

HOW TO USE YOUR TIME WISELY AS A DRIVER

Picture this: you throw your loose change into a jar every time you walk inside your house. Once the jar is full, you take it to the bank (or one of those coin machines) and end up walking away with ten, twenty, fifty, or even a hundred dollars! Now think of your time in the same way. Those moments waiting for a load, waiting at a truck stop for fuel, and even overall future time planning are like the coins. They seem small and insignificant but add them up and you'll see a big difference—if you used your time wisely.

To ensure you make the most of your time as a driver, here are *four* helpful time-management tips.

1. Make sure you deliver ON TIME

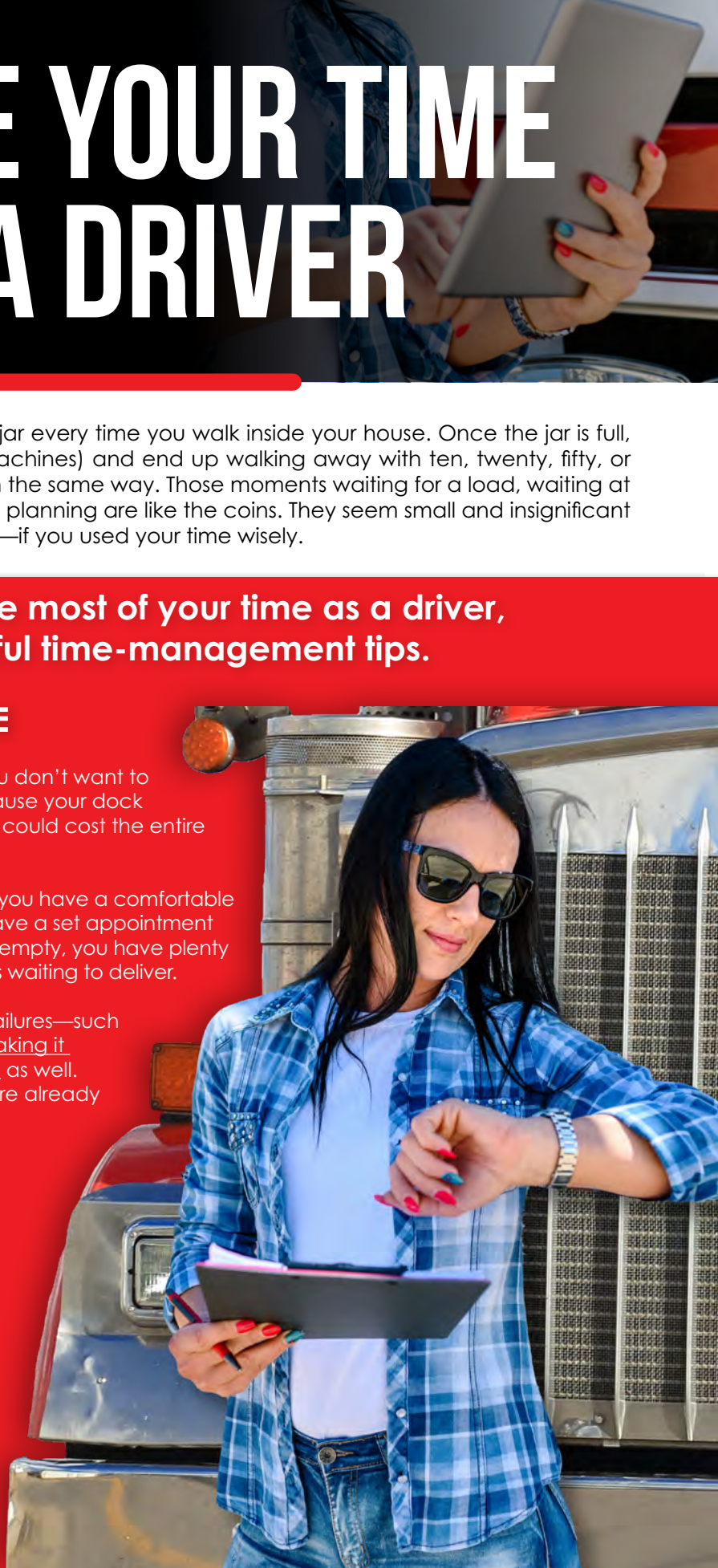
This time management tip is about proper planning. You don't want to arrive late for a drop-off and be put last on the list because your dock door was given to someone else. Being 15 minutes late could cost the entire day, or even entire weekend.

When possible, deliver as early in the day as you can so you have a comfortable cushion to get dispatched to your next pick-up. If you have a set appointment time, aim to deliver 30 minutes early. When your trailer is empty, you have plenty of options. But when you have a load, your only option is waiting to deliver.

Additionally, leaving late is a major reason for service failures—such as running out of hours on the morning of a delivery. Making it a habit to be early can reduce stress and anxiety levels as well. There's nothing worse than panic-driving because you're already late or know you will be late.

2. Weigh deadheading and layovers equally

While common trucking advice says to avoid deadheading as much as possible, there are instances where deadheading makes more sense financially and is a better use of your time. If you're getting paid by the shipper to layover due to issues on their end, stay. But if deadheading gets you to a lucrative load and your layover option is uncertain and/or unpaid, it may make more sense to roll on out of there. Always weigh your options equally and try not to fall into the trap of avoiding deadheads at all costs. Your time is valuable and if you can make more money by getting to a good load, do it!





3. Capitalize on your loading/unloading time

If you aren't involved in the loading or unloading of your load, you have valuable time to do small—but incredibly helpful—things. One, wipe off your reflective tape. You'll be more visible and likely invite fewer inspections. Two, organize your dashboard and cab area. A cluttered dash not only causes drivers stress while on the road but because it's such a visible area, you're more likely to be pulled over by law enforcement for an inspection. Three, go over your next pickups and drop-offs. Is there a way to be early to some of them? Are there quicker routes for others?

4. Give your rig AND yourself some attention

It doesn't take long to check your tires, lights, or do a quick visual inspection. While waiting during fuel stops or loading/unloading situations, spend your time cleaning off windows and mirrors, reviewing records, or scheduling maintenance appointments.

Remember to take care of yourself, too. As counterintuitive as it may sound, sitting for such long periods of time is hard on your body. As humans, we're designed to be moving around. To get your blood flow going and reduce stress, take a walk. Or do stretches in your cab if the weather or the area are unfavorable. Stand in the sunshine if it's a nice day for some vitamin D. If you're a big coffee/soda drinker, try to alternate throughout the day with water. For example, if you start your day with coffee or soda, make your next drink water, then after every other coffee or soda you drink during the day, follow it with a water.

Lastly, you can answer emails and pay bills while waiting on your truck to get washed or while at the scale house, so you don't have to worry about it later. Being able to squeeze the most efficiency out of your time means you can truly rest and relax when your workday is over.

All in all, making the most of your time doesn't have to be a challenge. Swapping out trip planning for zoning out on your phone while waiting or making it a habit to deliver on time can add up. The most successful owner-operators maximize their time while also realizing how important it is to care for themselves as well.

Being your own boss comes with lots of upsides but presents its share of challenges too. Let **TBS Factoring** help you overcome some of those challenges with our cash flow solutions, truckers bookkeeping services, back-office support, DOT compliance services, insurance help, trucking permit services, and more. That way you can focus on what's most important: building your business.