

UNIT

3

Efficiency, Time Management, and Ergonomics

REVIEW QUESTIONS

PART A

Complete the following sentences by filling in the blanks.

1. If you wear eyeglasses or contact lenses, ask your doctor for your _____ and adjust your seating appropriately.
2. To reduce stress, _____ as many routine tasks as possible.
3. _____ is the study of the compatibility of people, equipment, and surroundings.
4. Design _____ letters or paragraphs to take advantage of your word processing software.
5. Make a daily _____ if you want to get the most out of each day.
6. A roadblock to effective listening is permitting our _____ to get in the way.
7. Plan the most difficult jobs or stressful appointments for the _____ of the day.
8. Plants in an office take in pollutants and give out _____.
9. Handle each document only once. Don't _____.
10. Use _____ instead of a letter when appropriate.
11. Use _____ software to maintain appointment schedules.
12. Wash hands regularly, especially after using _____.

PART B

Indicate your answer by circling True or False in each of the following.

1. Time spent creating a "To Do" list is time wasted. True or false?
2. For some routine requests, it is appropriate to simply write on the original document. True or false?
3. A "To Do" list should list tasks in the order in which they should be done. True or false?

4. Start on the first job on your desk and keep going until everything is finished. True or false?
5. The only person who can do the job right is me. True or false?
6. A four-caster chair ensures the greatest stability. True or false?
7. To avoid interruptions, sit with your back or side to the door. True or false?
8. Overhead lighting is the best when working at a computer. True or false?
9. Do as much as you can in the morning so you can take it easier in the afternoon. True or false?
10. People will think you are crazy if you get up and stretch every now and then. True or false?
11. The first step in the decision-making process is to define the problem and write it down. True or false?
12. IFS means information fatigue syndrome. True or false?
13. Office colours should be geared to the nature of the business. True or false?
14. WHMIS is a Canada-wide system that provides employers and employees with information on ergonomic issues. True or false?
15. You should take a 20-minute break from you computer after every two hours of work. True or false?

CALCULATIONS

Insert the answers to the following calculations in the spaces provided.

1. If you spend 2 hours each day keying, 1 hour on the telephone or fax, 1 hour e-mailing, and 2_ hours doing research, how many hours of your 37_-hour, 5-day-a-week job do you spend doing other things?

2. You presented your findings regarding a procedure manual to the Administration Manager. She liked your ideas. She has asked you to create 20 copies of the procedure manual you suggested in your presentation. Each manual requires a three-ring binder: \$4.99 each; a set of dividers: \$2.30 each; 200 pages of paper at \$0.08 per page; one disk (for copies of standard templates, etc.): \$.0.80; and a red marking pen (for making corrections): \$1.39. What is the total cost?

3. To reduce costs and increase efficiency in your small office, you decide to buy two rubber stamps at \$4.75 each, a package of clean-edge business cards at \$19.85, 1000

preprinted stickers for \$15, and a package of slimline writable CD-ROMs for \$15.75. How much will you spend? Don't forget to include the appropriate taxes.

4. You are setting up a temporary office for a special one-year project. Are you better off buying furniture for this temporary office for \$4700 or renting furniture for the year at \$375 per month? What is the dollar difference between renting and buying?
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5. If you read at the rate of 350 wpm, by what percentage must you increase your speed to read at 500 wpm?
-
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RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

1. Workstation design and office layout are important considerations in today's busy office. Obtain information on workstations from several vendors, and create a written report on features, cost, and versatility.
2. Research the latest in office equipment designed to reduce repetitive strain injuries. Discuss your findings in an oral presentation with supporting materials (diagrams, photographs, etc.). Use presentation software, if it is available.
3. Invite a representative from a safety company, board, or association to make a presentation on current safety practices in the workplace. Send the necessary invitation letters, keep notes at the presentation, distribute copies to all class members after the presentation, and remember to send a thank-you letter to the speaker.
4. What constitutes effective lighting in an office environment? Contact a number of companies in your area to find out what lighting system each uses and why. Present your findings in an oral presentation. Remember to include visuals such as pictures of the lights and/or diagrams showing lighting locations.
5. What options can you add to a computer to reduce glare on the monitor or static electricity around the computer? Research the options available and report your findings in an oral presentation. If you can borrow some of the devices that can be used, display them in your presentation.
6. Contact companies in your area to find out if they have a policy and/or procedure manual. Find out what is included in it (companies will probably not let you borrow their manuals, but they may let you have a copy of the Table of Contents). Do all companies have manuals? What manuals do they have? Which ones should they have?

How often is each manual updated? How often is each manual referred to? Are the manuals on-line? Answer these and any other questions that you can think of relating to company manuals. Present your findings in a written report.

7. Contact three companies in your area that use Gantt charts in their project management. Ask for samples of old charts and present your findings in an oral presentation.
8. Surf the Net and locate the latest information on WHMIS. Share your findings with your colleagues.
9. Create a brochure and/or web page entitled "Health in the Workplace."

ON-THE-JOB ACTIVITIES

1. You work for Johnson Pharmaceuticals as an account representative. It is Friday, May 10. You have a busy day ahead of you. From the following list of items create a "to do" list. Prioritize them as to whether the task should be completed before lunch today, before the end of the day, or next week.
 - Update existing price list with new figures for May 17
 - Remind Alice Dennie about pictures required for new advertisement
 - Prepare new advertisement, copy deadline next Thursday
 - Prepare draft itinerary for Johnson's AGM in two months
 - Prepare flyer for prospect companies for next month
 - Meet with company picnic coordinator this afternoon
 - E-mail new price list to branch offices
 - E-mail home office staff re: next month's annual staff picnic
 - Arrange meeting with advertising agency for next Wednesday.
2. You work for a furnace maintenance company. You want to send a form letter to your valued customers (see Unit 2, On-the-Job Activity 6) advising that it is time for their annual inspection and service. Create a form letter reminding your customers and also mention that your customer service representative, Bill McArthur will call to arrange a convenient date and time.
3. Listening skills are critical to success on the job. Your organization is offering a series of training courses to its employees, including one on developing effective listening skills. Prepare a list of the factors that constitute good listening for your company's trainer to use at a training course being held next week.
4. You work for Alert Systems. The company's new telephone equipment can store up to 50 numbers. Your supervisor has asked you to prepare a list of Alert's customers (computer stores, electronics stores, book stores, law firms, and medical facilities). **Note:** If you live in a remote community, use the names of organizations in your nearest large town or city.

Your list should consist of three columns: program number (i.e., 1-50), organization name, and telephone number (including area code, if necessary). When you have completed your list, sort the names into alphabetical sequence. **Note:** Your supervisor wants the three main emergency service numbers to be at the top of your list.

5. Prepare a step-by-step procedure for the efficient handling of outgoing mail to assist new mailroom staff.
6. Your company is preparing an online-help program for new employees. There are several letter and punctuation styles being used in the company. Your supervisor has asked you to select the most efficient letter and punctuation style for your organization to adopt. You are then to produce a set of instructions for formatting a letter as well as an example of a letter that follows these instructions. The following is a sample of the company's letterhead.

Canadian Clearwater Company 2400 - 1850 St. Catherines St. Hamilton, ON M4N 3B7 Tel: (905) 453-9870 Fax: (905) 453-9998 Web site: www.canadianclear.com
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7. Nathan Zlotnik's job is stressful. Everyone seems to want everything done immediately. Priorities change hourly. Many employees have been laid off and budgets have been slashed so there is more work to do, with fewer resources. Prepare a list of stress-reduction techniques for Nathan to follow to get him through this tense time.
8. Prepare a list of safety rules that you consider appropriate for a general office. If possible, visit a number of businesses in your community to see whether there are any other rules you should add to your list.
9. Use the information from Activity 8 and your desktop publishing skills to prepare an attractive, eye-catching safety poster.
10. One of the basic tools of project management is the Gantt chart, which lets you see an entire project at a glance: the tasks involved, the length of each task, and the way in which the tasks fit together. If you use a project-management program, Gantt charts are in the toolbox.

Note: If you do not have a project-management program, you can use a spreadsheet, charting, or word processing program to prepare a Gantt chart.

Prepare a Gantt chart for the following office building project.

Task	Start Date	Duration
Building walls	June 15	4 days
Installing plumbing	June 19	3 days
Installing systems:		
Ventilation	June 22	4 days
Sprinkler	June 23	3 days
Heating	June 23	2 days
Lighting	June 24	4 days
Communications	June 27	3 days
Systems complete	June 30	0 days
Installing drywall	July 2	4 days

Painting	July 6	2 days
Installing ceiling tiles	July 9	2 days
Laying carpet	July 10	1 day
Cleaning	July 11	1/2 day
Project complete	July 12	0 days

11. To increase office efficiency, you want to establish flextime and telecommuting options for your employees. Write a memo to your staff outlining the concepts and why you think they would add to efficiency. Allow room at the end for a response.
12. How do you measure up? Each day for one week, complete the following chart as a measure of your personal efficiency. Use a scale of 1 to 5 (5: excellent, 4: good, 3: average, 2: fair, and 1: poor). Assess with your instructor your efficiency level at the end of the week. If, at the end of one week, you are surprised with the results, try again. Go through the same procedure for a second week.

Factor	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
Attendance					
Punctuality					
Brought needed supplies					
Tidy workstation					
Efficient clean-up					
Effort in class					

13. Read the following case study. As you read, highlight what you think are important time-management points. Then, answer the four questions following the case study.

Andrew works as a legal assistant in a large law firm. His desk is on the 20th floor. The law firm occupies the 18th to 25th floors.

A paralegal telephones and asks Andrew to bring seven files immediately to litigation support on the 23rd floor. Andrew rushes toward the elevators but suddenly hears his telephone ringing. He runs back to his desk, answers the telephone, and solves a problem regarding a missing courier package. Andrew then rushes to the elevators again and waits for two minutes. When the elevator arrives, Andrew goes down one floor to the central filing system. When he arrives in central filing, he realizes that he has left the list of required files on his desk upstairs. He takes the elevator back to his desk and then back down again to central filing.

Finally, Andrew retrieves all of the files but unfortunately there are too many to carry at one time. Andrew takes four files up to litigation support on the

23rd floor but he cannot find the paralegal because she did not mention in which room she was working. Andrew wanders around the 23rd floor until he finds the right office. The paralegal is annoyed because she has been waiting for the files for nearly an hour. She becomes even more annoyed when she discovers that there are still three more files to come. Andrew apologizes and rushes back down to central filing again to pick up the remaining three files. He chats to one of the filing technicians for five minutes about a file that has been missing for a week.

Andrew finally delivers the three files to the paralegal and then returns to his desk. He suddenly remembers that the local letter courier leaves in ten minutes. He runs to reception and sees that the courier hasn't left yet. Andrew returns to his desk, picks up a letter to be delivered, and takes it to reception.

Andrew then remembers that he has a long document to print for this afternoon, but decides that he needs a coffee break and goes to the coffee room. After a 30-min coffee break, Andrew returns to his desk. He decides to check his e-mail messages. Several messages that were sent overnight need his immediate attention. He quickly handles the e-mail messages.

Andrew then checks his calendar but is interrupted by a call from his supervisor, Jane George, at the courthouse to say that she urgently requires a document. Andrew finds the document and walks over to the courthouse with it. It is a 20-min walk. He walks back to the office, talks to the receptionist for a couple of minutes, and then returns to his desk.

He realizes that it is lunch time, so he goes back downstairs to get a sandwich. As he is eating his lunch, he realizes that he has not printed the long document required this afternoon. He finishes his lunch and then returns to the office to print the document. He sends the document to the laser printer that is across the room. While the document is printing, he checks his e-mail, delivers some documents to one of the lawyers, and starts on a large photocopying project.

An hour later, Andrew goes to the laser printer. Someone has kindly placed the printed sheets on the table by the printer. Andrew picks up the sheets, goes to his desk, and staples them together.

Jane returns from the courthouse and asks for the long document. She discovers that many of the pages are upside down and that the last ten pages are missing. Andrew rushes back to his desk to print the last ten pages. The copies are very poor because the laser printer is running out of toner. Andrew rushes around the office looking for another box of toner. He cannot find one. He rushes down to the supplies room on the 19th floor (waiting for the elevator again) and requisitions a box of toner. Ten minutes later he is back in his office. He loads the new toner, prints a cleaning sheet, and then prints the ten pages again. Jane is relieved that the document is finally ready because the client is arriving in five minutes.

Delighted with his efficiency, Andrew heads off home exhausted, leaving only a couple of long documents to be prepared and the daily trial scheduling to be done. He has not stopped all afternoon (even for a cup of coffee) and feels sure Jane will give him a pat on the back tomorrow for having delivered the document to the courthouse so quickly and printed the document in time for the client's visit.

- a) List five ways in which you think Andrew did not use time wisely.
 - b) Suggest what Andrew might have done to guard against the problems that occurred. Be specific.
 - c) Is Andrew really entitled to a pat on the back from his employer for his efficiency? Why or why not?
 - d) Use what you consider to be appropriate reference sources to develop a list of basic time-management rules that would apply on any job.
14. You operate your own business. When you visited your Saskatoon office last week, you made some notes on your laptop computer. Now that you have time, take these notes and enter them into your scheduling software program. **Note:** If you do not have calendaring software, make seven blank diary pages similar to the following.

Week of Apr. 4-7 (Tues.-Fri.) notes for next week's calendar	
Apr. 4:	Donata Kassam phoned re: lunch meeting in Montreal a week from this Tuesday at 11:00. Remember CIPS meeting at 18:00 on Monday at Delta Pacific Hotel.
Apr. 5:	Flying to Saskatoon a week Friday (2 o'clock) to meet with prospective sales representative in the evening – confirm flight Thursday next week. Dinner meeting with Joe Lee next Wednesday to discuss partnership agreement. Bank manager wants to get together for dinner at 19:00 the same day. Called Joe back and rescheduled for 12 noon lunch the next day.
Apr. 6:	Donata cannot make 11:00 o'clock meeting Tuesday, so suggested 13:30 – OK. Don't forget Sat. to make arrangements for cruise for husband's 50th! Start doing year-end financial statements Sunday morning.
Apr. 7:	Need to set aside three hours uninterrupted time on Tuesday to finalize Partnership Agreement.

Saturday, January 14	
A.M.	P.M.
8	1
9	2
10	3
11	4
12	5

15. In order to reduce expenses, your company has one subscription for each important weekly or monthly magazine. Design a routing slip for these. Be sure to indicate what should happen to the magazine when the last person on the list has read it. Include the following names:

Fred Smith, Joe Santini, Firoz Kassam, Nelly McCormack, Tao Lee, Nazir See, Jose Lopez, Chas. Able, Doug Mason, Jennie Bedford.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

In the space provided, indicate what you would do in the following situations.

1. The person at the next desk collapses on the floor.

2. You try to mend a piece of office equipment and you see the following label.



3. You feel that your working environment is always too cold or too hot.

4. Smoking is banned in your workplace but the person at the next desk insists on having a discreet puff when he or she suspects no one is looking.

5. You are increasingly plagued by headaches since starting a new job three weeks ago. You suspect the cause is the quality of the air being circulated.

6. Your productivity is affected by a co-worker who plays a radio or CDs quite loudly at the computer next to your work area.

7. One of your colleagues has frequent colds. He tells everyone that his young son "brings all sorts of bugs home from the daycare centre." You notice that you colleague often leaves used paper tissues on his desk or in his wastebasket.

8. At the end of each month it is your job to mail payment cheques to your suppliers. The cheques come to you in continuous form and it takes you hours to separate them into individual sheets.

9. You have a considerable amount of outgoing mail each day. At present, it takes you at least an hour to seal and stick the stamps on all of the envelopes.

10. You are responsible for the files in your department and find yourself being constantly bothered by people seeking an explanation of, for example, how the charge-out procedure works or whether something might have been cross-referenced.

11. There are disks in your office that are five years old. The files on the disks over two years old are rarely used.

12. Your desk is located in a high-traffic area. You are close to the washrooms, fax machine, and photocopier. People like to drop by to chat. Because of the layout of the office, it is not possible to move your desk.

13. Your company frequently uses the services of temporary employees. With each new temp, you have to explain company document formats and office procedures.

14. Your company has asked you to work from home two days a week. Your family keeps interrupting you when you try to work.

15. You notice that your employer sends the advertising leaflets that come in the mail to the same five people in the office. She laboriously handwrites the names on each leaflet.

16. You work for a workaholic who practically lives in the office. Her only interest in life seems to be work. Although you do not mind occasionally working overtime, you do not want to make a habit of it.

17. You report to two supervisors, both of whom are keen, industrious, and well organized. Between them, however, they interrupt you about 18 times a day. You believe that at least eight of the interruptions are unnecessary.

18. You recently transferred to a new department. You are assistant to someone who will shortly retire and who seems to do little productive work; therefore, you do not have enough to do.
