

6 Easy Time Tips

By Susan W. Miller

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You are definitely not alone if you are feeling a need to simplify and organize your life. Many people easily spend 20 minutes a day looking for things. That is 122 hours a year - 5 entire days every year. You are bombarded with information from every direction, with 150,000 books and 10,000 periodicals published each year in the USA, before you even consider all the material coming at you from every direction online and various parts of your personal and professional life.

A survey of 600 adults commissioned by the Franklin Covey Co. shows:

- 42% of adults report they too often feel "life is a treadmill and I can't get off."
- 78% of adults say they wish they had more time to "stop and smell the roses."
- 58% believe technological advances have given them more time. But they are using old habits with new technology. We need new habits.
- 81% of people consider themselves organized, YET -
- 83% say getting more organized is among their goals.

Consider the Law of the Slight Edge. When you use your time more effectively just one hour a day, 365 days a year (weekends, too), your yield would be an additional 45 - eight hour days. That's 1 1/2 months! What would you do with that 'extra' time?

And that's how much time the National Association of Professional Organizers says professionals spend looking for things. That's 45 days of every year spent looking for stuff, time you could spend doing more of what you would really like to do!

Here are six painless and easy tips to manage your time more effectively, tips to help reassign those hours now spent searching:

1. Ask yourself 'where would I look for this?' rather than 'where should I put this?' when storing paper, possessions, or electronic files. The 'putting' part is easy. Finding things quickly and effortlessly is what saves you time.
2. Carry a folder of articles with you. This makes good use of small amounts of time otherwise spent waiting, while making a dent into your reading pile.
3. Create a mini-agenda for phone conversations. A planned call averages seven minutes. An

unplanned call averages ten minutes. It is easy to see how you can maximize your phone time.

4. Set a time limit on your involvement in a task. The task will seem less boring or overwhelming if you know you will stop at a certain time.

5. Make notes to yourself for details that come up while sorting any pile. You can then address those notes one at a time later with the attention each deserves.

6. Use a spiral notebook to capture random ideas, to-do lists, and notes of phone conversations. The notebook creates reliability and consistency for storing information and is far superior to the back of an envelope.

Any ONE of these tips can redeposit considerable amounts of time back into the bank of Your Life, to spend in ways that are more pleasurable and satisfying for you. It's your choice.

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