

HOW TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU SPEND YOUR TIME ON

Are you spending time on the right things? Are you spending the right amount of time on the right things? Or, are you wasting precious time on things you later regret doing?

These are questions I often ask myself, because I want to make the best use of my time possible so that I have the time I need for the important tasks and so that my efforts result the best possible outcomes.



I'VE HAD AN IDEA

But, hand on heart, I have not had very good answers to these questions. I have occasionally measured how much time some specific tasks take when it has been either relevant or at all possible to measure, but I have not had the whole, comprehensive picture clear. Now I do.

A while ago I decided to log everything I do to make it crystal clear what my time is spent on. For those of you who are hourly consultants, this is old news, but for me, who very rarely charges by the hour, this was something new.

A USEFUL APP

I started using the [Toggl Track](#) app/service, which allows me to link the time worked to the various projects and assignments of my business, and to label the time with what kind of activity I was involved in, such as "email" or "meeting". Everything I do, I log, which is very easy to do, as Toggl is available on my computer as well as on my phone. I make sure to always have one of these close at hand when I work.

From time to time, I take a look at Toggl's excellent report pages, where I see how time has been divided between my projects, how much I email each working day, et c.

THIS IS WHAT I HAVE GAINED

I have already gained new, valuable insights:

- I can see that email takes only half as much time each workday as I believed and felt it did.
- It turns out that one of my projects takes much more time than I thought, which makes me want to streamline the work in it, so that what needs to get done there gets done faster.

- I spend less time than I would like on a task that is important to my business, so I now prioritize it more than I did before.
- If I find that I do not have time to do what I should and "fall behind" with processing emails, I can tell, after a quick look at the statistics, that this is because I have recently been more busy attending meetings or giving lectures than usual and that there is a perfectly natural explanation for this. Nice!

Getting clarity on how I use my time in this way helps me fine-tune how I work to an unexpected extent, which means that I now get to experience more work days that are much more aligned with how I like them.

DO THIS

If you too want to get a better picture of what your time is spent on, start logging what you do during your work days. Note or record what you do in a tool that works for you. It can be digital or physical. If you want to see me talk about how I use Toggl, [I do so in a recent video about just that](#) (in Swedish, though).

At the end of the week, look through the entries you logged and see if you recognize a pattern in how the time is distributed that makes sense to you. Are you happy with how it turned out or would you like to make any adjustments for next week?

Little by little, bit by bit, refine the way you work so that it turns out more and more the way you want it.

MORE ACCURATE ACTIONS

If you get a more factual picture of what your time is spent on by logging what you do, you can make better decisions about how to improve your working habits. You may also find yourself, like me, noticing a pattern that was not clear to you before. You will find it easier than usual to make time for what is important and to feel more satisfied that you have done the right thing to the right extent.

WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND?

If you log your time, what have you found or realized that you have not seen before? Write to me at david@stiernholm.com and let me know. Maybe you will give me an idea of something I should also look for that might help me.

Thank you for reading this edition of Done!, and welcome back next week.

