



Twelve Tips for Organizing Your Time

1. **Buy an organizer.** Find a planner or simple calendar that works for you. Make sure it is within easy reach.
2. **Post reminders of your goals, action plans, or contracts.** Bright papers and inks will catch your eye. The bathroom mirror and refrigerator are great places to post visual cues!
3. **Look at the big picture.** You want to make sure that your “to do list” or your organizer helps you balance short and long term goals. For example, by looking at your diet and physical activity goals on a weekly or monthly schedule you may be able to block off regular “anchor” times to take walks or to prepare for healthy meals. This may prevent getting snagged by a “bad day”.
4. **Know your own “efficiency quota”.** Combine activities you can do at the same time such as exercising, paying bills, or doing other household chores while watching a favorite TV show or talking on the phone. Match tasks to your daily energy and alertness levels.
5. **Minimize “time wasters”.** Cut back on TV, computer time, and overly ambitious goals. Screen telephone calls. Streamline food preparation and meals. However, be realistic and know that there will always be unexpected interruptions.
6. **Learn to say no.** Try and set limits on the amount you do for others.
7. **Make lists of things to do while you are waiting.** When you are stuck waiting do some deep breathing or relaxation exercises, make a weekly “to do” list, review your priorities and goals for the week or month, or catch up on reading.
8. **Set aside some quiet time.** Many of you have heard the expression “The faster I go, the more behind I get”. Setting aside even 10 minutes a day to practice relaxation techniques, meditate, or simply sit without distractions can help you be more efficient and energetic.
9. **When doing a high priority activity do all you can to block out distractions and improve focus.** If you are a daydreamer, plan another specific time to do it (like during your quiet time). Screen phone calls, only answer e-mails at specific times during the day, and let others know that you will be unavailable.
10. **Take charge of your environment.** Think about your physical space. Is there a quiet room or corner available for reading, writing, practicing deep breathing, or just thinking through your plans?
11. **Flip a coin.** Are you one of those people who spend a lot of time fretting over more or less equal options such as what gift to get someone, what to serve for dinner, or where to buy certain products or services? Set limits on the amount of looking you do and flip a coin to help you come to a decision.
12. **Reward yourself for improving your time management skills.** Not having to rush is its own reward! However, by becoming a better time manager you can choose to move through your day at a more leisurely pace.