



Ten minutes beats an hour

The five rules for a ten-minute session, and ten things you can actually finish inside one.

Give yourself a whole free hour and it drifts away. Give yourself ten minutes with one clear goal, and you focus completely. **The deadline is the secret ingredient.**

1

Set a timer

Ten minutes on your phone, or one of those kitchen timers. If the time is open-ended there's no reason to start, because there's always another minute after this one.

2

Make it doable

Pick something you can actually finish. The imperfect tense is far too big, but the imperfect of *être* and three sentences using it is done well inside ten minutes.

3

Write the list before you need it

If you decide once you've sat down, you'll lose the first four minutes to choosing. Write down eight or ten things you could do, in a mix of lengths, and keep the list somewhere you can tick them off.

4

Do the thing you actually enjoy

If you love German thrash metal, spend your ten minutes on German thrash metal. Or Italian opera, or reciting Spanish verbs while you dance salsa. The thing you enjoy is the one you'll still do on a busy day, and it usually gives you the language at full speed.

5

Stop when the timer goes off

Even if it's going well, and especially if it's going well. Write down where you got to: one line, ten seconds, and tomorrow you carry on rather than start again.

TEN THINGS YOU CAN FINISH IN TEN MINUTES

- Write a shopping list in the language
- Learn ten words: garden, kitchen, music
- Put sticky notes on ten things
- Learn the chorus of a song
- Write three sentences about your day
- One verb, one tense, three sentences
- Learn how to ask for the bill
- Take five words from a news story
- Narrate making the coffee, out loud
- Write yourself a note about tomorrow

REMEMBER

You don't need more time. You need a smaller amount of it, and to use it well.