

HR Monthly Newsletter



September 2026



Stop Lying to Your Calendar (And 6 Other Time Blocking Rules)

Time blocking fails for most of us because we lie to our calendars. We schedule eight hour focus blocks we couldn't hit on our best day. We set statuses we ignore the second a notification pops. These seven rules are what time blocking looks like in the real world, built for how your brain and your job actually work.



Rule #1: Time blocking isn't for the faint of heart.

Do you feel guilty ignoring notifications during your focus time? Do you check email "just in case" something is urgent? Do you accept a 3pm meeting request because saying no feels rude?

If yes to any of them, you have two paths:

1. Stop feeling guilty
2. Don't try time blocking.

For this to work, your blocked time has to be sacred, which means no distractions, check-ins, or debilitating guilt.

Rule #2: Do one thing. That's the whole rule.

The golden rule is stupidly simple: one task, one block.

Most people can't sustain deep focus on more than one thing anyway. Batching three low stakes tasks into a focus block is how you finish zero of them in 90 minutes.

Pick the one, and do the one. Everything else waits.

Rule #3: Block your priorities. Skip everything else.

Your priorities fit in a day. Your priorities plus the five “quick things” people pinged you about this morning do not. Pick the two or three priorities for the day. Block them first. Whatever’s left after that is a “maybe” or a “tomorrow.” If that feels brutal, it means it’s working. Time blocking is pragmatic by design. Optimism is not a planning method.

Rule #4: Block in 90 minute chunks. 3 to 4 hours a day, cap.

For real work, 25 minutes is barely warm up. Most cognitive research points to 90 minutes as the sweet spot: long enough to reach flow, short enough to still have focus when you finish. After 90, take a real break walk, eat something, get away from a screen. And cap your “deep work” at 3 to 4 hours total per day. Blocking 8 hours of focus is a lie you’re telling your calendar. Most people can do 3 to 4 hours of genuine cognitive work before quality collapses. Fill the rest of the day with admin, meetings, and reactive work. Your calendar looks less impressive, but your output is noticeably better. That’s a trade worth making.

Rule #5: Tell people. Loudly.

Silent time blocking is a fantasy. Put it on your team calendar with a clear label: “FOCUS: Q3 strategy doc, no meetings.” Post your focus windows in your team channel weekly. Set your calendar status to “Heads down until 2pm” and actually mean it. When someone pings anyway, here’s the script:

- “I’m in focus time until 2. I’ll get back to you then.”
- “Is this urgent enough to break a focus block? If not, I’ll have an answer by EOD.”
- “I can’t do a meeting at 3. I can do 4.”
- “This is exactly the thing I’m blocking time for. Let me get it done and I’ll send it over at 3.”

Boundaries without warmth get labeled cold. Boundaries with warmth get respected.

Rule #6: Do the worst thing first.

The hardest, most avoided task on your list goes in your first block of the day. You have the most willpower in the morning. You have the fewest interruptions early. And once the thing that’s been haunting you for three days is done, the rest of the day feels like a downhill ride. If you schedule it for “later,” later will fill with everything else, and the hard thing will move to tomorrow (again).

Rule #7: The right system is the one you’ll run tomorrow.

There are forty time blocking frameworks on the internet. The one that matters is the one you’ll actually execute at 9 am Monday. Track what you finish. Tweak what didn’t work. Give it two weeks before you decide it’s broken.



4.7 ★★★★★ (1,709)

Ten Minutes to Better Prioritization

This quick course focuses on mastering prioritization by showing you how to juggle all your tasks, manage your time like a pro, and make the most of your resources. Get ready for some real changes in the way you tackle your to-do list, and learn proven techniques that streamline your day, ensuring that every minute contributes significantly to your goal achievement.

Back-to-School No Bake Energy Bites

Ingredients

- 1 cup old fashioned oats
- ½ cup peanut butter
- ⅓ cup honey
- ½ cup mini chocolate chips
- ⅓ cup ground flaxseed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon



Directions

- Add all ingredients to a large bowl and mix until well combined.
- Refrigerate the mixture for about 20–30 minutes to make it easier to handle.
- Roll the mixture into small, bite-sized balls.
- Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

PROFESSIONALISM IN THE WORKPLACE

Friday, October 2nd
9:00am-12:00pm

T280 Milwaukee Room, Taubman Center

All staff and faculty are invited to attend this optional training.

This course is filled with practical tools and tips to build your professional image and credibility to increase your success!

This training is designed for anyone who is new to the team or looking to sharpen their skills.

RSVP by September 18th!

Reach out to Kennedy Kilgore
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with any questions.



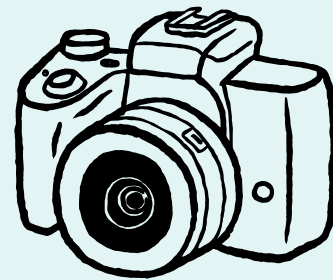
Mark your calendars for the upcoming holiday:

Monday, September 7th 2026– Labor Day

Remember to turn your out of office messages
on for your email and phone. Enjoy your time off!



Summer Snapshots!



Lisa Rigstad, from Studio Art & Craft, went kayaking with her dogs on Spirit Lake.



Drew Samson, from Human Resources, went on a summer boating trip on Taggett Lake.



Kennedy Kilgore, from Human Resources, went Horseback Riding in Florida.



Larry Lunsford, from Community Arts Partnership, shared a photo from the CAP summer program.

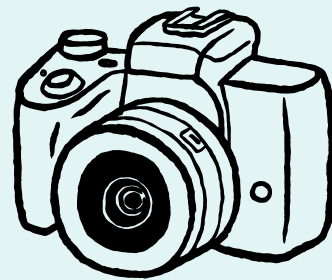


Michelle Peck, from Business Services, went to Evergreen Resort in Red Bay, Ontario.

Summer Snapshots!



Katie Rusak, from Institutional Advancement, traveled to Krakow, Poland with a high school classmate.



Ann Hawkins, from Student Affairs, and her daughter went to Washington over 4th of July weekend.



Janine Surma, from Academic Advising, took a trip with her son to Juneau, Alaska to visit her brother.



Raquel Diroff, from Human Resources, went to Oval Beach in Saugatuck, Michigan.



Before you go...

Fall is a wonderful time to embrace simple pleasures and make the most of the changing season. Whether you're spending time outdoors, trying a new recipe, or enjoying a favorite fall tradition, there are plenty of ways to welcome autumn.

Here are a few ideas to celebrate the season:

- Visit a local apple orchard or pumpkin patch.
- Bake a seasonal treat like apple crisp or pumpkin bread.
- Read a good book.
- Decorate your home with fall colors.



As summer comes to a close, take a moment to appreciate the beauty of the season and enjoy all that fall has to offer. Happy Fall!

We want your feedback!

<https://forms.gle/J9qieF1938KJA9YS9>

Be featured in the Employee Spotlight!

<https://forms.gle/Q3GpHraoafNDos3M8>

How Can We Help?

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