

# 104-the-pomodoro-technique-productivitycast

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pomodoro, timer, minutes, pomodoro technique, technique, blocking, tomato, long, work, task, procrastinate, talking, procrastination, break, productivity, pressure, smartwatch, activities, thinking, gamification

## SPEAKERS

Art Gelwicks, Augusto Pinaud, Raymond Sidney-Smith, Francis Wade



00:00

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00:02

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00:08

the weekly show about all things productivity, here, your



00:11

host Ray Sydney Smith and gusto pinout with Francis Wade and art gal Wix.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:17

And Welcome back, everybody to ProductivityCast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity. I'm Ray Sidney-Smith



Augusto Pinaud 00:22

Margo stupido.



Francis Wade 00:23

I'm Francis Wade.



Art Gelwicks 00:24

And I'm marquel. wicks.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:25

Welcome, gentlemen, and welcome to our listeners to this episode. Today, we are going to be talking about a tried and true productivity methodology known as the Pomodoro Technique. It was, let's say invented, developed by Francisco cirio, an Italian student at the time, and he wanted a way to be able to conquer procrastination. And so he developed this concept of the Pomodoro Technique. Today, what we're going to do is we're going to talk about what the Pomodoro Technique is, if you have never experienced it, before come across it, we're going to then talk about our own experiences with regard to how we use it or don't use it in our systems, and why and even those of us who may be trying it out soon. And then we're going to close out with ways in which you can modify the Pomodoro Technique, because there are ways in which you can adjust and shift it in in different ways. And maybe some tools that are available to all of us for being able to do that. Let's talk first about what the Pomodoro Technique is, who wants to explain the Pomodoro technique for listeners.



Augusto Pinaud 01:23

So the Pomodoro Technique, the pommard, let's begin by the word pomodoro. And the Pomodoro comes with the pomodori. That is tomato in in Italian and what the story said, I don't know if that is accurate or not. But that's what the story said is that franciscus Rila, was trying to beat procrastination. And the tool he had at hand was a kitchen timer in the form of a pomodoro. And that's what gives the technique the name. And what he did was

tried to change into 25 minutes of concentrated work. And then five minute break after that, and for all that he was using that pomodoro. So and what he was trying to accomplish is count how many, you know, pomodoro he could accomplish and then after for pomodoro, then you take a longer break, you know, 20 or 20 or 30 minutes, so and what he was trying to accomplish with this was not get more deeper, more. But to beat that procrastination, being able to say, okay, during the next 25 minutes, I'm going to accomplish x and have that physical reminder of that pomodoro ticking in for have in front of him and knowing that at the end of those 25 minutes, he was going to be able to take a five minute break.



#### Raymond Sidney-Smith 02:48

So that's the Pomodoro Technique in a nutshell. And all you need really is a clock or timer. You don't need one of those tomato timers like Francisco had, but you just need a timer of some kind to be able to track that time. Now, I'm just curious from all of us here. What are our experiences with the Pomodoro Technique? And or why don't we use it in our own worlds. And I'll start off with saying that I actually don't use the Pomodoro Technique all that often. And this episode and just kind of coming up to it. I thought about ways in which I could use it. I don't particularly procrastinate in the way in which I think surreal was attempting to. Well, he developed the system in order for its intended purpose to conquer procrastination, I don't see myself as that type of person. So I just don't do it. The goal is to be able to keep yourself motivated in concentrated work. And for me, I just don't see the technique working all that well for the type of concentrated work that I do. But I've been recently having to do projects where the type of work that he's talking about, which is not studying, but focusing on getting a particular amount of work done. That may work in my world today. And I'm willing to give it a try. So I'm going to I'm going to do a little experiment after this episode is over and just spend two weeks where I actually do use a pomodoro timer and see where my my world is. But I'm curious from the rest of you what your experience has been with the Pomodoro Technique. When did you first learn about it? Did you try to invest in it? And what were your experiences with them?



#### Francis Wade 04:23

I loved it when I tried it the first time. And it really, really worked. And it worked for a while that the 25 minutes notwithstanding I could change that to I think 45 minutes or something that suited my my particular workflow 25 was just too short. But the the, the, the concentration and the, the sort of the sprint, the it strikes me as the equivalent of of product developer platform development when they change from their waterfall methods or to using agile and Scrum and that kind of thing. They The idea of going from long sort

of vague targets and time slots per day to going to very focused efforts led, followed by a little siesta, you know, a little break. The general principle definitely works in my experience, the specific prescription of 25 minutes and the timer, I don't use, but I definitely use the idea of sprinting, and relaxing afterwards and then sprinting again. So the working really hard on the recovering the what the Pomodoro Technique has given me is the awareness that those are two very different modes that I need to manage. And when I allow them to bleed into each other, or I'm not aware of when I'm working too long, or I'm resting too long, then I lose the the rhythm and the momentum that I do I need to do to have to get my best work done. So I've learned that the principle I think is correct that the specific application is, it's a place to start,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 06:06

I guess. So Francis, from, from your perspective, how did you determine your ideal length of time when it comes to the Pomodoro? As opposed to the break? And then how did you determine the length of break?



Francis Wade 06:20

I think in the beginning, the beginning I did the 20 15 was way too short, I think I experimented and thought that maybe I should go for more like 45 and 10, or 50, and 10. And I that worked for a while as well. And then I have built in bricks during the day. So if you look at if you looked at any given day, that I have time blocked, I have I have recurring bricks every single day. And it's a it's a nod in the direction of the Pomodoro Technique, because I'm essentially saying that I need to have regular breaks throughout the day. And if I don't schedule them, they won't happen. So I don't do it based on task, I know do it based on basically the whole day, the 10 hours of the day that I schedule. So I'm using the same technique, but I'm not doing it per task, I'm doing it more like per bucket of activity. And then that changes every day. So I don't I'm not I'm not strict about doing 50 and 10 any longer, I'll do whatever it needs, that needs two hours and half an hour that I do that



Augusto Pinaud 07:25

I tried the Pomodoro Technique many, many years ago. But what the problem is, for me the kind of work that I'm doing at the time. So I have talked we have talked and discussed previously, in this podcast about the manager and the maker scheduled, you know, that was based on a Paul Graham article. And the problem for me goes there. If I am on a manager schedule, the Pomodoro technique works pretty well. Mostly because the

manager schedule is based on time is that time blocking that Francis's is going I need to be here for 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes, I have five minute break. And that is structure works relatively well with the Pomodoro. And when I'm on on that manager, role or mindset, my problem goes when I need to go into the maker mode, because then the 25 minutes, what it does is exactly what Graham described, his article is break my train of thought brain my what I'm doing, you know that beep of, you know, I am finally getting into the deep of the work I'm going to do and then I need to take five minutes break. If I do that, then there is no coming back. So that's one of the things that break for me the the Pomodoro Technique on a future episode, we're going to talk about what it's called 2555 there is a similar concept on the sense that you break it in in 30 minutes, but you don't, you're not trying to take the breaks, what you're trying is more an accountability technique than than anything else. So that said, if you're if you tend to be more into that manager, schedule where or you can really time blog most of your day and get those breaks or you are the kind of person who procrastinate Or even better, the kind of person who their problem is burnt out she's the person who started in the morning full of power, but then because of the lack of break by three 4pm or 2pm they are completely burnt out and then cannot use anymore. You know that is a fantastic technique because allows you to manage and keep the energy a lot more stable instead of seeing big peaks and big valleys.

A

Art Gelwicks 09:51

Anybody who knows me knows I love to name things and I agree completely with Francis's approach I struggled with pomodoro every time I try Do it because it's honestly too quick. The types of things I get focused on and I get working through, have an extended amount of time to them. 45 minutes, 50 minutes usually makes sense. So I am going to refer to our technique as the fat tomato technique, that extended amount of time still follows the same principle. I don't do it consciously, I don't sit down and set a timer and say, Okay, I am now going to work for the next 15 minutes. It's just kind of worked out that way. But I was thinking about how did it work out that way. And my primary reminder for this is actually the inactivity, timer or reminder that's on my smartwatch. And a lot of smartwatches have that now that if you're sitting in one place and not doing anything for an extended period of time, it'll bug you and say, Hey, you need to get up and move. Well, that just happens to line up with roughly the hour that I spend working on something and then it prompts me and then I get up and go get, you know, a new cup of tea or do some stretches or move around a bit. And then I sit back down and go back to work. Those are basically the same thing. So I'm not planning the work, I'm planning the non work time, and allowing the work time to fill in around. So for me pomodoro, or fat tomato, or whatever I want to call it isn't really about getting the work done, because I'm not starting it. It's helping me maintain some balance. And not

burying myself too deep into the work.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 11:32

One of the things that I have consistently thought about with regard to the Pomodoro Technique over the years is it's very defined concept of really structuring your day. And, you know, he talks about this idea of having four pomodoro pomodoro. And then a longer break. And that, of course, always brings me to Tony Schwartz had written a several books, but one was a you know, based on his work at the energy project. And he talks about this notion of the ultradian rhythm, and that our bodies, you know, our chronobiology is designed around our circadian rhythm. And that we have these upward and downward movements along the circadian rhythm path called the ultradian rhythm that was up 90 and down 90, that is we have high periods of active kind of executive function or prefrontal cortex function. And then we have 90 minutes that basically where that function recedes back into the default mode network parts of our brain, and we have this, you know, basically work that's being done in the background. And that's the time to do physical activity. And so in, in that sense, the Pomodoro Technique kind of makes a little bit of sense there. But again, the time the the amount of time for me really shifts, because if you are capable of sitting into 90 minutes at a time, and then step away from that work, and then go into something that is more physical or go have lunch or those kinds of things, your body is designed in a particular way, and you should work with with your biology and everyone's biology is a little different, right? Not everybody is going to be up 90 down 90, there's going to be times when you know, a particular individual is going to say up 120 and down 60. All right, you just don't know until you have really tracked it for some amount of time and seeing how you how you work. So that is something that really kind of comes to mind whenever I think about the Pomodoro Technique, along with some social science that came out several years ago, I think is back in like 2014 2015, where some social scientists had done a study where they determined that if you work 52 minutes, and then break for 17 minutes, that was kind of the ideal amount of time to be working on any given task where you would give your optimal energy and then in essence, you know, run out of mental energy for that period, and therefore the break would be necessary. And so any thoughts there about the adjustment of the Pomodoro time, and what you think folks should do as it relates to getting themselves a an effective Pomodoro Technique routine? If they wanted to try it out?



Art Gelwicks 14:18

I have a problem with getting hung up on the actual amount of time, we've talked about 25 550 to 17 5010. And I can see where people would go, what is it? Which one is it, what one's going to work? And I think based on what I'm hearing and what I'm thinking about

with my own work execution, you need to adjust it to the type of work that you're having to do. And maybe you have different size tomatoes. So I think about some of the work that I do is interrupt driven. There'll be a help request that comes in that needs to be handled right away. I don't know what I need to do with that one. I don't know how long it's going to take. So maybe that's a little tomato and I tackle it I start it and I find out, it's going to take more so that the next one becomes a bigger tomato. And that's word. Or if it's something longer, like reorganizing the episodes on my podcast, great that it's that's going to be a fat tomato. So I'm going to set a big block of time. So I can sit in focus. And that using that phrase block of time makes me start to connect these dots, can you take time blocking, and tie it to pomodoro? So if you've time blocked an hour of time on your calendar, can you do basically a fat tomato tied to that to make that time block effect? I don't know. I haven't even gone down that path. But I know I'm gonna play with it this week and see if that works. I just I think focusing on the minutes of time is the wrong part of the equation to focus on at least with this? Well,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 15:50

you bring up a really important point, it's kind of akin to what I was thinking, which is that there are certain types of work where the Pomodoro Technique applies, well, at least for me, and then there is, if I'm going to do that the work needs to be of such a nature that it wouldn't be necessarily completed in that one pomodoro. And, or the work would fit into a single pomodoro. But it's of such a context where I can chunk those pieces together. Again, I don't particularly my way in which I operate doesn't really work. That way, I just don't need the Pomodoro technique for if I have six tasks to do, I'm going to do them and I'm going to do them in the order I want to do them not because of the time mountainous. And the challenge for me is actually on the day level. And I've always seen my productivity that way. And so I see the day and I see the week, and they're both enough, have enough pressure because I have meetings and other things going on, I don't have that kind of long expanse of time to just sit down and do the pomodori in that way. But I can see myself making the time for it and choosing, okay, I need 352 minute pomodori to make this particular project happen. And seeing if if given context, a specific context, though those and identifying the type of work I'm going to do during that period, then it becomes kind of a part of for those who don't know, I use the unschedule. And I'll put links to all of the things that we're talking about, by the way in the show notes. And so but the unschedule has this time blocking field, you know, it's basically preflighting, your time blocking, Dr. Neil Fiore talks about this notion of, in essence, pre populating your schedule with fun, and all of your necessary activities that are fixtures in your week, and therefore, you know, what your available time is, and I and I think beyond that, then you can put in these chunks of pomodori. If, for me at least, they're context based, then I know how to

use that time effectively. And maybe the time driven nature of it can actually be, dare I say it fun. They can, it can drive a little bit of excitement there pressure on me to focus on just those activities, as opposed to other things that could take my attention, like phone calls or email or other kinds of interruptions, slash disruptions. Yeah, so I'm just It is a very interesting and intriguing potential application of the concept

A

Art Gelwicks 18:38

is it me or just pomodoro field too simple. This is where I'm struggling with it a little bit. And I think I've always, it feels like it's just one piece out of a larger solution.

F

Francis Wade 18:49

I could agree with that. It's a it's a it's a feat, a feature, but not a product or service, or it's a it's a modification of the way you do time blocking. And it's a useful principle to keep in mind if you're doing time blocking. And I think that's that's basically what what is, therefore that's its value, it's it, it once you have a certain level of awareness that you need to balance this hard work with time when you're recovering from the hard work, then it's a matter of mixing and matching the idea in many different kinds of ways, different kinds of kind of constructs. But as long as you're thinking about managing yourself and your time, and allocating time to particular activities, as long as you're doing any kind of pre populating or any kind of planning, then it's an idea which should be everywhere at the same time, but not necessarily in any particular one place. It's a it's a correct principle. I think that has superwide application. I think it applies to deep work and deliberate learning of deliberate practice and flow. I think it applies across the board to all of the ideas that say that good, good work comes from focused effort and focused, focusing your mind and killing distractions. And it plays into that whole idea. But I think it fits really well, it adds to the idea that you get your best effort from really focused activity. So I think it applies everywhere. I think it's just, it's just an principle. I don't think it's anything more than a certainly not the clock with the tomato shape. And it's certainly not the number of minutes that you need to spend in each half. But the overriding principle, I think, is applicable everywhere.

A

Art Gelwicks 20:42

So for people who think that, the, and I'm gonna go back to focusing on the minutes, because that's the, we keep saying not to, but that's the easiest thing. That 25 five breakout if for the people whose tasks and activities feel too small for that, for example, they're going to focus on writing an email, what doesn't take a half hour necessarily to write an email? What's the smallest interval, we think would be practical for something



like this?



Raymond Sidney-Smith 21:13

Well, I think for me, it would be the two minute rule is that anything over two minutes, in as a, as a GTD practitioner, anything over two minutes is being tracked somewhere, and so it's not being done right now. And so therefore, yeah, I would say anything over two minutes,



Art Gelwicks 21:30

okay, because that's a pretty big gap between two minutes, and basically 30 minutes. So you're gonna have to at least the way I'm thinking about it, you would have to put together an exercise to lump together a bunch of the two minute activities into a 30 minute pomodoro. Sprint,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 21:47

yeah, I would say something like, you would actually have a series of, instead of thinking about it in terms of lumping the tasks together, you would actually have a series of pomodori. So you would have, say, 10, pomodori, right, in the three minute perspective, would give you roughly about 30 minutes of work, you want to complete each task under those three minutes. And then take the five minute break. And I know that Sergio argues against not ending pomodoros pomodori early. So if you have 25 minutes, you are you are just stay concentrated on that work and, and then dwell on, reflect on the work that you've done if you are completed. And I don't particularly agree with that in the sense of the type of work that I do. But in the, if you're a student and you're studying, I think that there could be some veracity to that, I'm not sure. But the the goal for me, though, is to consistently optimize on how I'm doing, which is not just the quantity of work, but the quality of work as well. And so I have a goal of making sure that if I am going to do something in a particular amount of time, it's because I know how to do it well enough that it's going to be of a quality standard that makes me feel comfortable with doing it at all. And that's the that's always going to be the challenge for me is making sure that quality and quantity are in equal measure, as it relates to the the time boundedness of any particular technique.



Augusto Pinaud 23:30

Again, as for me, it doesn't work as a permanent, you know, go the whole day. But I could

make the case or see the case for some people to use this Pomodoro Technique on very specific thing. So for example, I'm going to spend, you know, the next 25 minutes cleaning my inbox or clean or responding to email. And then I'm going to take five minutes, especially though things that we tend to procrastinate and we all have, you know, may change from person to person, but we all have things that we procrastinate. So we're maybe, you know, going into this timer and this pomodoro may be useful to say, Okay, well, I'm going to spend the next 20 minutes and then I'm going to take a five minute break. And I'm going to do another 20 minutes. And then I'll take another five minute break, you know, maybe really useful maybe notice that eight to 10 hour a day thing. But as I figure it out, you know, those moments that again, we all have them, there are moments in the day that we tend to be a lot more productive than others, maybe in those times that we are less productive. You know, something like defined by the Pomodoro Technique will be useful for those less productive times.

A

Art Gelwicks 24:47

Something I can't get out of my head, as we're talking about this is that this technique sounds really useful for things you don't finish during that time period. I mean that talking about cleaning out your inbox and that and that sort of things that could run over things that don't have a defined end, which are the ones that really lend themselves to procrastination. It sounds like it's a really good fit for that. I don't know if it's a really good fit for all those little like, I'm going to respond to this specific email. But what do you guys think? Do you think it works well for providing, I don't know, artificial guardrails to things that don't have them.

A

Augusto Pinaud 25:26

Let's not forget that the idea that create the Pomodoro Technique was exactly that was to help or defy procrastination. So when there are things that are going to be have those boundaries where you don't need them, okay, there is I don't need, you know, a timer to tell me read 25 minutes, okay, I need a timer to tell me you have been reading two hours to stop, okay. So I don't need a pomodoro for that. But I see a lot of things where that pomodoro may be useful, you know, don't think that as you know, hey, go, let's go, there is a task on my system that sent me to check and clean and organize the garage. So I keep it up and is a task that I can procrastinate for the longest ever. So it may be interesting maybe to add into that task, instead of go and clean the shelf on the right of the garage. Okay, maybe replace it for use or use the Pomodoro Technique while I'm doing that, so that way, I, you know, work 25 minutes on it, and then we'll take a five minute breaks. So you can recognize that part of the issue is it takes more than 10 minutes usually. And then it's something that are 20 minutes, and it's something that then I will go and then when

I'm in the middle, I don't want to finish. So it always feels like as a much larger, larger task. That what it is. And because of that I tend to procrastinate upon it. So it may be really useful for those kind of things. I have never tried it that way. But I will capture to that idea.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 27:06

I'd say that I would agree with you art, I think that there are opportunities to be able to use this as folks who have been listening to me for any number of years, I am a huge fan of game design. Some people call it gamification, but basically adding game elements to your productivity systems where you need it. And one of the easiest ways to add a game element is time pressure is applying time pressure in some way, shape, or form. And if you say that I need to clean the bathroom, and you know that you could do it in 30 minutes, then say I'm going to do it in 20. Because you feel a little bit of demotivation for whatever reason, you then can say, Okay, well, let me put some time pressure on that and see if I can do it in 20. And see what happens. There's a very interesting article, I'll put a link to this in the show notes as well, on the muse, where the author of the article talked about this 10 minute rule, where there are so many things that she can do in 10 minutes, that if something is more than 10 minutes, she wants it broken down into smaller chunks anyway on her system. And so she has started putting on this 10 minute timer on her phone, and, you know, take a shower, it should happen in 10 minutes having breakfast, it should happen in 10 minutes, and each activity throughout the day, then has this time pressure on it for her to be able to get those things done. And that allows her to finish her work earlier in the day than it would otherwise. And so I see this ability to add time pressure to all kinds of things, which again, I think is probably why the Pomodoro Technique has never been the biggest driver for me because I have a sense of time pressure. just naturally, it's just it's built into my, my, my my, you know, biological ecosystem, I just have a really strong internal clock in terms of that time pressure. I'm I'm driven in that sense. The goal, though, is that if you don't have that internal clock is to use an external one to be able to apply time pressure. And, again, don't think of it as anything other than a motivating factor, just like accountability to to provide some level of interesting note to it. Remember, humans are motivated by variable, you know, variability. And so variability, we pay attention more to things that are variables is the better way to say it. And so since humans are really interested in that, which is variable that's which is novel, we're much more likely to pay attention to something if we have a time limit on something. And it's not the only time limit that we're working with I I tend to think like okay, well if I have 20 minutes to do something, and I say I can do it in 18 minutes. Well the next time I might say can I do this in 16 Right, that's more likely for me to say, okay, am I going to get the same quality standard, because that's important to me, am I going to get the same quality standard, but do it faster. And that part is the is the holy grail for me is like, oh, wow, I can do this in less time, and I can have the same level of quality. Now I've truly saved time,

because I haven't, I haven't done worse work in less time, right, I've done the same amount of work at the same quality in less time. And that's, that's really important, and powerful as a technique.

F

Francis Wade 30:34

I think the the Pomodoro idea lends itself to gamification, in the sense that it, you can either gamify, the Pomodoro itself, or you can gamify, the number of pomodoro is a day, or you can use it as an entree to, to gamify, the quality of your time blocking. I don't I don't see many people talking or writing about that. And I've tried it a little bit myself, and found that the, it's difficult to create a personal game and keep it going for very long. But while the game was going worked really, really well, just wasn't, it wasn't all that sustainable, because there was so much manual effort involved. But if there were a way to, to gamify, the Pomodoro position of or calendars using, you know, a column common tool like Google Calendar, I think I think it would, it would get some traction, I think would be really useful.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 31:32

I could see it also in a in a group environment where you can track say, in a Google Sheets workbook, the number of pomodori that you do in a particular timeframe. So you can say, Okay, I have this group, we're gonna, we're gonna get together, we don't even have to see each other. But in this timeframe, each week, we're going to track how many pomodori that we excel at, and then have a leaderboard. And that's just one little game design element that not only allows you to stay motivated to the personal game, because really, in the grand scheme of things, who cares how many pomodori you take, you practice, but the then the group sees it, which creates that social accountability, that then compels you to want to, you know, keep up to the standard, at least to the to the mean average, or the modal average of the group. Because if you see other folks who, on average, you're doing six or seven pomodori a day, and you're only doing three, then you want to hopefully be motivated to Excel to the to the at least, you know, mean or modal average, depending upon how you see it, of the standard of the group. And especially if it's a group of your peers, then you're going to be much more likely to see that as, as the as the bar to reach, and maybe even Excel, you know, some people are competitive. And so they're going to want to excel that number, which will be another motivating factor.

A

Art Gelwicks 32:58

So I had a couple of thoughts about this. And I can't agree with you guys more of the

gamification prop prospects of this are huge, because just sitting here, as we're talking about it, I'm laying out something that might gamify this a little bit. And it's fairly easy, because we're dealing basically with the equivalent of a checker on a board. I mean, each pomodoro sprint, for lack of a better name is a piece in this equation. But one of the things I remembered as we were talking about this is sometimes people have a hang up about the timer itself, and they forget the timer and things. I've heard it done where people will put together a playlist in something like Spotify, covering the same amount of time. And when they're going to do their sprint, they start their playlist, and they go through them when the playlist stops, they're done. So instead of it being this ticking clock, it actually adds to the work experience because it provides you your background music, and it provides the timing as well. So that's just one of those alternatives. If you don't have a little tomato timer sitting on your desk, you might be able to use an playlist. But I do like the gamification concept with this. I just don't think people need to get too hung up on the specifics of this. This is a this is a core concept you can apply pretty much to anything. You just need to apply it and and see and not be afraid to walk away from it.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 34:19

In that vein, what are some of the tools that you've heard about and or use as it relates to the Pomodoro Technique before we close out?



Art Gelwicks 34:28

Well I have on my smartwatch like I said I use the activity tracker and action reminder as kind of that prompt to make sure I go ahead and do stuff or stop doing things as I need to. The second thing though, is I have a series of timers on my watch that are preset at intervals. And I just tap on one of those to start one of those sequences. So I have to say I probably use my smartwatch as the timer tool more than any other because if I walk away from my desk and I have a timer there, but I have like things to, you know, sorting the incoming mail, well, I'm not necessarily sitting at my desk. So the timer that's there doesn't help me. So for me, it's the portable aspect of it airgo the smartwatch.



Augusto Pinaud 35:15

smartwatch is a good one, if you have any of those devices that start with the letter A, or the letter G, I'm not going to set the name to avoid the headache to everybody listening to this. But if you have any of those devices, that is another option, you can go and tell them directly, you know, start the timer for an extra amount of minutes. or, in the case at

least of the one we start with a they are skills that will replicate also, the technique. So they're the ones start with a letter A will have skills that replicate that that Pomodoro Technique. Also, if you have any Apple device, a phone, or a tablet, or an iPad, or even a Mac, you can find an app that has been coming into not only allowing you to replicate the Pomodoro Technique, but also to put your notes on what you did what you know if it was good, if it was bad. So it allows you to value how much with the quality of of that tomato most of those applications will allows you, or at least once I have seen over the years, we'll allows you to do what we were describing earlier as a fat tomato, the cross sort of pomodori and in which you can tell them now don't don't put in 25 minutes make it much longer because I need longer today. So if if you struggle with that procrastination element, or you struggle with keeping yourself focused on you know, there is really an incredible amount of apps that you can go and check on on your phone. I'm certainly not familiar with what happened on the Android world regarding that, but I'm sure if you type pomodoro on the Android the Google Store, you will find a bazillion of options.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 37:10

If you're using wear OS, you can actually set the timers and they actually are persistent. So when you open up the timer app on your wear OS watch, it will they'll just be there. So you can I have a number of timers that I have set that are designated for certain things. And I just know to you know, open up the watch, tap the button twice, and there goes the timer. And then I can scroll to the particular length of time that I want. And then just start the timer. So at least on the on the smartwatch world, it's very, very easy.



Art Gelwicks 37:39

If you're old school like I am, I was just searching this out because your Alexis sorry, the madam a skills that that was a really excellent idea. And I forgot, when I did a search, there's about six of them listed in the Amazon store. But also at the same time, I just found a glass hourglass set one is 30 minutes one is five minutes, and they come in the same set. So if you're truly old school, you could have two hour glasses on your desk and just flip one or the other that that may happen for me.



Francis Wade 38:13

I would love to have a visual timer. I've looked for them. But I haven't. ones I saw were kind of expensive for what I do wanted to try was a visual timer that has the the how to explain it has a red red circle that slowly disappears as the time gets consumed. But it's a countdown timer, but it has a visual effect of describing it right?

- A** Art Gelwicks 38:40  
I know I know exactly what you're talking about. Matter of fact, it's right underneath the hourglasses. And that's a neat visual cue in the description of this thing that I'm looking at. It's a square timer, it's a 60 minute timer, and it has a red section that's basically retracts into the zero as it moves back in time. I could see how that would be really useful. But honestly, for me, I could also see how that would be really stressful.
- F** Francis Wade 39:05  
Good stress or bad stress?
- A** Art Gelwicks 39:08  
I'm not sure it depends on how close I am.
- F** Francis Wade 39:10  
That's a physical object, right? They sell a physical
- A** Augusto Pinaud 39:14  
Yeah, timer. If you want an extra motivation, you can just ask the device with the letter A to play the Jeopardy songs and you can work those.
- A** Art Gelwicks 39:27  
That's all you need. Totally. Now it's interesting too, because when we think about things, we keep talking about this for professional productivity, but you know, the world is new now. And home is just as mixed with work. And I'm looking at somebody has released a product, but the target is for kids to be able to focus and I could see how pomodoro would be a huge benefit to them. Especially that 25 five minute thing where Okay, you're going to work on this class work for 25 minutes and then the dings is going to go And then you get five minutes to do whatever you want. And then you get started again, that matches up, not timewise. But concept wise to the classroom model of changing rooms, being able to focus around smaller time segments. So this may be a great way to not only help them focus in an environment that's really not conducive to them focusing, but also help them start to instill that discipline again, around working and not working.



## Raymond Sidney-Smith 40:28

Yeah, I can almost see like all the students being in the classroom, and they're working on something in a 25 minute period. And then they get tossed into a breakout room in zoom. And they're paired up with friends, and they can to chat and have the kind of, you know, hallway chat and chatter that they have, and then they're brought back into the room, and then they have to, you know, continue the work, then you could, you could have some really interesting, sophisticated technological, you know, solutions to this, that would be really interesting to see, I could see that being fun, you'd have to test the efficacy of that. But yeah, I wanted to point out that there are several different timers that are out there in the market, there are physical timers, I'll put a link to some of these in the show notes. The most notable one that I know of is the essington glass. And this is a very high end, you know, hourglass type timer, and it's, it's beautifully made. And and, you know, it's also at the time of recording, I think it's 100 bucks on discount. So typically \$200. And so it's a clearly a nice timer. on the software side, there is pommeau done. And it has an integration with many of the other time tracking, I'm sorry, many of the other task management tools that are out there from Trello to do is to Evernote, Asana, JIRA, Basecamp, slack one, you know, Microsoft to do, I think now integrates with it, but don't hold me to that there's a Chrome extension for PAMA done. And so that's the most prolific one that I know of, that integrates with many of the other tools that are out there. And so there's focus booster as well, again, I'm going to put a link to these in the in the show notes. So don't worry too much about that. But I will say that I use toggle for time tracking, and it has a pomodoro function built into it in the options. So if you're using a I'm not sure if it's in the in the web browser extension, but certainly in the desktop application, you can go into the settings on mobile or desktop and say, you know, turn on the Pomodoro functions, and then it will actually give you those prompts inside of the toggle app on arts point. You know, I've listed the ones that I know folks are using and are time tested, you know, with folks out there in the in the ecosystem in the in the in the wild using it. So I would suggest checking those out before you go down that rabbit hole of going into Amazon or whatever, wherever you shop. And, you know, researching for days on end, just choose one of those and get started. And as we talked about at the beginning, you just need a timer of some kind. So even if you just have a clock in visual range, you can just use the clock. And then a timer is going to be a little bit more invasive in the sense that it's going to prompt you with a tone. So use the tools that are available on, you know, at home to begin with. And then you can look at some of these others that are either software based or hardware based to be able to do that. But thank you, gentlemen, for this conversation. While we are at the end of our discussion, the conversation doesn't stop here. If you have a question or comment about what we've discussed during this episode, please visit our episode page on ProductivityCast dotnet there on the podcast website at the bottom of the page. Feel free to leave a comment or question we read and respond if



needed to every comment or question. Just a point about if you've enjoyed this episode. If you enjoyed spending time listening and learning with us today, it'd be a great help to us if you would leave a rating and review in Apple podcasts or Stitcher or whatever your favorite podcast app is, if it allows a rating or review, your compliments motivate us to keep going. And they help us grow our personal productivity listening community by signaling to the podcast algorithms that we're putting out quality episodes. So thank you to those who have left reviews. And we've seen them and appreciate all the feedback and so keep them coming. If you have a topic about personal productivity you'd like us to discuss on a future cast, please visit ProductivityCast dotnet forward slash contact. You can leave voice recorded message or you can type us a message and we will be able to hear or read the messages and maybe we'll feature your comment or question in a future episode. I want to express my thanks to a good steppin out Francis Wade and our guests for joining me here on ProductivityCast each week, you can learn more about them and their work by visiting ProductivityCast dotnet Also, I'm Ray Sidney-Smith. And on behalf of all of us here at ProductivityCast here's to your productive life



45:00

That's it for this productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity with your hosts, Ray Sydney Smith and a gousto. pan out with Francis Wade and art gal wicks.