


How to Work Smarter: A Crash Course in Time Management, Efficiency and Work Wellness
CORD Academic Assembly 2017
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Holly Caretta-Weyer, MD
Oregon Health & Science University
carettaw@ohsu.edu
 @holly_cw

Goal: Provide attendees with actionable take-home strategies to use in the ED to improve their time management, efficiency, and overall work wellness.

Objectives: At the end of this talk, attendees will be able to

1. Identify strategies for improving time management and efficiency in the ED.
2. Employ these strategies to improve your overall efficiency and work wellness within your current and future ED settings.

We all want to be as efficient as possible. Working faster and more efficiently adds to an emergency physician's sense of satisfaction and well-being. It is much more enjoyable to work in an efficient department as patients and staff are happy, everything is flowing smoothly, and you are able to go home at a reasonable time after the shift is over! So how do we make this happen?

Strategies for Improving On-Shift Efficiency and Work Wellness

1. Pre-Shift – A great shift starts before you even walk through the door
 - a. Working in the ED is the cognitive equivalent of taking a drink from a fire hydrant!
 - b. Take 5 minutes before your shift, clear your mind, meditate, and mentally prepare for the next 8-12 hours. Go into the shift fully focused!
 - c. Set the tone for the shift!
 - i. Be the one that everyone is excited to see walk through the door. If you are happy to be at work, promote teamwork, and make sure those that do a great job are recognized, others will follow suit. This will make your crazy shifts much more enjoyable!
2. On Shift – Where the magic happens
 - a. Be disposition oriented
 - i. Run your list in whatever way works for you and run it often!
 - ii. Identify rate-limiting steps and get them done to keep things moving.
 - iii. Delegate what you can – emergency medicine is a team sport!
 - iv. Dispositions free processing capacity and reduce cognitive load – push yourself to close out cases in order to free your mind for the next patient or challenge.

- b. Control your patient volume
 - i. Eat what's on your plate before serving yourself more!
 - ii. You can only handle a certain number of patients efficiently – once you reach that limit, you need to concentrate on moving those cases along.
 - iii. The ED is like a revolving door and in order to get patients in, you have to get other patients out.
- c. Touch it once
 - i. If you are working on a chart or any other task, do whatever you can to complete it ideally in one go.
 - ii. Get it done or you will waste time coming back to it over and over and over again!
- d. Big picture flow
 - i. The staff will be focused on their own patients, but you're responsible for monitoring flow for the entire department.
 - ii. Have an idea of who can move into the hallway or be dispositioned if something catastrophic should happen.
- e. Hit the reset button
 - i. Nothing gets done well when you are hangry!
 - ii. Take a minute for a snack, bathroom break, deep breath – whatever you need to take care of you so you can give your all to the patients and maintain your sanity.
 - iii. Taking good care of yourself will increase your efficiency in the long run.
- 3. Post-Shift – Breath that big sigh of relief
 - a. Accept your limits!
 - i. Give yourself the time to process unexpected or difficult situations or patients either on shift or immediately after.
 - ii. The physiological consequences of a stressful clinical encounter are significant and can last for days – you need to process it before you can move forward.
 - iii. This goes back to taking care of you so you can care for others!