

Before you promise a deadline

A free worksheet for solo commission artists

1. Count usable hours

Start with the real hours you can work before each deadline. Remove days off, admin and other work, then deduct your chosen reserve. Use your own history to estimate work still needed, including revisions.

2. Check each deadline, not just the last one

At each existing or proposed deadline, compare all work due by then with all usable hours available by then. A later quiet week cannot repair an earlier deadline. Use the table below for your next three deadline dates.

Deadline	Usable hours by this date	Existing + new hours due	Spare / shortfall

Fictional example

By Friday: 15 available hours minus a 20% reserve = 12 usable hours. Existing work needs 10 hours and a new request needs 6. Total due: 16. Spare: $12 - 16 = -4$ hours. Test another date or scope before replying.

3. Check what hours cannot tell you

Can all work start now? Are there client approvals, shipping, fixed appointments or tasks that cannot be split? Agree a response date and confirm these dependencies separately. Passing the arithmetic is not a delivery guarantee.

More space needed? Repeat this table for every deadline in your plan.