

Productive to the Max

Productivity

Performance

Profitability

Read Right

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Do you have stacks of papers, reports, magazine articles, books and emails propagating like tiny bunnies in the corners of your office, home or den? Do you spend time cutting out all those marvelous looking recipes and then shove them in the nearest cupboard hoping that they will be easily accessible when you need them five minutes before dinner is scheduled?

Preparation is key to being able to ingest all that information you are keeping. The following steps will assist you in making the most use of your reading time.

1. Batch it up. Place all your reading in one area; inbox or shelf. Prepare a box of materials ahead of time and place it beside your reading. You will need a highlighter, pen, scissors and post-its. If you have reading that is over three months old, destroy it. You will never get to it with all the other information you have.
2. Schedule an appointment with yourself. Put aside time in your calendar to regularly read. Downtime in doctor's offices, during travel or while waiting for your children to finish classes is opportune for this. Pick a time when you can destress by putting aside your regular duties.
3. Pick your location. Find a comfy area, preferably away from interruptions. A meeting room, empty office or inviting den is ideal. Set a timer for the amount of time allocated and focus on the task at hand, one piece of information at a time.
4. Read efficiently. Don't just pick up the material and start reading. Organize the information by scanning the text quickly to ascertain what is important to retain. Read the title and headings and the first and last paragraphs. This will give you an idea of whether you should proceed further into the body of the article.
5. Highlight as you go. You will retain more of the information if you physically do something with it. Highlighting or writing in the margins or even using a ruler to read will provide greater understanding of the topic.

Staying on top of your information on a regular basis will make you shine not only personally but professionally. Good luck!