

## HOW TO USE THE POMODORO PRODUCTIVITY TECHNIQUE



### WHY LEARN THIS SKILL?

The best tool for productivity might be in your kitchen. No, it's not the coffee machine. It's the egg timer.

Time management guru Francesco Cirillo stumbled on an ace technique for carving out productive slices of time. He measured these chunks of time using an ordinary tomato-shaped egg timer. He called this killer technique the 'Pomodoro' (Italian for 'tomato').

Before you think we're barking up the wrong tomato plant, let's get one thing straight: it works. It works for disciplined people and for undisciplined people, for people who like to work at night and for early owls, it works on study and on writing a novel – whatever large task you face.

This technique shows you exactly how to make serious headway on work, study, reading, writing – anything, in fact, that seems a bit too big, too daunting, anything that you might be putting off

### WHAT?

The pomodoro technique is a way to focus your mind on a large task, by breaking it down into small chunks in a way that means you **will** stick with it. You'll definitely see results.

### IT'S OKAY TO...

- > not know what you want to do
- > get knocked into the pit
- > move faster or go slower
- > fail (as long as you tried)

### WHAT TO DO

Ready to start your big task? Noooo. Feeling like it's too large? Tomato time!

- 01 Set a timer for 25 minutes.** That's one Pomodoro. (Use the egg timer, your phone or this website: [tomato-timer.com](http://tomato-timer.com))
- 02 Follow the rules.** Get started. You are not allowed to check socials, stand up, make tea or leave the task. Keep going as long as the timer runs.
- 03 If a distraction pops into your head,** write it down.
- 04 When the buzzer rings,** put a checkmark on your paper (or some other visual sign – I put a little toy on my desk).
- 05 Take a five-minute break.** Set a timer for 5 minutes. ([tomato-timer.com](http://tomato-timer.com) has a shortcut for 'short break'.) Get up, get that tea, check emails – but only until the timer rings.

## WHAT TO DO CONT:

06

**Repeat a Pomodoro.** Start the time again. 5 minutes, same deal. No cheating.

07

**After each Pomodoro,** make a tick mark (or move a little thing that amuses you, like my tiny toy kangaroos, onto your desk).

08

**After four Pomodoros,** take a 30-minute break. Get moving, go outside, take a walk, have a nap. Guilt-free, you have earned it.



### GOT IT?

- Try a set of three Pomodoro to get started, then look at how far you have come. Did you really focus? Did you make progress? The Pomodoro technique can make you more conscious of how long a task actually takes you (useful if you are an optimist... or a pessimist!)



### TRY THIS

If you feel like you've nailed it but you want to level up, try this:

- Grab those ideas you wrote down while in the Pomodoro. Give each one a 5-minute slice of time full Pomodoro to get them done. Or a full 25 minute Pomodoro if they're bigger.
- Set yourself a study goal expressed in Pomodoro, e.g. 'I will write this essay for four Pomodoros. And then I'll go out for a bike ride.'

### SO WHAT?

- It may seem crazy-simple, but this trick is a serious tool for productivity. (Trust me, I've written whole books this way.)

## WHAT ACTION WILL YOU TAKE?

- Choose a big task you need to crack through.
- Get a timer or set one on your phone: 25 minutes.
- Find a good place to work, and start a Pomodoro.



## IF YOU LIKED THIS ONE YOU MIGHT WANT TO TRY...

- How to Set Up Your Work Space
- How to Make Time for Study and Downtime
- How to Overcome Fear of Failure
- How to Use Sketchnoting
- How to Go on an Adventure