A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Your First Pomodoro Session

New to the technique? Don't try to master it today. Your first session has one job: to show you how much focus your work really takes. Here is the whole rhythm, the rules that actually matter, and what a good first day looks like.

Start With One Objective

Cirillo designed the technique to be learned through an "evolutionary approach", one objective at a time, in order. On day one, only the first one matters.

I (TODAY)	II	III	IV	V
Find your real effort	**Cut interruptions**	**Estimate effort**	**Sharpen each round**	**Build a timetable**
Learn how much focus a task actually takes.	Later	Later	Later	Later

Trying to do all five at once is the most common beginner mistake. **Ignore Objectives II–V today** and just observe your effort, one Pomodoro at a time.

WHAT YOU NEED

A timer
A kitchen timer, phone, or an app. Anything that counts 25 minutes and rings.

Pen and paper
To write your task and tally the Pomodoros you finish. Low-tech, low-friction.

One real task
A genuine thing from your to-do list that needs focused, concentrated work.

WHAT YOU DON'T NEED

- ✕ Special software or productivity apps
- ✕ A perfectly quiet, distraction-free room
- ✕ A cleared schedule or elaborate plan
- ✕ A long, uninterrupted block of free time

Complexity is the enemy. The technique is built to work in real conditions, with real interruptions.

Your First Session, Step by Step

Five simple moves. About half an hour from start to finish.

1. **Choose one task**
Something that needs real focus, not a draining chore. Don't try to guess how many Pomodoros it will take.

2. **Set 25 minutes**
One Pomodoro is 25 minutes of work plus a 5-minute break, 30 minutes in total. It cannot be split or paused.

3. **Work until it rings**
Pure focus on that one task. A stray thought? Jot it down and carry on. Don't watch the clock, trust it to ring.

4. **Take a 5-minute break**
Step away properly. No email, no work. Let your mind reset, this is when your brain consolidates.

5. **Mark an X, repeat**
One X for the Pomodoro you finished, your first data point. Then start the next one.

The Rhythm of a Session

Work, ring, mark, break, then repeat. After four Pomodoros, take one longer break.

25 FOCUS	5 BREAK	25 FOCUS	5 BREAK	25 FOCUS	5 BREAK	25 FOCUS	15–30 LONG BREAK

25 min focused work · **3–5 min** short break · **15–30 min** long break, after every 4th

The one rule: stop when it rings

No "just a few more minutes," even if you're one line from finishing. And if a real interruption forces you to stop early, that Pomodoro is **void**, don't mark it. Just start a fresh one. Learning to stop is the whole skill.

HANDLING INTERRUPTIONS

INTERNAL **your own wandering mind**
Remembered an errand? Felt the pull of your phone? Write the thought down, then return to the task at once. Defer it, don't obey it.

EXTERNAL **someone or something else**
If you're truly pulled away, the Pomodoro is void, start a new one later. On day one, don't over-engineer this. Just notice it.

Common First-Timer Mistakes

Beginners trip on the same five things. Sidestep them.

- ✕ **Working past the ring**
The point is learning to stop. Two more minutes defeats the lesson.
- ✕ **Estimating on day one**
Discover how long things take first. Predicting comes much later.
- ✕ **Light work in breaks**
Even a quick email keeps your mind on. The break must be a true disconnect.
- ✕ **Counting broken Pomodoros**
An interrupted one is void, never "0.8 of an X." It's all or nothing.
- ✕ **Chasing speed**
Seeming fast isn't the goal. Observing your real process is.
- ✕ **Doing all 5 objectives**
Day one is Objective I alone. The rest will only overwhelm you now.

What Success Looks Like on Day One

Forget crushing your to-do list. You're learning a skill. If you did these four things, you've got it.

- ✓ Completed **one full 25-minute Pomodoro** without interruption
- ✓ Marked **at least one X** to record your real effort
- ✓ Took **one proper 3–5 minute break**, a true disconnect
- ✓ **Stopped when the timer rang**, even mid-task

Two to four Pomodoros is a great first day. **Even a single one counts**, because it lets you observe your process.

"The next Pomodoro will go better."

Ready to start? **Begin your first session at pomodo.io**: no setup, no account, just the timer.

Based on the method developed by
Francesco Cirillo
Visual reference by pomodo.io