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# Twelve Time Management Habits to Master in 2013

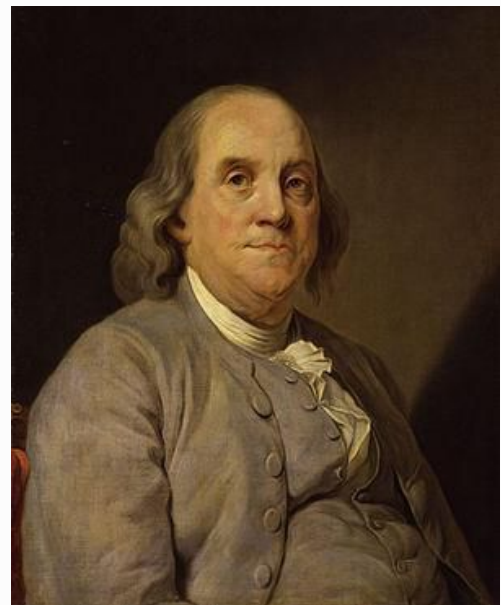


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Nearly three hundred years ago, [Benjamin Franklin](#) came up with an approach to changing habits that has yet to be surpassed. A young adult seeking to straighten out his act, Franklin developed a list of thirteen virtues, jotting down a brief definition of each. These were character traits he took to be important, but in which he found himself lacking. He knew that nurturing these habits would bring about positive change in his life.

Starting at the top of the list, Franklin spent one week working on each virtue. In the morning he thought about how he would reinforce the new habit throughout the day. During the day he looked at his notes to remind himself of the new habit. At the end of the day, he counted how many times he fell back into the old habit.

While Franklin was surprised at first to see how “faulty” his behavior was, he was so resolved that he pressed on, working through the entire list in a thirteen-week cycle, and completing four such cycles in a year. As for results, he noted in his autobiography that while perfection was unattainable, he could see big improvements.



Benjamin Franklin (Photo credit: Wikipedia)

Modern psychologists recognize three key elements in Franklin's three-hundred-year-old procedure for changing habits:

1. He started out committed to the new behavior.
2. He worked on only one habit at a time.
3. He put in place visual reminders.

### ***Applying Benjamin Franklin's Method***

Here are 12 time management habits for the new year. Tailor these as you like, but whatever you do, work on one each week using Benjamin Franklin's method:

**Habit 1: Strive to be authentic.** Be as honest with yourself as you can about what you want and why you do what you do.

**Habit 2: Favor trusting relationships.** Put your efforts into building relationships with people you can trust and count on, and make sure those same people can trust and count on you.

**Habit 3: Maintain a lifestyle that will give you maximum energy.** Work your way up to doing aerobic exercise at least three times a week, eating a light lunch, and getting enough sleep.

**Habit 4: Listen to your biorhythms and organize your day accordingly.** Make it a habit to pay attention to regular fluctuations in your physical and mental energy levels throughout the day; and based on what you learn, make adjustments to how you schedule tasks.

**Habit 5: Set very few priorities and stick to them.** Select a maximum of two things that are your highest priority, and plan time to work on them.

**Habit 6: Turn down things that are inconsistent with your priorities.** Get good at saying no to other people, and do so frequently.

**Habit 7: Set aside time for focused effort.** Schedule time every day to work on just one thing.

**Habit 8: Always look for ways of doing things better and faster.** Be on the lookout for tasks you do over and over again, and look for ways of improving how you do them.

**Habit 9: Build solid processes.** Set up processes that last and that run without your attention.

**Habit 10: Spot trouble ahead and solve problems immediately.** Set aside time to think about what lies ahead, and face all problems as soon as you can.

**Habit 11: Break your goals into small units of work, and think only about one unit at a time.** Spend most of your time working on the task in front of you, and avoid dreaming too much about the big goal.

**Habit 12: Finish what's important and stop doing what's no longer worthwhile.** Don't stop doing what you considered worth starting unless there's a good reason to give it up.

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