



Tools To Help You Work Smarter

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So far we've talked a lot about how to work smarter. In this next section we'll take a look at some tools that will help you do that. Some of them were mentioned in the previous section already.

Not every tool will be right for each person and business. Give them a try and stick with the ones that work for you.

To Do List Apps

Let's start with my favorite - the to do list. It's my most used tool when it comes to working smarter... unless you count the spellcheck on my computer. Yes, you can use pen and paper for this, but an app makes your life so much easier. You always have it on you and you can set up recurring tasks to pop up once a day, once a week or once a month.

Google Tasks

This is the simplest one and something that's built into your Google Calendar. It's also available as a Chrome extension. If you're in your Google Calendar all day long, this may be a good solution and something you already have installed.

<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/google-tasks-by-google/>

Remember The Milk

This is my personal favorite and something I've been using for years. It's available for the web, android and apple devices. It syncs across platforms and has just enough bells and whistles to do what you need it to do without getting overwhelming.

<https://www.rememberthemilk.com/services/>

Wunderlist

Another App worth looking into is Wunderlist. It also works across all platforms and as an added bonus allows you to share your to-do lists with team members. Definitely worth checking out if you are working with others on projects.

<https://www.wunderlist.com/>

There are quite a few other good to-do list apps out there. If you're already using one that works for you, by all means, stick with it. And if the ones suggested don't seem like a good fit, do a little search in the app store and test drive a few others.

Timers

We talked about how important it is to not only know what you're working on but also to set yourself a time limit. That's where countdown timers come in.

Timer On Your Phone

My favorite is the timer on my phone. You may already have a countdown timer built into your phone's clock function. If not, there are plenty of free ones to download from the app store for any smart phone.

Since most of us always have our phones on us, this is a quick and convenient way to use a timer.

Kitchen Timer

If you want to go old school, or if the constant clicking of a kitchen timer is motivation to work faster, consider a kitchen timer. You can pick one up at the Dollar store. Go ahead and grab a couple and leave them around your work spaces. You want them in easy grabbing reach when you sit down to work.



Focus Booster

A slightly more “high-tech” option is Focus Booster. It’s a web-based app that works with your browser. It’s based on the Pomodoro technique of working for 25 minutes, then taking a 5 minute break. After a few sets of these you get a longer break. <https://www.focusboosterapp.com/>

File Sharing Tools

Working smarter involves being flexible about where you work and what device you work from. You’ll also be working with a team and that means you need to share files with other people. As an added bonus, your content will be safer since you have an additional copy of everything you create digitally up in the cloud.

Here are a few file sharing tools I’ve found helpful in my own business.

Google Docs

Google Docs works very much like a Microsoft Office product, but you can access it anywhere from your browser and your smart phone. All you need is your gmail logins. It’s great for editing documents on the fly and sharing them with a team of people.

<https://docs.google.com/document>

Dropbox

Another personal favorite is Dropbox. It's easy to organize projects in folders that live both on the cloud and on your personal computer (and that of everyone on your team that shares the folder). It's great for collaborations and if you're using a lot of files from multiple computers. It even works on your smartphone, making it easy to attach an important spreadsheet to send to your accountant for example.

www.dropbox.com



SugarSync

I've also heard a lot of good things about SugarSync. It sounds very similar to dropbox but with the added advantage of being able to sync and share file folders you already have on your computer. No need to drop everything into a designated "dropbox" folder first.

<https://www.sugarsync.com>