit the snooze button, linger in bed, and watch TV at the very start of your day. If you have difficulty with this, move your alarm clock to someplace out of reach from your bed; that way you have to get up to turn it off. Acquire the habit of sitting up, stretching, and getting out of bed as soon as the alarm goes off. If you can't get out of bed on time, you may be going to bed too late - try sleeping earlier to allow yourself at least 7 hours sleep. By getting up late you are setting a pattern of lateness for the rest of the day. For more tips on how to do this, see the Related wikiHows section below.
4. Commit yourself to being 15 minutes early for everything. If you have to be to work at 8:00, don't even tell yourself this. Just tell yourself (and everyone else who listens) "I have to be at work at 7:45." If you do this, you will be on time even with little unforeseen interruptions. You will be on time even with a traffic jam. And on those

rare times that you actually show up 15 minutes early - you will get kudos for being an enthusiastic employee.

5. Bring something you can read in short segments almost everywhere you go. This makes it easy to be early, since in the 10-15 minutes you have before an appointment/event, you can get a few pages of reading done. This makes it feel like you're getting something done (and you are) while you are waiting, if you do have to wait. You can get a ton of reading done this way, too.
6. Re-examine how long your daily tasks really take. For example, you might be under the impression that you take a 15 minute shower, assuming that starting at 6:30 you can leave at 6:45. But, what about the time you spend before and after the actual shower? It's quite possible you really spend 20 or even 30 minutes in the bathroom, and that's why you can never leave by 6:45. So, think about the things you do every day, and time yourself when doing them.
7. Watch yourself for a few days to see where you often waste the most time. These "time sinkholes" (such as getting distracted while checking emails) are often unnoticed by us and can throw off your daily planning. Try to change your habits around these activities - for example standing up while quickly checking your emails makes it hard to lose an hour randomly surfing the web.
8. Make a note of where you should be in regards to time. For instance, if you have to leave your house at 8 for work, tell yourself, "It's 7:20, I should be getting in the shower." "It's 7:35, I should be brushing my teeth." This will help keep you on track. It is useful to write up a morning schedule to get used to this habit.
9. Keep organized. Disorganization is directly related to lateness. How often have you been late because you were looking for your car keys or couldn't find an important document? Keep the things that you use everyday in some semblance of organization and your routines will go smoother.
10. Plan ahead.
 - Schedule something unimportant right before something very important. If you have an essential interview at 4:00, plan to meet a friend for coffee at the coffeeshop next to your interview at 3:30. Then, even if you are late to meet your friend, you will be poised to pounce on your meeting.
 - Pick out your clothes the night before (don't forget your underclothes and shoes!). If you need to bring something with you, set it with your car keys or purse.
 - If you are going to some unfamiliar place, look over a map, or even drive there once if at all possible. Have your transportation planned - if you drive, keep your car in good order and refill gas in the tank. If you ride a bus, know the route, have your fare, and keep cab money on hand in case of emergency. If you are depending on another person for a ride - have a plan B!
11. Go to sleep on time. This makes it a lot easier to get up on time and helps you stay on task during the day. Unless you know otherwise, assume you need eight hours of sleep every night. By far the majority of people need at least this much sleep. College students and younger need more. Most people underestimate their sleep needs.

Tips

- Kids are really good at making their parents late. Follow all the above tips, not just for yourself but also for your kids. Have their clothes ready, make sure they get baths the night before, etc. If your child is very young, make sure their diaper bag is always fully stocked.
- Being habitually punctual tends to have the effect of actually allowing you to be late from time to time. For instance, Sally is often late. Bob is always on time. They both get stuck in traffic, it is the fault of neither of them, but they end up a few minutes late to work. Most bosses aren't even going to blink at Bob. They view him as a responsible person who has had a rough morning. Sally, on the other hand, is going to get yelled at. Her boss will see her tardiness as evidence of a larger pattern, even if it isn't really her fault this time.
- Quick thing to remember. "If you are 5 minutes early, you're on time. If you're on time, you're late. If you're late, then you've got a lot of explaining to do."
- It's better to be an hour early than a minute late.

Warnings

- Remember your reputation is on the line. The power of showing up is limitless.
- Don't fool yourself into thinking nobody notices the latecomer. If you think you are more than occasionally late to work, school, church, appointments, etc., you can be sure others have noticed too.