

WAITING TIME BANDITS

EST. IMPACT: 30–60 minutes
per week

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Waiting becomes a time bandit when it's vague and unbounded.

You send something out, need a reply, or are blocked by someone else.

Nothing is happening, but the task stays mentally open. You keep checking, wondering, and circling back.

Time leaks through repeated "status checks."

THE FIX

Every time a task leaves your control, do these three things immediately:

- 1) **Waiting on:** Convert the task into a named state.

Example: Waiting on Jack to review.

- 2) **Set a Trigger:** Assign a next action to the wait.

Examples: Follow up in two days,

"If no reply by Friday, I will escalate.

- 3) **Schedule Follow-Up:** Pick the next time you will check in.

"I'll check in on Friday."

Let the waiting go until that follow-up, not sooner.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Collapse follow-ups into one daily or two weekly windows. Batch them on purpose to prevent constant checking.
- Ask for deadlines instead of status whenever possible. "When should I expect an answer?" gives a clear follow-up point.
- If the wait is low-value, drop it. Decide in advance: "If no reply by Friday, I'll close this out."

The goal: Fewer mental check-ins. Less random distraction.