

## Overcoming Chaos - 6 Tips from a Productivity Coach

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# 6 Tips from a Productivity Coach

If you're doing all you can but can't seem to keep up with the unending demands of your job—perhaps you need to reconsider how you're approaching your work. Productivity Coach, Casey Moore, author of *Stop Organizing Start Producing*, says there are simple steps you can all take to make the most of your limited time.



Whether you're a top executive at a large company or a consultant [working from a home office](#), it's likely your motivation and job satisfaction are closely linked with whether or not you feel efficient and effective. But, like most professionals, you probably have a nagging feeling that you could be doing better.

Casey Moore has built a career helping busy people achieve sustainable productivity. Her approach is unconventional. Her book, *Stop Organizing Start Producing* encourages professionals to [stop trying to reshuffle papers](#)

and instead get real about what's holding them back. In a recent interview, she shared some insightful advice:

### **Get curious—not critical**

The first step to making a change is admitting that you aren't currently maximizing your productivity. However, Moore emphasizes that it's important that you [resist the urge to be hard on yourself](#).

She encourages clients to have a neutral attitude, acknowledge they have been managing their time a certain way for legitimate reasons, and simply explore if circumstances have changed and things might need to be done differently now.

"My clients come up with half of their solutions once they get out of their own way and stop judging themselves. When you come from the perspective of curiosity, solutions come from everywhere," Moore says.

### **Commit to mindfulness**

Sustainable productivity doesn't result from tips, shortcuts or so-called "hacks." Moore says that once you've recognized the need for change, the next most important thing you can do is [commit to mindfulness](#).

By rejecting a chaotic mindset and learning to be calm and present, you can greatly improve your ability to successfully manage time. "The way you can get the most out of five minutes of productivity is to be mindful, to be inside your body, breathe, feel the floor beneath your feet," Moore says. "You'll make better decisions about [what to do with those five minutes](#) and what you do is going to be more accurate, more complete and less likely to cause interpersonal problems."

### **Get your mental to-do list on paper**

In Moore's experience, not even the brightest professional can successfully keep a complicated list of appointments and "to-dos" in their head long term. She says, "Have a written to-do list. It does not belong in your head—that's a recipe for feeling overwhelmed and having cluttered thinking. Make and review that list. Even if you can't do anything on that list at the moment, it tells your brain, 'Oh you've got this covered, I don't have to keep

reminding you.'"

## **Get real about your limits**

Moore teaches clients that a key part of [getting control of time management](#) is getting better at estimating how much time tasks take. In other words, we need to acknowledge our limits.

If your time estimate for today's to-do list exceeds your available time, something has to give. Moore shares, "I have clients who have nine hours of work they expect themselves to get done in two hours. We are too busy to be sensible."

She says when a client comes to the realization that they are trying to do more than they are humanly capable of doing, she asks, "What meetings can you get out of? How can you set up some boundaries? How can you carve out time to do some work? Can you hire someone?"

## **Connect your to-do list with your calendar**

How often have you had the same item on your to-do list for weeks on end? Moore says that once you have a written to-do list and have limited that list to what you are truly able to accomplish, the next priority is to [connect your to-do list with your calendar](#). In other words, make appointments with yourself to accomplish the tasks you need to do. Need to buy more office supplies? Need to respond to some key emails? Need to talk to an employee? Select specific time slots on your calendar to get these tasks done, so that you can cross them off your to-do list.

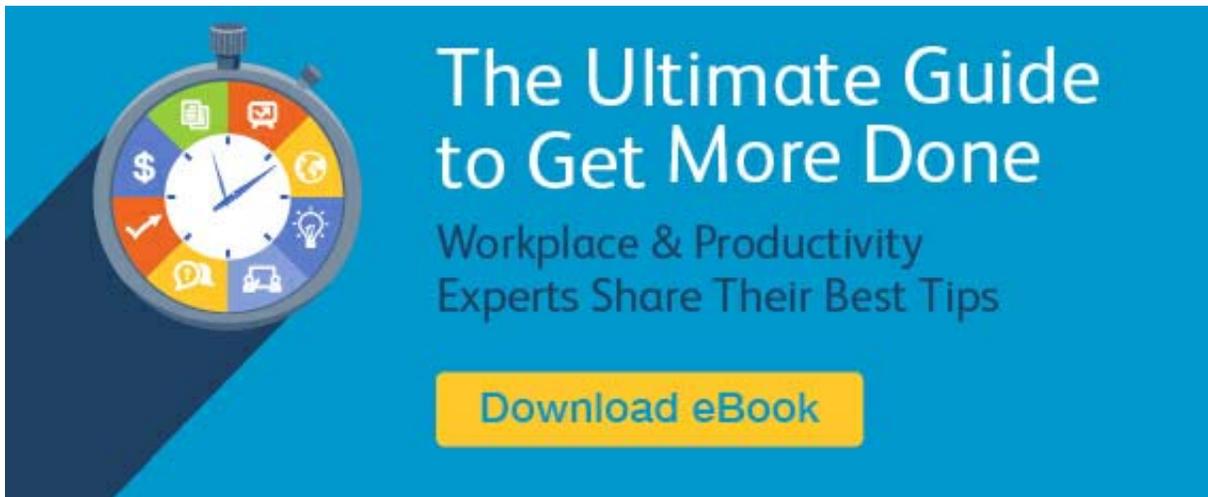
## **"Let me do one more thing." Not**

While always thinking that you can accomplish one more thing can lead to trouble, Moore says it can also help you start thinking differently about how you use your time. She says one thing we can all do is to [start identifying brief, easy tasks](#) that can be quickly knocked off our to-do lists.

"Start seeing little pockets of time—like one or two minutes—as opportunities to actually accomplish something significant. Seize those little moments. This requires that your to-do list is organized so that you can see the little activities that are quick 'one offs'—the quick call, the quick email—

in five minutes you could get three of those done. If you start seeing the five minutes here or two minutes there, you can accomplish a lot.”

The genius of Moore’s approach is that you can start right now. Unlike most other time management approaches, there is no need for training, software, organizational tools, or even team meetings. At its core, this approach is less of a technique and more of a needed paradigm shift.



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