

The Great Balancing Act: 25 Ways to Get the Most Out of Your Time

We might just be able to help. Here are 25 tips that can help you better manage your time (and save your sanity):

1. **Realize that time is often more valuable than money.**
With this in mind, consider hiring a lawn maintenance service, a handyman, or a babysitter (but always have a contingency plan in place).
2. **Batch like tasks together.**
Make all calls to customers at once; food shop once a week.
3. **Keep a daily to do list.**
4. **Use direct deposit.**
5. **Master software packages.**
Learn the tricks and tips associated with the software packages you use most frequently. They can increase your productivity.
6. **Cook and freeze.**
Set aside a half-day to prepare sauces, stews, and soups and then freeze them for use later in the week or month.
7. **Use the phone or the Internet to comparison shop.**
You'll spend less time running around.
8. **Use technology wisely.**
To prevent technology from controlling your time, try these ideas: schedule time to respond to e-mail and voicemail, use rules to filter e-mail, screen calls, and don't answer the phone during dinner.
9. **Pay bills online.**
10. **Come in an hour early or leave an hour later.**
You'll be surprised how much work you get done when it's quiet (and how much traffic you'll miss).
11. **Exercise.**
Physical activity provides an outlet for stress and makes you feel better.
12. **Take short mental fitness breaks throughout the work day.**
Take five minutes out of every hour to stretch your legs, read a magazine, or eat a healthy snack.
13. **Determine the time of the day when you are most productive.**

Schedule accordingly.

14. Turn off the TV.

The time you save can be spent on more important tasks.

15. Be realistic.

Don't underestimate how long a task will take. When you rush, quality suffers and stress soars!

16. Know your priorities.

Ask yourself, "What's the best use of my time right now?"

17. Learn to say "No" to social invitations.

You're not obligated to attend every party or dinner engagement.

18. Don't let others waste your time.

Politely let people know by stating, "Now is not a good time to chat. Why don't we talk over lunch?" If this is an especially big problem, consider removing any chairs near your desk!

19. Run errands before work.

20. E-Mail vs. voicemail.

Use e-mail to send detailed messages and voicemail to pass on quick messages.

21. Shop on weeknights.

It's much less crowded, especially around holidays.

22. Come back from vacation on a Saturday instead of a Sunday.

You'll have some extra time to catch up on laundry and prepare yourself for Monday.

23. Split housework activities evenly at home.

24. Make time for yourself.

Invest in you first!

25. Lighten up.

Don't take everything so seriously, stop trying to be perfect, and learn to laugh!

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