

The Best Productivity Apps



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Introduction

We are all busy these days. There are so many different tasks, appointments, and things to keep track of day in and day out. It's no wonder that we need a little help to make sure we stay on task and stay productive throughout the day.

My favourite tool to help me to be productive is my smartphone. People sometimes think that I'm addicted to my phone as I use it so much, but what they mostly don't realise is that I'm (usually!) not just on Facebook! I use little pockets of downtime, like standing in a bank queue, to get work done that would otherwise take up time that I'd look to use for other, more fun, stuff!

In this short report I'd like to share a few of my favourite smartphone apps with you that help with productivity. They will make your life so much easier. Download them to your phone, put them to good use and see if they don't help you manage your busy life.

And more than that I hope you realise that your phone is a handy little tool that can make your life easier and help you get more done. So, don't see this as a finite list or a one where you must use everything recommended, but more as a beginning point to help you on your way to improving your productivity using your smartphone!

Never Miss a Thing with Tiny Calendar

The first app you want to try is a good calendar app on your smartphone. I like the [Tiny Calendar App](#), which is a native Google Calendar app that syncs across multiple devices. This is great for keeping track of appointments, business meetings and events, after-school activities for the children, birthdays, anniversaries and the like.

You can set up separate calendars for work tasks and project deadlines, your family, home tasks and more.

Yes, it takes a little time to get some of this set up, but once you're in the habit of using a digital calendar like this you're not going to want to go without. Plus recurring dates like anniversaries and birthdays only have to be set up once and you're good to go for years to come.

You don't have to worry about missing an appointment and there's no need to keep a mental list of everything you need to remember every week. It's all in your calendar and your phone will alert you to anything important. It's amazing how much brain space this frees up, helping you stay productive all day long.

And, as it's in the cloud and on your phone, you have your diary with you at all times. Get in to the habit of entering appointments there and then; no more scraps of paper or appointment cards cluttering up your purse or wallet!

Make A List: Remember The Milk and Todoist

If you're already a fan of to-do lists, you're going to love the next two apps. If you're not using lists yet to get through your day, I strongly encourage you to give it a try.

Working from a daily to-do list is one of the best things you can do to boost your productivity. It gives you focus and helps you move right along... ticking off items as you go. By getting all the things you need to do out of your head, you are paving the way for more space to get things done, have ideas and generally focus on the big stuff without your brain constantly whirring about less important, perhaps more urgent, tasks.

While you can certainly work with pen and paper and carry that around with you all day, why not make use of your smartphone instead. There are plenty of great list apps out there. Two of the best on the market right now are [Remember the Milk](#) and [Todoist](#).

Both apps have easy to use interfaces and allow you to create to-do lists that will sync across multiple devices. Both apps allow integration with third party software, but Todoist has the advantage here over Remember the Milk with more integration with services like Google Calendar and Gmail, for example.

Remember The Milk has a free option with a paid upgrade and excellent customer service. The basic free option will work for most users but upgrading is always an option.

Todoist has a free option and then a premium option for a monthly or annual fee and a business option if you work with a team, priced by user. If you need the extra integration, this may be worth it, otherwise maybe give Remember the Milk a try first.

Keep Track Of Everything With Evernote

Another great app to have in your arsenal is Evernote. The Evernote app and software service has been around for quite some time. It's a great way to keep track of anything and everything. Think of it as your digital file cabinet that stores, organises, and lets you access everything you save from your smartphone, your tablet, or your computer.

This comes in very handy when you're out and about and need to access an important document, or look up the recipe you clipped to make sure you are getting all the right ingredients.

Any time you need to make notes, when offline you would whip out a notebook, use Evernote instead. One of my favourite uses is to take notes during meetings and calls knowing I won't have to subsequently 'write them up'! And better yet they are instantly searchable, so no more flicking through pages and pages of different notebooks trying to find those elusive notes from that meeting three months ago!

If you're a writer or blogger, Evernote is a great writing aid as well. Check it out at [Evernote.com](https://evernote.com) and see if this app can help you simplify your life - at least the digital aspect of it.

Communication At Your Finger Tips With Gmail and Google Contacts

How often do you change mobile phones? And how often do you send emails from multiple devices? One of the handiest productivity apps is Gmail and the integrated Google Contacts. No more digging around for contact information in multiple planners and digital accounts. It's all there at your fingertips.

And speaking of Gmail, it's a lot more powerful than you may realise, particularly when it comes to the smartphone app. You can add multiple Gmail accounts (let's say you have a private one and a business one) and even forward or import emails from other accounts into Gmail. That means all your emails – no matter what account they are – can be managed right from your smartphone.

That's a huge time saver. Instead of having big chunks of time set aside to read and answer emails, you can use all those little pockets of time, while you're waiting for a meeting to start, brewing coffee, ordering lunch, or waiting in line at the shop, to deal with your email.

And since you always have your phone with you, you can quickly check messages when you're out and about if you're expecting something, or get something through, that you need to deal with immediately.

Gmail also has different inboxes and a nifty label system that allows you to filter your emails as needed. I use the filter option to automatically save receipts to a finance records 'folder' to stop them cluttering up my inbox.

Plus with an app that's supported over multiple devices, you can head on over to your laptop to type up a longer reply when needed. And if you really need some quiet, focused time to knock out a project, silence your phone and email won't interrupt your day.

Don't Try To Remember All Those Passwords

Let's wrap this up with one more app that will save you lots of time and keep all your various accounts more secure. Yes, I'm talking about a password management app. I recommend LastPass. For a yearly fee, you can store and access unlimited passwords to all your online sites.

LastPass has great multiple platform support making it easy to access your passwords from your favourite internet browser on your laptop, desktop, or tablet. And of course there's a smartphone app as well. This comes in handy not only when you want to check your bank status or log into your favourite shopping site from your phone, but also when you're traveling and suddenly need access to a particular password. Just look it up on your phone or log into the site from the app on your phone.

And with a handy password generator, you end up with much more secure (and unique) passwords than the ones you come up with off the top of your head. But how does this save you time?

The first and obvious one is of course that you no longer have to go and hunt for passwords wherever you may have written them down at the time. With a password manager app all your passwords are right there at your fingertips. The only thing you need to remember is your master password. And since you'll be using it every day to access your password manager app, that's easy to do.

The second way you save time is a little more subtle but it adds up quickly. LastPass has a cool browser feature where you can just hover over the icon, and start to type the site you want to log in at or select it from the drop down. It pulls the site up for you and enters your username and password for you. It may only save you a few seconds of time, but if you multiply that by 20 logins to various things per day... that's a lot of time over the course of a year.

Best of all, it's convenient and keeps all your passwords safe and secure.

Conclusion

I hope these suggestions have been helpful and if nothing else they inspire you to look at your smartphone as a productivity tool. The main thing I want you to remember is that you should make any app – whether it's one of the ones I mentioned here, or something else you come across – work for you.

You want them to make your life easier and more simple, not the other way around. Spend some time every few months evaluating how well the apps you're using are working for you.

Do they save you time and make you more productive?

Or do you end up wasting time with the app? If so, don't feel bad about ditching it and finding something that works better for you.

Tweak the apps you use and make them work for you until you come up with a system that helps you stay productive and makes your day go smoothly. That's really what using your smartphone to increase productivity is all about.

Don't forget that if you want to get stuff done, especially those projects that are important but not urgent, or those habits developed and happening, you can join in one of my Get Stuff Done with POWER 'sprints'. Find out all about them [here](#).
