Record actual intervals and their causes

Date: 2026-10-25

Observe a few ordinary days with start, finish, activity and result. Keep interruptions or waiting distinguishable from the work if they explain a mismatch. The fictional actual times below total 140 work minutes, plus the same 30 minutes of gaps. The actual window therefore ends at 11:50,20 minutes after the planned 11:30 finish.

Use consistent categories and units. This is a personal learning log, not a payroll record or monitoring of another person. A delayed task can still produce a good result; investigate the cause before deciding what to change.

Work	Planned minutes	Actual interval	Actual minutes	Observation
Draft	60	09:00-10:15	75	An example required clarification
Calculation check	30	10:30-10:50	20	Prepared data made the check shorter
References and delivery	30	11:05-11:50	45	One reference needed correction
Work total	120		140	Gaps excluded from both work totals
My entry				

Calculate the difference with the right denominator

Duration variance = actual work minutes - planned work minutes. Here 140 -120 = +20 minutes. Relative variance =20 /120 ×100 ≈16.7%. The denominator is planned work, not the 150-minute calendar window. A positive result here means more time used than planned; it is not a productivity or quality score.

For the 20-minute check against a 30-minute estimate, the difference is-10 minutes and the relative difference is about-33.3%. Record why it was shorter instead of assuming faster is always better. If planned duration is zero, the percentage is undefined: report the absolute difference and fix the estimate. Compare like with like, especially when the scope changes.

Sources

- Google Calendar Help: create an event
- Google Calendar Help: focus time and eligible accounts
- Aeon, Faber & Panaccio (2021): time-management meta-analysis
- Masicampo & Baumeister (2011): plans and unfinished goals
- Ghibellini & Meier (2025): interruption, recall and resumption
- Wendsche, Weigelt & Syrek (2026): unfinished work and off-job thoughts

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