

Act Name: _____

Date: _____

Key Ideas in this Toolkit

There's an old proverb that goes something along the lines of.....

There was a dood (lets call him Boris) slaving away chopping down some trees. He was having a real hard time of it, because his axe was really blunt. Another guy came along (lets call him Baz), and said to Boris "that looks like hard work, wouldn't it be quicker if you sharpened your axe?". Boris replies "yes it would, but I don't have time".

This toolkit is all about sharpening YOUR axe.....

Yeah, you need to work hard, but you've got to work smart as well!

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Time Management and Goal Setting are very personal things. It is dependent on your personal circumstances and your personality traits. What works for some people, won't work for others. Therefore, take out of this toolkit what is relevant for you and put it into practise. Some of it may not be relevant – that's OK.

Regardless of how you do it, both are crucially important.

Time Management takes time. You need to make time to make time, much like Boris and his axe.

Your Health

There is just no way you can be efficient if you don't look after your health. This is in no way a complete guide to the healthy body and mind, simply a few basic pointers. If you have concerns about your health you should contact a health professional.

You don't need to be crazed about it (in fact, that is usually worse for you) but you **MUST**:

Get enough sleep.

- The amount of sleep you need, and the times you sleep, is really individual. Figure out what works for you, and do it.
- Be aware that there will be times you need more sleep and times you will need less. Go with what your body tells you.
- Be aware that your energy levels will vary. Don't give yourself a hard time if you're having a low energy day. However if you go for weeks with low energy, something is wrong.

Your diet:

- Be sensible.
- Eat plenty of fresh fruit and veges.
- If you enjoy food that supposedly isn't good for you (takeaways, chocolate etc), don't deprive yourself, but keep it moderate.
- Eat regularly – don't starve yourself. You can't operate if you don't give your body food.
- If you have difficulties maintaining a healthy diet, seek the help of an expert. A good naturopath is invaluable or a good dietician.

Drugs and alcohol:

- Avoid drugs and the people that do drugs. Neither are good for you.
- Avoid drinking bucketloads and the people that drink bucketloads. Neither are good for you.
- Unless you are prone to addiction, there is nothing wrong with a few drinks, maximum, once or twice a week and even the occasional binge, but make it the exception rather than the rule. Also make sure you are in safe company if you do.
- Avoid doing it at work (ie when you're at a gig – this is a really bad look).
- We are in an industry which tends to have a problem with substance abuse. If you suspect you, or anyone you know has a problem, seek help.

Be active:

You don't need to be a fitness freak, but if you are at least moderately active, you will be a lot more efficient.

Time out:

It's really important to give yourself time out. This may just be 10 minutes for a coffee or it may be scheduling yourself a proper holiday.

Have some activities you really enjoy that you find relaxing. It might be hanging out with friends, playing a sport, or going on a bush walk.

If you don't know already know how, learn to relax. It may be useful to learn about meditation or you may find an activity you really enjoy does the trick.

Your physical state of health is also closely linked to your mental state of health. You can't have a healthy mind if you don't have a healthy body and vice versa.

Your

State of Mind

You simply can't be efficient, if you don't have a healthy state of mind. This is not qualified mental health advice, merely a few personal observations. If you are concerned about your mental health, you should contact a health professional.

It is important to realise that creative people are possibly more likely than "normal" people to suffer mood swings (at best) and mental illness (at worst).

Everyone has good days and bad days. If you're having a lot of bad days in a row, this may be a sign that you need some professional help, don't be afraid to ask for help. It may also mean you need to make some changes in your life.

Apart from that there are some really simple ways to ensure the good days are the rule and the bad days are the exception, and to deal with the bad days when you have them.

- Surround yourself with positive people that have a "can-do" attitude. Lose any losers in your life.
- Affirmations
- Congratulate yourself when you've done a good job
- Learn to distinguish between good advice and out and out criticism. Listen to the former and don't even pay attention to the latter.
- Recognise all the good things in your life, and your good qualities. You may find it helpful to write these down or draw pictures.

When you've having a bad day:

- Assuming the people around you are good for you, tell them how you're feeling and ask for support from them.
- Don't give yourself a hard time. This will likely result in a downwards spiral.
- Be nice to yourself. Do something you really enjoy.
- This is the time you should most avoid drugs and alcohol.
- Unless its absolutely necessary, try to avoid doing anything and seeing anyone that will stress you, or that you find difficult.
- Don't listen to the little voices in your head that tell you how useless, bad or worthless you are. If you suffer from this problem, when you're feeling good, prepare a list of all the things you like about yourself and all the wonderful things you've achieved. Pull it out and read it if you're having a bad day.
- Realise and tell yourself you won't feel like this forever.

Goal Setting

You can't manage your time unless you know what your goals are.

If you've never done a goal setting exercise, you may find this process will take some time and some soul searching.

Have fun with this exercise. Don't look at it as one of those "I really should do this" things.

What does your movie look like?

What is your ideal life? Think about things like:

What kind of a person do you want to be? What will your qualities and skills be?

Where will you be living – what do your surroundings look like?

What are the people like who are in your life?

What does your "average" day entail?

What are the activities you will be doing?

How much money will you be earning? How will you be earning it?

Find a way, that suits you, of recording this. It might be writing it down, drawing pictures, actually making a movie. Up to you.

Visualise it – how does it everything look and even more importantly feel.

This needs to be the first thing you think about when you wake up and the last thing you think about before you go to sleep. This will get your subconscious mind working on it, which is a very powerful thing.

Break it down into smaller goals

Again, its up to you, as to what suits you best. Some people prefer to start with the shorter term goals, others prefer longer term. Some goals may take you a while to come up with. That's cool, just keep working on it.

Ask yourself. What do I need to do within the next (day (this will become your to do list), month, 3 months, 6 months, 12 months, 2 years, 3 years, 5 years and 10 years) to achieve the "movie".

Again, find a way to record these goals that suits you. Most books on the subject will say write them down. You may prefer something different, like drawing a picture or a mindmap.

Not all your goals will be career or business focused. It's important to have personal goals as well.

Goal

Setting Necessities

Express them in the positive

If writing them down, express them in the positive eg Today I will spend an hour on reading a book on marketing NOT I will not spend an hour playing playstation.

Make them time specific and measurable

Eg this week I will add 10 new people to my mailing list NOT I will increase the number of people on my mailing list

Set deadlines

Give yourself a deadline for each goal. Make it achievable.

Make them small achievable steps

If you have a large goal of eg Recording and releasing an album, break it down into smaller steps eg preproduction, researching and finding a studio, researching CD duplication, getting the artwork done etc

Get a balance between achievable and pushing yourself outside of your comfort zone

Set your sights high, include your dreams, but make goals achievable.

Review your goals

It's important to make sure you review your goals regularly. Sometimes your circumstances change, or what is important to you changes. It's important to recognise these things and adjust your goals accordingly.

***Here's the most important thing
Stop and congratulate yourself every time you achieve one of your
goals!!***

Figure out what works for you. Give yourself a day off, shout yourself a night out, or it might be tell yourself how fantastic you are.

Be Organised

Time management will be a whole heap easier if you're organised. Organised does not necessarily mean tidy. So, don't stress if you're not naturally tidy. It doesn't mean you're disorganised.

Don't try to change everything at once. A lot of these things are changing hard and fast habits, so concentrate on one at a time.

1/ *Homes*

Everything must have a "home". Eg your clothes may live in your wardrobe. The advantages of this are:

- You will always know where to find things. This can cut down a huge amount of time and frustration looking for something you need.
- You won't lose things.
- It will be easier to be tidy.

When deciding on "homes", think about:

- Is it near where you'll use it eg keep your spare strings in your guitar case
 - Is it easy to get to eg are all the things you will need in the office (paper, pens, stapler, scissors etc) easily reached without getting out of your chair.
 - Put like things together eg all your things you need for a gig (eg guitar, mic, leads)
-
- **Always** put an item back in its home when you've finished with it.
 - Make sure everyone who will use the item knows where its home is.
 - If you're not used to "homes" try using labels until the concept of homes is firmly embedded in your subconscious.

2/ *Diary*

Have (one only) diary and use it. It may be an old school diary or a new fangled digital diary. Figure out what suits you best and carry it with you all the time. It will also double as a useful notebook.

Write all your appointments in your diary as you make them.

Write relevant details of your appointments such as contact name, address, phone number etc

3/ *Be*

One of the most important things, if you want people to treat you seriously, is to be on time.

Allow extra time for things to go wrong.

As soon as you are running behind time, invariably this is when things go wrong. Particularly if you are rushing.

If the worst happens and you are running late for an appointment, let them know as soon as you can.

If circumstances outside of your control eg severe traffic, cause you to be late, you need to adopt the “don’t panic” and “stay calm” mindset. You can’t do anything about it. Just accept it and enjoy the time you are getting to yourself.

4/ *Your memory vs writing things down and your recording system*

Having a good memory sure helps being organised. If you don’t have a good memory, consider some memory coaching.

HOWEVER

Regardless of how good your memory is, don’t rely on it. Make sure you have a system for recording everything.

Things to avoid

Avoid writing things on scraps of paper that will get lost and/or will take a heap of sorting through to find the right piece of paper.

Avoid having records spread out in several different places.

The following items in your recording system are recommended

A diary for appointments

A to do list

A database for contacts

Your goals

A notebook and/or a file on your computer for inspiration and ideas. This may include future additions to your goals, lyrics, promotional ideas, or just random thoughts.

Mobile record system

If your system is not portable, make sure you have a method of recording ideas, contacts, things to do etc while you are out (eg a notebook and pen or dictaphone) Then, incorporate them into your system when you return to your office.

6/ *Get a good filing system*

Make sure you always know where to find that quote you got for recording 2 years ago and those equipment warranties and those paid accounts.

7/ *Have a clear, logical file structure on your computer*

Make sure it makes complete sense to you so you always know where to find your files again. If you don't know how to do this, invest in some education on the topic.

Give files meaningful names ie don't call them letter1. Call them either the topic of the letter and the date, or the recipient of the letter and the date.

8/ *Have a bought forward / follow up system*

Diary things that need to be done at a later date.

Diary when you need to follow something or someone up. Don't just cross them off your list and never think about it again.

9/ *Leaving voicemail messages*

Leaving good voicemail messages will save you time, you'll get more calls returned and increase your cred.

- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly
- If you aren't sure what you're going to say, script it first.
- Begin AND end the message with your name AND phone number AND email.
 - NEVER assume they have your number. Even if they do, it will save their time looking it up.
 - Leave a landline and a mobile if possible. It may often be bad form, expecting someone to carry the cost of a mobile call.
- Spell your name if dealing with someone for the first time
- Don't just leave your name and number—leave a message.
 - Let them know the nature of the call
 - Let them know a good time to reach you.
- Make it quick, less than 60 seconds.
- 10. Avoid (if possible) leaving messages from your mobile.

Time Overview

Management

Have some fun with your time management and planning. Don't stress too hard about it and you'll find it will get easier as you go along and teach yourself new habits.

Once you've done the goal setting exercise you'll find time management a whole heap easier. Before doing anything, ask yourself, "does this help me achieve my goals?". If the answer is no, then don't do it.

Will I ever get everything done?

If you have a business which is developing and has the potential to develop further, you will never have everything done.

The day everything is done and up to date, is the day your business (in this case as a musician), has no potential to grow any further.

Therefore you will often feel like there just isn't enough hours in the day to get everything done. Provided you are moving towards your goals, this is a good thing. Don't allow yourself to feel guilty or overwhelmed by it.

Where does that time go? - Time Journal

Before you embark upon a time management exercise you may find it useful to keep a time journal for a period of time (perhaps a week). Write down what you do every day in 30 minute intervals (see table on next page – you may need to change the times for your day).

Then analyse your journal. See instructions following the sample journal.



Musicians Career Development Programme
Time Management and Goal Setting Toolkit



Day

Time	Activity	Comments eg hungry, tired, happy, grumpy
8am		
8.30am		
9am		
9.30am		
10am		
10.30am		
11am		
11.30am		
Midday		
12.30pm		
1pm		
1.30pm		
2pm		
2.30pm		
3pm		
3.30pm		
4pm		
4.30pm		
5pm		
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9.30pm		
10pm		

10.30pm		
11pm		
11.30pm		
Midnight		
12.30am		
1am		
1.30am		
2am		
2.30am		
3am		
3.30am		
4am		
4.30am		
5am		
5.30am		
6am		
6.30am		
7am		
7.30am		

Totals

I spent my day doing (for eg)

Personal

Sleeping
Eating, showering, basic type living stuff
R & R
Phone calls

Work

Phone calls
Emails
Gigging
Songwriting
Traveling
Research (reading etc)

Time wasted

What things do I waste my time on?
Who causes me to waste time?

Analyse the Journal

Total what you spent your time on each day.

How much wasted time was there? (not to be confused with timeout which is really important).

What did you waste your time on?

What caused you to waste time?

Who caused you to waste time?

What are you doing that doesn't really need to be done?

What are you doing that could be done by someone else?

What are you doing that could be done more efficiently?

Do you need to upskill? On what? (add this to your goals).

Do you need to upgrade equipment or technology? (add this to your goals).

You should see some patterns emerging.

When are your productive times of the day?

When are your non-productive times of the day?

What things affect your productivity positively? (This may give you some things to add to your goals).

What things affect your productivity negatively? (This may give you some things to add to your goals).

Time Wasting Habits

Doing the time journal will also make you aware of your time wasting habits. Here's how to deal to them.

1. Be really honest with yourself, what do you do that could be done more efficiently. You may like to ask people around you what they think you do which is a bad time wasting habit.
2. Write down them down
3. Rank them in order of what wastes the most time.
4. Concentrate on improving one thing at a time. When you've mastered that and created a new habit, move on to the next one.

Some common time wasting habits:

Procrastination. This is a biggie. Virtually everyone suffers from it. There is a whole big section on it, to help you deal with it.

Not being organised. See "Be Organised"

Not prioritising. See "Prioritising".

Not doing everything in one hit.

How many times have you gone out to get milk, come back and realised you needed bread as well? Every time you are off to get something or drop something off, spend a few seconds or minutes checking to see what else can be done during that trip.

This also applies to simple things like moving from one room to another eg when getting up to make yourself a cup of tea in the kitchen, take the dirty dishes back to the kitchen. This may seem like a really small thing but can, over a period of time, save amazing amounts of time.

Being easily distracted. Does noise or people talking distract you. Do you want to contribute to their conversation? You may need to change your surroundings / living circumstances to give yourself a work area which doesn't have distractions. You also need to be aware of it and spend some effort to not be distracted by things and focus on what you're doing.

Only handle pieces of paper AND emails once. Deal with paper as soon as you get it. Don't pick it up 10 times before you deal with it. Generally paper can be dealt with one of the following ways:

- Bin it
- File it
- Prioritise it and put it on your to-do list
- Put it in your brought forward system

Same with emails. Empty your inbox everyday. Here's how to deal with them.

- Download them
- Delete any spam
- Open and deal with any urgent emails
 - Once they are dealt with, IMMEDIATELY put them in a folder, so you can access them at a later date if you need to.
- Put the remaining emails on your to-do list in priority order.
- When you get to your emails on your to-do list:
 - Deal with as many as you can there and then
 - If you have emails that are reading / research, put them in a folder together and allocate some of your reading time to going through them
 - Put any that can't be dealt with there and then in your brought forward system. The easiest way of doing that if you are using outlook, is drag them into your tasks and set a reminder for some time in the future, when you can deal with them. Then file the email away in a folder.

Jumping between tasks. Once you've started a task, finish it before you move on to the next task. If you think of something else you need to do, write it down on your "to-do list"

Watching things happen. How many times have you sat there and waited while your emails downloaded, or maybe watch the kettle boil. Always have other things you can move on to while these things are happening. It may only be a couple of minutes, but if you save 2 minutes, 10 times a day, that's a massive 122 HOURS of time you save a year, that's 3 working weeks!!

Visitors and phone calls. When you work from home, phone calls and visitors can pose a major problem. If friends phone or visit you while you're working, don't get into a conversation with them, be firm, and tell them you will call back at a later time.

You may choose to have certain times of the day, when you take your phone off the hook and let your voicemail answer it.

Television, computer games, playstation etc. If you can't stop using these things, consider selling them or having them some place which is well away from your workspace. Preferably in another building.

Not being able to say no to people. Are you one of these people who is constantly over committing yourself because you can't say no to people. If so, you need to learn.

Prioritising

This is probably THE most important skill to learn in time management.

Urgent vs Important

You need to be able to identify the difference between something which is urgent and something which is important.

Some things which seem urgent may not be important at all. Eg someone who “urgently” wants you to phone them.

Many things which are important do not seem urgent, so they never get done without proper planning eg developing your website

So

Something is **important** if it moves you towards your goals.

If something **seems urgent**, before you do it, ask yourself if it is **important**

Maintenance vs Progress

In order to make the most of your time, you will need to be able to get the balance right between maintenance tasks and progress tasks.

Maintenance tasks are **important** things like collecting your emails and updating your website and must be done (these are often daily or weekly tasks), and although they may be moving you towards your goals, may not be progressing your career.

Progress tasks are **important** things like writing new material, upskilling, research and recording which progress your career. These are often the things which don't get done, or get low priority. It is important to prioritise these and to always be working on at least one **progress** task.

Your **progress** tasks, will be a plan of how you will achieve your longer term goals. Eg If you have a large goal of recording and releasing an album, break it down into smaller steps with timeframes eg preproduction, researching and finding a studio, researching CD duplication, getting the artwork done etc

Add at least one thing you can do towards this progress task to your to-do list everyday.

Your To Do List (Your Daily Goals)

This is your most important tool in time management.

It is what you will be doing today that will mean you can achieve your “movie”.

It should be the first thing you do when you start work every day.

It will include:

“Your maintenance tasks”

“Your progress tasks”

Your maintenance tasks usually work in daily, weekly and monthly patterns.

To save time on compiling your To-Do lists, spend some time:

Compiling a daily tasksheet.

This may include things like: collect emails, practise etc

Compiling tasksheets for each day of the week.

For example, you may update your website every Monday and advise gig guides of your upcoming gigs on a Friday.

Diary monthly tasks. If you use outlook, you can use the recurring function on the calendar to do this automatically for you.

Compiling Your To-Do List

1. Add your daily tasks
2. Add the weekly tasks for that day of the week
3. Add the monthly tasks from your diary
4. Add any tasks from your brought forward system
5. Add your **progress** tasks for that day

NOW

6. CHECK there aren't any tasks which aren't important (ie are not moving you towards your goals). If there are any, **CROSS THEM OFF!**
7. Put them in the order that you will do them. Bear in mind:
 - From your time journal, you should be aware when your productive times are. Schedule your “hard” tasks, during those times
 - Schedule the things you find easier, during your less productive times and/or schedule your R&R during those times.
 - Group “like” things together eg if you've got a number of phone calls to make, put them together on your to-do list.
8. Make sure your to-do list is the right size. If it's too big, reprioritise. If it's too small, add some more progress tasks.

NOW

9. Do it
10. Make sure you do it in order and don't go off on a tangent or get distracted with those seemingly urgent matters.
11. Don't keep working if you need a break, or need to eat. You won't be efficient and you are more likely to make mistakes. Take a break and come back to work refreshed.

Keep a list of smaller activities...

... which need doing, and you can use these to fill any gaps in your time eg if you are waiting on the phone

Keep a list of tasks you can do whilst kept waiting etc

Ever been kept waiting for an appointment. Or just ended up with some time on your hands between say appointments. Always have something you can work on during these times so it's not wasted time.

Blasting Procrastination into Oblivion

“Why do today, what can be put off until tomorrow.....”

WRONG!!

Most people suffer from it, so don't give yourself a hard time, this will only make you procrastinate more. Accept that you have possibly wasted a bucketload of time in the past and move on.

Before labeling yourself as procrastinating about a task, is the task really necessary? Maybe you're "procrastinating" because it doesn't actually need to be done.

Maybe you genuinely don't have the time. If this is the case you need to restructure your workload.

Things already covered in this toolkit which will assist you in the problem of procrastination:

- Addressing any health and mental health issues
- Realising you will have the occasional bad day. Don't worry if you procrastinate on these days (provided they are only occasional).
- Having your subconscious constantly working on achieving your "movie". Things that once seemed insurmountable will now seem like fun!
- Having goals with deadlines
- Being organised
- Being aware of your productive and non-productive times of the day. Schedule the tasks you find hardest, when you are at your best.
- Realising what makes you unproductive eg being hungry or tired
- Having a plan for each day (your to-do list).

Here's what to do if you're procrastinating about something

1. Spend a few moments imagining you've finished the job. Isn't it a good feeling?
2. Decide upon a reward you will give yourself when you've done the job. Make it worth your while.
3. Be aware, the worst thing of a job you are procrastinating about, is making yourself start it. Once its started, 999 times out of 1000, it's not nearly as bad as you thought it would be.
4. What can you do to make the task more pleasant?
Maybe put your favourite music on (not if it will distract you). Have some of your favourite food nearby eg a bowl of chips or M&Ms

5. Figure out why you are procrastinating. Once you know why you are avoiding something, it is usually much easier to address. Here are some common reasons and some ways around it.

The job seems too big.

- The old saying “A journey of a 1000 miles starts with a single step” is really the best advice here.
- Break it into smaller steps.
- Make the first step the smallest
eg You are procrastinating about promoting a gig. You might break it down with the first step being compose an email to go to your mailing list (this will probably only take a few minutes).

You don't know where to start.

- Somewhere is always better than nowhere. Even if its not the best place to start, figure out something you can do easily NOW and you will probably find it easier from there.
- Ask a clear thinking friend to help brainstorm and put together a plan of attack.
- Sometimes you may need to get expert advice eg for a recording project you might like to speak to the engineer of a studio you are thinking of using, to help you decide how to approach the project

You are scared of what you'll find.

- Eg you have been procrastinating about sorting out your bills.
- Yip, what you'll find will probably be scary BUT not nearly as scary as what will happen to you if you ignore it.
- Enlist the help of a friend who is good at dealing with such things. If you don't have any friends who are, again you may need to seek expert advice. There are a number of agencies that can assist in these areas. Citizen's Advice Bureau is a good place to start.

You're scared of what people might think of you.

- Eg you have some phone calls to make to people who make you nervous.
- Figure out what you want to achieve from the phone call
- Visualise what it's like when you've achieved what you want to achieve
- For phone calls, it is often a good idea to script your call.
- Also figure out what is the worst thing that can happen eg they'll say no. Is it really THAT bad. Don't focus on it, but if you know the worst thing that could happen is not death by slow and painful means, it does make it easier.

You have had a bad experience before.

- Figure out why the experience was bad the last time
- What can you do better this time to minimise the risk of the same thing happening?
- If it is something that has affecting you really badly, think about getting professional help to address the issues

Wanting it to be perfect.

- Perhaps you haven't started on a task, because you want the outcome to be perfect eg a poster.
- Yip, your first poster design, will not be your best BUT it is still better than NO poster.
- It's important to realise you won't get to the perfect poster, unless you start with the earlier less perfect models.

You don't have the skills.

- Its really important to recognise if you genuinely don't have the skills to do a particular task.
- If its important that you get those skills, then learn them (courses, reading etc)
- If its not important that you get those skills, then pay someone to do it for you

Summary

Address any health and mental health issues that may be affecting your life

Develop your “movie” – your ideal life

Set your goals to achieve the “movie” for the next:

- month
- 3 months
- 6 months
- 12 months
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 5 years
- 10 years

Learn to be organised – address one thing at a time

Find out how you spend your time – do the “Time Journal”

Analyse the Time Journal

Identify and correct your time wasters - address one thing at a time

Learn to prioritise – only do things that move you towards your goals

Do a daily to-do list

Ban real procrastination; relabel what you might think is procrastination to what it actually is (eg I’m not doing it because it’s a waste of time).