



The Organizing Authority<sup>SM</sup>

## Tip Sheet: Time Management

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New Yorkers are among the most time-starved and over-stressed. Following these quick tips from NAPO-NY will save up to three hours a day and get people on their way to becoming stress-free:

1. **Make yourself a priority.** The truth is that you can give only as much as you have in you. If you are depleted (mentally or physically), you cannot give to your work, your children or your significant other what you'd like. So look at it as a gift that you give them as much as yourself and block time every day, or at least every week, for yourself. Ask your partner to take care of the children for a half-day of the weekend; get a babysitter for a couple hours a week; get a gym membership -- do whatever you need to nurture your body and spirit.

2. **Maintain work-life balance on a daily basis.** Set boundaries between work and life, and respect them. For instance, decide that you will leave work at 6:00p.m., no matter what. Or that, while you will work hard during the week, you will spend dinnertime with your family once a week and Sunday is family day with no exceptions allowed. Those boundaries will ensure that you will spend time with your family, and that you will break them only for emergencies.

3. **Schedule personal, family or life events in your calendar.** Don't just decide that you will go to the gym at lunchtime every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, write this down in your calendar. It makes it more real and, if something comes up to conflict with your gym appointments, you will at least weigh the conflict with the gym before deciding to pre-empt your gym time. If it's not in your calendar, your immediate tendency will be to say "yes" to the other option, without even thinking about the gym.

4. **Protect your sleep.** Sleep deprivation is a sure recipe for reduced productivity and increased mistakes, resulting in longer hours at work and added stress.

5. **Manage your stress.** It is imperative to manage stress on a consistent basis. On a daily basis, set time aside to relax, through meditation or any other activity that makes you feel relaxed. Throughout the day, take mini-breaks and do some deep breathing, stretching exercises, or even just walk around the block. On a weekly basis, put time aside to recharge your batteries. As much as family time can be enjoyable, it is not the best way to recharge your batteries. Activities that are truly refreshing and relaxing are activities that you do without family or friends, and that make you feel more energized once completed than you were when you started. And, above all, be sure to take vacations.

6. **Streamline your morning routine.** What does your morning routine look like? How could you make it faster, more efficient? Set out your and your children's outfit the evening before rather than choosing them in the morning. Or set the breakfast table after dinner rather than in the morning. While small, those changes can make the difference between a hectic and a stress-free day.

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**7. Streamline your routine tasks.** Look at the tasks you accomplish on a regular basis and find ways to make them more efficient, shorter, or even automatic. Create a master grocery list, devise a weekly checklist, or set up automatic payment of certain bills. This will free up time that you can use for more productive – or interesting – things.

**8. Organize your stuff and your papers.** At home, create three distinct locations and/or containers: one for the papers that you haven't yet touched, such as unopened mail; a second for the papers that you have looked at, but which require action on your part (invitations to RSVP, forms to fill, etc.); and a third for the papers that you need to keep for future reference or for legal or tax reasons. The containers can be an in-box, a file box, or in the filing drawer of your desk. They can also be a basket near the door, a box in the kitchen, or a filing cabinet in the den. What is important is that the different types of papers don't get mixed together, that they all have a definite home and are easy to find.

**9. Cheat!** By that I don't mean do anything illegal, unethical, or morally wrong, but who will really care if the cake for your daughter's bake sale is store-bought or was made using a cake mix?