



Professionals are the first to get overwhelmed, and the easiest to get organized. NAPO-NY offers the following tips specific to business professionals that are sure to help control what's already limited work time and increase productivity:

- 1. Plan for eight-hour workdays.** Working 12 hours a day, every day, will induce fatigue no matter how much sleep you might get each night. Your brain needs relaxing activities as much as sleep to keep you at peak productivity. Also, set aside just 10 minutes each morning, or evening, to carefully plan your eight working hours. This will allow you to hit the ground running, and make your day even more effective.
- 2. Distinguish between important and urgent tasks.** Important is something that brings you closer to your goals, urgent is something that someone else (or circumstances) says needs to be done right away, whether it is true or not. Now, rank your tasks according to their importance and urgency. Start with the Important and Urgent tasks; next, do the Important but Non-Urgent tasks. Most people do the Urgent but Non-Important first, and waste a lot of time that way.
- 3. Put a deadline on your goals and your tasks.** Goals that don't have a deadline are dreams, and tasks that don't have a deadline are ghosts. Neither of them will get done. When setting deadlines, be sure to add 20%-30% to the time you think it will take (some people even add 50%). This way, you will be set for any unforeseen problem. And if everything goes smoothly, you'll have extra time.
- 4. Organize your stuff and your papers.** Studies reveal that executives spend on average one hour every day looking for lost documents -- that's a wasted six weeks per year! Give yourself a head start and more productive time each day by creating an office space and filing system that works for you.
- 5. Set aside at least one hour of undisturbed time every day.** It takes between three and five times the normal time to accomplish a task if you are interrupted. This stems from the fact that after every single interruption, however short, it takes between five and 10 minutes to get back to your prior level of concentration. Blocking out just one hour from your calendar can increase your productivity three-fold.
- 6. Group similar tasks together.** Quick time saver: try returning phone calls back to back; running all errands in the same neighborhood; and emailing in a single sitting. You'll be amazed how much time will be added to your day.
- 7. Minimize interruptions as much as possible.** Angle your chair so that it faces away from the door of your office or the opening of your cubicle; wear earplugs if you are in a noisy environment; establish 'visiting hours'. You will be amazed how much more you get done, and how people will start to respect your time.