



# Kinship Link

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## Strategies for Better Time Management

### Pro Kinship for Kids

#### Inside this issue:

Strategies for Better Time Management continued 2

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Much like money, time is both valuable and limited: it must be protected, used wisely, and budgeted. You cannot manage time; you manage the events in your life in relation to time. You may often be the one wishing for more time, but you only get 24 hours, 1,440 minutes, or 86,400 seconds each day. How you use that time depends on skills learned through self-analysis, planning, evaluation, and self-control.

People who practice good time management techniques often find that they:

- ◆ Are more productive.
- ◆ Have more energy for things they need to accomplish.
- ◆ Feel less stressed.
- ◆ Have more free time to do the things they want.
- ◆ Get more things done.
- ◆ Relate more positively to others.
- ◆ Feel better about themselves.

Finding a time management strategy that works best for you depends on your personality, ability to self-motivate, and level of self-discipline. By incorporating some, or all the strategies below, you can more effectively manage your time.

#### 1. Know How You Spend Your Time

A time log is a helpful way to determine how you use your time. Record what you are doing in 15-minute intervals for a week or two. Evaluate the results:

- \* Did everything you needed to do get done?
- \* Which tasks require the most time?
- \* What time of day are you most productive?
- \* Where is most of your time devoted (job, family, personal, recreational)?

Identifying your most time-consuming tasks and determining whether you are investing your time in the most important activities can help you determine a course of action. Having a good sense of the time required for routine tasks can help you be more realistic in planning and estimating how much time is available for other activities.

#### 2. Set Priorities

Managing your time effectively requires a distinction between what is important and what is urgent. Experts agree that the most important tasks usually aren't the most urgent tasks. However, we tend to let the urgent tasks dominate our lives.

Categorize activities into four areas of urgent, not urgent, important, and not important. Focusing on the important activities allows you to gain greater control over your time and may reduce the number of important tasks that become urgent.

Creating a "to do" list is an easy way to prioritize. Whether you need a daily, weekly, or monthly, list depends on your lifestyle. Be careful to keep list-making from getting out of control. List manageable tasks rather than goals or multi-step plans. Rank the items on your "to do" list in order of priority (both important and urgent). A prioritized "to do" list allows you to set boundaries so you can say "no" to activities that may be interesting or provide a sense of achievement, but do not fit your basic priorities.

## Strategies for Better Time Management continued

### 3. Use a Planning Tool

Time management experts recommend using a personal planning tool to improve your productivity. Personal planning tools include planners, calendars, phone apps, wall charts, index cards, pocket diaries, and notebooks. The key is to find one planning tool that works for you and use that tool consistently.

When using a planning tool:

- ◇ Always record your information on the tool itself. Jotting notes elsewhere that must be transferred later is inefficient and wastes more time.
- ◇ Review your planning tool daily.
- ◇ Keep a list of your priorities in your planning tool and refer to it often.
- ◇ Keep planning tools synchronized. If you keep more than one, make sure your phone, computer, and paper planning tools match.
- ◇ Keep a back-up system.

### 4. Get Organized

Disorganization leads to poor time management. Research has shown that clutter has a strong negative impact on perceived well-being. To improve our time management, get organized. Set up three boxes labeled “Keep”, “Give Away”, and “Toss”. Sort items into these boxes. Discard items in our “Toss” box. Your “Give Away” box may include items you want to sell, donate, or discard. Your “Keep” box needs to be put away and organized for easy access. The next step is to improve the time you spend processing information. Try to get in the habit of only handling items one time, so put it away or place it in the folder you will need to have it with when you work on it.

### 5. Schedule Appropriately

Scheduling is more than just recording what must be done. Be sure to build in time for the things you want to do. Effective scheduling requires you to know yourself. Your time log should

help you to identify times when you are most productive and alert. Plan your most challenging tasks for when you have the most energy. Block out time for your high priority activities first and protect that time from interruptions. Limit scheduled time to about three-fourths of your day to allow for creative activities such as planning, dreaming, and thinking.

### 6. Delegate: Get Help from Others

Delegating means assigning responsibility for a task to someone else, freeing up your time for tasks that require your expertise. Identify tasks others can do and select the appropriate person to do them. Select someone with the appropriate skills, experience, interest, and authority needed to accomplish the task. Be specific. Define the task and your expectations while allowing the person some freedom to personalize the task. Check how well the person is progressing periodically and provide any assistance, being careful not to take over the responsibility. Finally, reward the person for a job well done or make suggestions for improvements if needed.

Another way to get help is to “buy” time by obtaining goods or services that save you time. For example, paying someone to mow your lawn or clean your house to free up your time for other activities.

### 7. Stop Procrastinating

People put off tasks for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the task seems overwhelming or unpleasant. To help stop procrastination, consider “eating the big frog first”. Unpleasant tasks we procrastinate completing are “big frogs”. Complete these tasks as your first action of the day to get them out of the way. Another option is to “snowball” your tasks by breaking them down into smaller segments, completing preparatory tasks, and eventually completing the larger task at hand. Try building in a reward system

for completed tasks to help stay motivated.

### 8. Avoid Multi-tasking

Do your best to focus on just one task at a time by keeping your area clear of distractions, including turning off notifications on your devices, and set aside dedicated time for specific tasks. It is found that completing one task at a time is actually faster than trying to move back and forth on tasks.

### 9. Stay Healthy

The care and attention you give yourself is an important investment of time. Scheduling time to relax or do nothing helps you rejuvenate physically and mentally, enabling you to accomplish tasks more quickly and easily. Unfortunately, poor time management and too much screen time can result in fatigue, moodiness, and more frequent illness. To reduce stress, reward yourself for time management successes. Take time to recognize that you have accomplished a major task or challenge before moving on to the next activity.

#### Think:

- \* Do you have a healthy balance between work and home life?
- \* Are you accomplishing the tasks that are most important in your life?
- \* Are you investing enough time in your own personal well-being?

If the answer is “no” to any of these questions, then reevaluate your time management strategies and transition to ones that will work better for you. Successful time management leads to greater personal happiness, more accomplishments at home and at work, and a more satisfying future.

