

How to Regain Control of Your Time

Are your days always a flurry of activity? Do you realize at the end of your day that you did not get anything accomplished that you had planned on? Maybe you have even looked at a few time management systems, and decided that you just do not have time to use them. Here are a few tips to help you turn your out of control schedule into a system that can put you back in control of your time.

The first step in regaining control of your time is to figure out what the major categories of activities are that consume your day. Some of these might include work time, family time, financial time and self-time. Make a list of the overall themes that fit your daily activities.

For the next step, you will need some paper and a pen. This step helps you get a visual look at exactly where your time goes. Across the top of the paper, write out the days of the week. Down the side of the paper, list out your waking hours, so that each hour has its own line. Once you have completed this chart, you can begin marking off your committed hours. Some people like to make each activity a different color. Plug in your working hours, and do not forget to add your travel time to and from work. Include any regularly scheduled appointments, family commitments, etc. Once this is complete, you have a map of your committed time. All the open blocks are your available time. This is not the same thing as free time. Now you can look at your list of categories from step one, and fit them into your schedule. You might find that you have an open spot available where you can fit your financial time. This would be the time when you pay your bills, track your savings, or anything else that you need to do to keep your finances in order. You might also find a free evening where you can fit in some family time. Continue until all of your categories are accounted for.

Be sure to leave yourself some free time. Things never go exactly as planned, and time management is no different. Open time allows you to catch up if needed, and leaves time for the unexpected events that will occur in your life. Remember to remain flexible with your time management schedule. It is a tool to help you, not another set of rules that you need to follow. If you find your original schedule does not work for you, revise it. It might take you a month to get it to a comfortable fit, but with each adjustment, you are regaining control of your valuable time.

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