

Designing a Daily Workflow That Minimizes Instrument Idle Time

Keep your analyzers productive, not sitting idle

Article 11 of 22

7 min-minute read

\$0/hr

Revenue from an idle analyzer

15 min

Daily maintenance staggering saves hours

Pre-Stage

Next batch while current one runs

An idle analyzer is an expensive asset generating zero revenue. In small labs running one to three instruments, efficient scheduling means the difference between profitability and loss.

1 Map Your Current Workflow

Spend one day documenting what happens hour by hour. When do samples arrive? When does each analyzer get loaded? How long is it idle between runs? Where are the bottlenecks?

QUICK TIP: Draw a simple timeline. The gaps are your improvement opportunities.

2 Align Courier and Run Schedules

If your courier picks up at 9 AM and 2 PM, your run schedule should align accordingly. Build in processing time so batches are analyzer-ready within a predictable window after each arrival.

3 Stagger Maintenance and QC

If you have two analyzers, stagger their maintenance windows so one is always available. Run QC first thing so instruments are validated when patient samples arrive.

QUICK TIP: QC at 6:30 AM means analyzers ready for first batch by 7:30 AM.

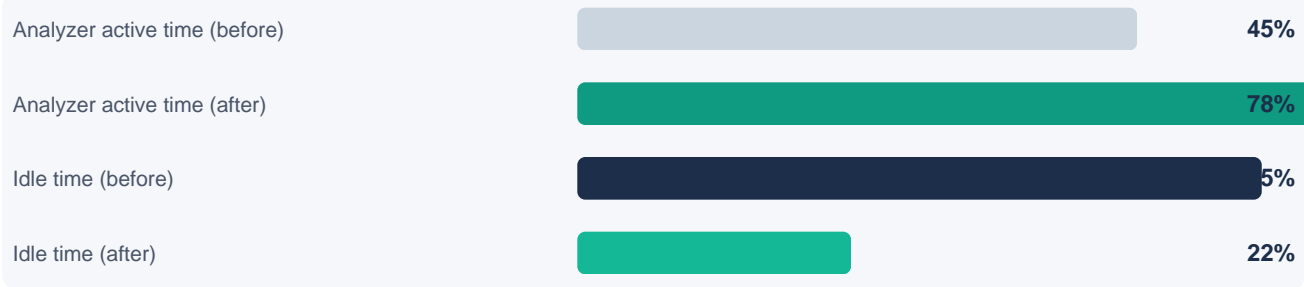
4 Pre-Stage Samples

While one batch runs, the next should be in preparation. Have samples accessioned, centrifuged, and sorted before the current run finishes. This minimizes gaps.

5 Use Downtime Productively

When analyzers are idle, schedule low-priority tasks: batch non-urgent tests, run PT samples, or perform calibration verifications. Reserve prime-time windows for highest-priority patient samples.

TYPICAL LAB DAILY TIMELINE: BEFORE vs AFTER OPTIMIZATION



Illustrative improvement from workflow optimization

BOTTOM LINE: Draw a simple timeline of your day. Mark when samples arrive, when instruments run, and when they sit idle. The gaps are your improvement opportunities.

FREE TOOLS TO GET STARTED

Template	What It Does
Daily Workflow Planner	30-minute interval timeline for scheduling all analyzer activities

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 23 ready-to-use Excel templates covering inventory, financials, compliance, and more.
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