

Your Tailor-Made Time Management Plan

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- Spend a quiet 15 minutes with no distractions and write a wish list—no editing, no censoring—of *Stuff I Want To Do Regardless of Time or Money*. This is truly a list of your heart’s desires, everything is possible.
- Download a copy of the “Weekly Planner with Times” and fill it out for one week to see where you REALLY spent your time. Not what you were *supposed* to be doing — what you *actually* did. Be honest! Compare it to your list of *Stuff I Want To Do Regardless of Time or Money*. Will it get you there? Is your time in balance?
- List your top three time wasters. Ask yourself — Why am I doing this? What do I gain? What is the risk? Then ask again every time you start to slip away from your plan. Keep a list next week — every time you waste time in those ways (or in delightful new ways), write down how much time slipped away. Total it up at the end of the week. That's a gift to give back to yourself by being mindful of your saboteurs.
- Write down everything you want to accomplish in the next 12 months. Don't censor and don't think about how you're going to do them. Choose the one most important to you and brainstorm how you might accomplish it, what steps to take. Again, don't censor. Choose the unlikeliest step and try it. Sometimes we need to step out of our comfort zone to see fresh ways to accomplish tasks.
- Now take that same list of what you want to accomplish in the next 12 months and for each item, list all the reasons you tell yourself you won't/can't do them. Are you being miserly with yourself? Find a way to take the time you have and do what you love.
- When you have at least 30 minutes of quiet time, download the “Weekly Planner with Times” and complete this exercise. Use a pencil or for more fun, colored pencils. If you can put accurate times to everything, then do so. Otherwise, you’re just going to start accounting for the time and you can refine the specifics later. Be mindful of the days of the week.
 1. Shade in 7 hours for sleep. If some of that time includes reading or meditating or other relaxing self-care, then so be it.
 2. Shade in one hour/day for exercise. Non-negotiable. Doesn't have to be the same time every day. If you don't exercise regularly right now, just shade in one hour, but I'd advocate for it being first thing in morning so it's more likely to get done.
 3. Shade in one hour for breakfast and bathing.
 4. Shade in an hour for lunch (30 min for lunch plus two 15-min breaks). Promise to take your 30 min lunch and 2 breaks every day and *leave your desk*. You'll be more productive. Really. I promise.
 5. Shade in one hour for dinner. That will include cooking/eating OR eating/cleaning. Unless you're living alone there is no reason for you to both cook and clean.
 6. Look at the list you made of *Stuff I Want To Do Regardless of Time or Money*. Shade in one hour every day for the things on that list. "Me Time" never includes any of the things already accounted for. Me Time is to do what you love. Me Time and exercise are the things you're going to be tempted to blow off. But don't. They're non-negotiable and you need to treat them as if they were your most important meeting every day. Trust me. You may have crossover in your “Me Time.” If you wrote on your list that you want to spend more time with your spouse or kids, taking a daily walk or playing at the park can double as your exercise time. Cooking dinner together, or a gardening chore, or your volunteering opportunities can be ways to spend more time with them as well. Look for opportunities for crossover.
 7. If you have a job outside the house, shade in the hours you work. If you CAN'T carpool or take public transportation, shade in the time you commute also. (If you don't have to drive, that frees up your commuting time for something else.)
 8. If you work for someone else, but at home, shade in your work hours.
 9. If you work at home as your own boss, don't shade in anything for your workday - those hours will be filled with your To Do list items ... OR if you've been doing it for a long time and are in a healthy routine (ie,

working a reasonable number of hours per day), shade in the actual number of hours you work ... OR shade in a generic 6 hours every day. (That's a good, healthy amount for work every day.)

10. If you do the menu-planning and grocery shopping, pick a day and shade in one hour to plan your weekly meals, look up recipes, and make a grocery list. Shade in another hour to do the shopping. Of course this can be two different days. And if you know shopping takes longer, then shade in another hour.
11. Now shade in any regular appointments like if you volunteer every Tues at the food bank or go to church or play bunko.
12. Shade in one hour for To Do list items, which is a constant juggling act. On the back of this sheet of paper, jot down a list of daily, weekly, and occasional (but regular) chores you need to do. Jot down the time it typically takes you to do each one. If the amount exceeds one hour, decide how to handle that. Prioritize the most important and the ones only you can do. Delegate, and/or delete the rest. Or figure out how to do them faster, or less often. The problem with our To Do lists is that without thinking, we add "just one more quick thing" or something pops up unexpectedly which requires reshuffling (which we rarely do because we're too busy!), or we don't have any idea how long something takes to accomplish and we guess wrong. [See "helpful hints, tips and tricks" for ideas to tame your particular issue.]
13. Now look at your shaded-in week. Do you have any white space? Did everything you need to accomplish find its way to the page with a little extra buffer? If everything is in balance, congratulations! You're well on your way to a more organized, less stressful life!
14. If you don't have any white space, you have a bit more work to do. You need to figure out how to *get* more white space on that page. Maybe you can wrangle some of your chores into smaller amounts of time. Maybe you can ride public transportation to work at least a few days so you can have Me Time on the train. Maybe you can delegate. Check "helpful hints, tips and tricks" for ideas to find more balance. Pick a couple of ideas you think might help you and work on them for a week or two, then try this exercise again. Keep at it until you have a shaded-in calendar with balance for your week. Then congratulate yourself!
15. Any extra white space should be filled in with "Me Time" so you can accomplish more of what's on your "Stuff I Want To Do Regardless of Time or Money" list ... because now you have some more time!
16. Remember that your life and work situation changes, so whenever you find yourself out of balance, work this exercise again.