

Transcript for Organising your time

Host: On ‘Star Students’ today we are speaking to Peter, who is going to tell us about the Pomodoro Technique, a system to help manage your time. It was invented by an Italian man called Francesco Cirillo in the 1980s. Now, he called it the Pomodoro Technique after a tomato-shaped timer that his mother used to use when she was cooking. Pomodoro is Italian for tomato. And this tomato has helped Peter become an A-grade student. So, Peter, welcome to the studio.

Peter: Thanks.

Host: Tell us about the Pomodoro Technique. What’s it about?

Peter: It’s about getting maximum productivity from your available time. I use it for studying, but professionals use it at work.

Host: Is it difficult to follow?

Peter: No. It’s actually very simple. It’s about breaking down your work into separate jobs and then using a timer to separate your time into periods of intensive work and short breaks.

Host: OK, well, that sounds sensible. So, how do you start?

Peter: First of all, you should think about the task you need to complete. For example, writing an essay for homework. You need to think about all the stages of the task and write a clear to-do list on a piece of paper. When you are ready to start you set the timer to 25 minutes and you start working on the first item on the list.

Host: OK ... but what happens when the timer goes off?

Peter: When the timer goes off you must take a short break of between 3 to 5 minutes. One 25-minute session is one ‘pomodoro’ so when you have completed this, you deserve a short break. You should try to move about a bit during the break. Then, set the timer for another 25 minutes and keep working. At the end of the next ‘pomodoro’ you have another short break. As you complete the items on the to-do list you should tick them off, to give you a feeling of satisfaction that you’re getting the job done.

Host: OK ... I get it. Can you use any timer? Most people have timers on their phones these days. Could you use that?

Peter: You could, but the danger is that then you can check messages on your phone or you start looking at apps. I use my dad’s kitchen timer and I make sure I switch off my phone when I’m studying. I get so much more done. In the breaks I sometimes check my phone but only if I’ve completed some of the items on my to-do list.

Host: Three to five minutes isn’t long for a break. Is that enough time?

Peter: Well, when you've had four or five short breaks you can take a longer break, and then you start again.

Host: And it works?

Peter: Yes, it works for me! It stops me wasting time. My work is much more effective when I use the timer. It's like short, intense periods of work. I actually get my homework done a lot quicker now, which leaves me more free time, so for me it works really well.

Host: Oh, I think I'll give it a try. Thanks so much for coming in, Peter.

Peter: You're welcome. Thanks for inviting me.

(British Council)