

Pomodoro Technique

The Pomodoro Technique is a popular **time management method** that helps people break work into **focused intervals** with regular breaks.

The technique was developed by **Francesco Cirillo** in the **late 1980s** when he was a university student.

Struggling with **focus**, he used a tomato-shaped kitchen timer to **challenge himself** to study in **short bursts**.

He later developed this into a **full productivity method**, publishing "**The Pomodoro Technique**" book in 2006.

NB: Pomodoro is Italian for 'tomato', hence the tomato-timer!

1 Cognitive Load Theory

Our brains can only hold a limited amount of information at one time. Short, timed work sessions reduce cognitive overload and prevent burnout.

2 Behavioural Psychology

The use of timers and rewards (breaks) builds habits and positive reinforcement. You train your brain to associate short periods of focus with successful outcomes.

3 Executive Function Support

Breaking tasks into smaller units helps with planning, task initiation, and emotional regulation, some of the executive functions that are often impacted in neurodivergent people.

Customising Pomodoro



Adjust intervals (e.g., 15 minutes work, 10 minutes rest if 25/5 feels too long or short).



Use visual timers or apps with colours and sounds.



Pair it with body doubling (co-working with someone else).



Allow for non-traditional tasks (e.g., doing admin, sensory activities, or creative projects).



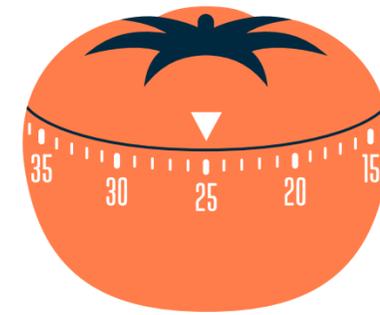
Combine with the Kanban Board for added structure.

Why is the Pomodoro Technique helpful for Neurodivergent people?

- **Manages time blindness by making time visible through timers.**
- Encourages task initiation (getting started can be hard).
- **Provides built-in movement and sensory breaks, which can reduce restlessness.**
- Helps with impulse control—knowing a break is coming can help sustain focus.
- **Encourages consistency without perfectionism—you don't have to finish the task in one go.**
- Offers predictability and structure, reducing anxiety.
- **Encourages clear transitions between activities and tasks, which can be grounding.**
- Reduces task overwhelm by chunking big tasks into manageable parts.
- **Allows for sensory regulation—breaks can be used for stimulating, mindfulness, or calming routines.**
- Externalises the passage of time, which can be abstract for some.

The Pomodoro Technique

Created by Frances Cirillo



Set your timer for 25 minutes.

Set to work on the task you have set yourself and keep going for the full 25 minutes. This is called a Pomodoro.

Now set your timer for 5 minutes.

When the alarm sounds, set your timer for 5 minutes and walk away from what you are doing.



Exercise & refreshments.

Use this time to do a quick burst of exercise. Make sure you have a drink and a healthy snack to get you ready for the next Pomodoro.

Complete another Pomodoro.

Set the timer again for another 25 minutes and carry on with the task or project you have set yourself.



The Process:

Focus

(25 mins)



Focus

(25 mins)



Focus

(25 mins)



Focus

(25 mins)



Break

(5 mins)



Break

(5 mins)



Break

(5 mins)



Break

(25 mins)

