

SmartBrief

Be more productive with these tech tips



Joel Garfinkle · July 20, 2015 · Leadership · Careers

It seems every day brings more e-mails, more data, more information to sort through. Your [workload increases](#) but you can't add more hours to the day. How can you push back?

Use these innovations to [reduce overwork](#), streamline communication and [increase productivity](#). Take advantage of technology. Make it work for you instead of driving your life.

- 1. Rein in e-mails.** A leading report says businessmen and women receive an average of 121 e-mails a day. And that number will keep growing. Create a system to avoid being buried in the deluge.

Allot only a certain amount of time to scan your emails each day. Find a system of deleting, saving, and acting on them that works for you.

Consider [reducing the number of emails](#) you send out. Who really needs to be CC'd on them? Do you need to "reply all"? At times you can accomplish the work of a dozen e-mails by picking up the phone and speaking directly with the other person.
- 2. Streamline paperwork** Instead of stacks of paper on your desk, try stacks of files in programs that allow you to share with your team. Use Evernote to keep your thought, drafts, and research under control. Collect group files accessible to all team members in Dropbox.
- 3. Reduce travel time.** Time is money. Instead of spending hours and days in airports, flying or driving, use technology to shorten the distance. Skype or Google Hangout allow up to 10 people to see each other and converse. WebEx and GoToMeeting are great for screen sharing. These techniques will provide [efficient use of your time](#).
- 4. Contact information** Many people keep contact information in their smartphone making the data dial-ready. Another option is Jibber Jobber. Here you store more than phone numbers or other contact information. You can keep notes about your power lunch, log in relationships and tie the contact to other people or companies.
- 5. Unplug.** Use the ever-present technology to help you [take a break and unplug](#). Look for a parent control apps to limit the time you spend on your phone. Of course, you'll have the passcode to let you over-ride the cut-off time. But it helps you see how much time you're spending and insures you unplug for a while.

Break Time (Mac) or Workrave (Windows) can assist with taking breaks and managing your schedule on your computer.

Also consider turning off e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, and other notifications. The constant dings divert your attention from work. When you have periods of no technology, you allow your brain to think more deeply and find better solutions.

Technology simplifies our lives in many ways -- we scan and digitally file material, we research easier with Google search, and our smartphones with their multitude of applications can speed up work. Rather than have technology encroach into our lives, chose the best parts to streamline your communications. Then free up your time for your [most productive work](#).

Joel Garfinkle is recognized as one of the top 50 leadership coaches in the U.S. As an [executive coach](#), he has worked with many of the world's leading companies, including Google, Amazon, Starbucks, Deloitte, Cisco Systems, and The Ritz-Carlton. He is the author of seven books, including ["Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level."](#) More than 10,000 people subscribe to his [Fulfillment@Work](#) newsletter. [If you sign up](#), you'll receive the free e-book "41 Proven Strategies to Get Promoted Now!"

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