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Mastering Your Time

Having enough time in the day to get all of our tasks, assignments and chores done can be a great challenge. We are bombarded with instant messages, wireless phone calls, tons of emails and a steady stream of information from the internet. Oftentimes, because our society has conditioned itself to have instantaneous responses and results, we feel like we have to get everything done all at once or we are failures.



What do you do when you can't keep up the pace with all the constant demands on your time and attention? The answer is: you have to learn to make good use of your time. Strategize your day! This does not include watching television. If you lack energy, reevaluate your diet and exercise habits.

The following are suggestions to aid you in mastering your time:

- I. Make a daily reminder list of things you need to do. Some people think that if you write things down, it's a sign that you're getting old. Not so! By writing things down, you are able to free your mind of "thought clutter" and strategize your day. There are several ways to make a reminder list depending on what works best for you:
 - a. planner/piece of paper/sticky notes
 - b. electronic devices (too many to name)
 - c. Outlook-task/calendar/flags
 - d. dry erase board
- II. If you're having difficulties managing your time, estimate the time you think it will take for you to complete each task, assignment or chore; write down the latest acceptable deadline to get each task done. Take notes on how long it actually took you to complete each assignment and what caused the difference. Continue to do this until you're able to develop the skill of estimating time in your head. Practice makes perfect!
- III. Take advantage of small blocks of time rather than waiting for large amounts of time. If you have 5 minutes here, 20 minutes there, you can complete several items on your task list. Anxiety results from looking at the whole picture, constantly replaying in our head all the things you have to get done. Break your assignments down into small attainable parts and strategize your day. Also, handling small tasks are great when you need a change in pace.
- IV. Take a couple of minutes each morning to strategize your tasks according to priority. Take a few minutes each night to plan your tasks for the next day.

If you start by following these simple suggestions, you'll be well on your way to mastering your time.