Time Management

Dealing with daily responsibilities

Ever feel like there aren’t enough hours in the day? Trouble with prioritizing your tasks? With some focus and dedication, it is possible to lessen the stress of daily life.

Negative Effects
Poor time management results in:
- Procrastination
- Lack of sleep
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Rushing through tasks
- Feeling overwhelmed

In order to combat the above, it is necessary to construct and stick to a schedule. Use the following suggestions for assistance.

Tips for Work
- Use a personal digital assistant (PDA), calendar, or day planner to keep track of upcoming meetings, deadlines, and appointments.
- At the start of your day, take time to write down what you need to accomplish, and work in order of priority.
- If possible, delegate minor jobs to others – or, simply ask for assistance.
- Never skip lunch. Not only does your body need nourishment to help you focus, your mind needs the mental break.

Tips for Home
- Sort mail into “Now” and “Later” categories. Read it at the same time each day; this will prevent you from spending too much time reading a particular piece.
- Lists are your friend!
  - Always carry a shopping list to stay on task
  - Plan your weekly meals while writing out your grocery list
  - Every day, create a “to-do” list; rank each item in order of priority.

Tips for Parents
- Keep a calendar or chart posted with the family’s daily activities so you can keep track of important upcoming events. Use a different colored marker or pen for each family member for easier readability.
- Find tiny windows of opportunity to get small chores done. For example, balance your checkbook while your kids watch TV, or answer e-mails while they do their homework.
- Buy in bulk. This will reduce the amount of trips to the store.
- Teach your children to do chores. Not only will they learn responsibility, it will free up time for you to get other things done!

General Advice
- It’s okay to say “no”! Only oblige yourself to activities you know you have time for.
- Divide large projects into smaller parts and tackle each separately. This will make the venture feel more manageable.
- Constantly ask yourself “What is the best use of my time right now?” and do that job.
- Try combining errands; for example, if you will be heading out for lunch anyway during a break from work, why not take part of that time to drop off dry cleaning or buy pet food?
- Wake up earlier! Wouldn’t it be nice to get a few more things done instead of sleeping a mere 15 minutes later?
- Don’t forget to pencil in some time for yourself to unwind as well! Taking a break from the stressors of life is just as important as completing your duties.

Did you know…?
There is a mathematical formula called “Pareto’s Principle,” or the “80/20 Rule,” which has been applied to other life concepts. Its basic idea is that in anything, a few (20 percent) are essential, and the rest (80 percent) are trivial. You can attribute this to your list of daily or weekly tasks and prioritize accordingly.