

10 Ways To Get A Grip On Time

Are you ready to start using your time more wisely?

Do you often run late or over-book your time, trying to squeeze in too many things each day?

According to **my favourite author on the subject of time, New Zealander Robyn Pearce**, using time well has two major elements to it. Firstly, we need to know how to plan, prioritise and make wise choices with our wonderful and precious gift of life. Secondly, we need to learn the shortcuts that save us time, minute-by-minute, day-by-day.

Here are 10 of Robyn's great tips for getting a grip on time:

1. **Are you a last-minuter?** Do you often arrive stressed and flustered at your destination? Remember that 'one last thing' you squeezed in before you left, thinking you were being efficient? DON'T DO IT! (P.S. This one tip has been a god-send for me whenever I'm really busy and remember it).
2. **Get ready early - and then do other things:** Going somewhere today? Before you move into doing any other jobs or tasks for the day, prepare for your day first. Pull out any files you'll need to take with you and have them ready to grab and go. Check on any destinations you need to go to at the beginning of the day and make sure you're clear on the travel time needed to get there, to park, walk, etc. Then, go back to the other tasks you can fit in to the day.
3. **'No' is your most powerful time management tool:** When we know what our values are and when we have a clear set of goals in all areas of our lives, we're in a much stronger position to politely and appropriately say 'no' to potential time-stealers and less relevant activities.
4. **Every week, lock in a few important non-urgent actions:** It's too easy to get caught up in everlasting deadlines. Change that emphasis by making appointments with yourself, written into your diary or organiser, to work on one or two activities per week of long-term and long-lasting value. Not sure what you could do? Think of the big tasks put off until you 'have time'. Almost certainly they can be broken down into small chunks.
5. **Constantly ask, 'What is my highest priority right now?'** This is a great focusing question. When applied we find it easier to stay on task with activities that make a difference. We're also less likely at the end of the day to find we've not dealt with our highest priorities.

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6. **Consider 'How can I do this task more efficiently?'** Every time you do a task, look for a shortcut, a way to trim a few seconds or a minute off the task. They mount up to a surprising total over a week. Time-saving efficiencies are all around us, but most people don't go looking for them. Instead, they just complain about lack of time!
7. **Block in regular sanity gaps:** When did you last take a complete weekend off - no email, no business calls, no responsibilities other than the people you're with? Many of us know it's important to clean out our old files and regularly defrag our computers - it's a housekeeping process that helps them run better. Think of taking regular time off as a defrag of your brain. You'll come back fresher and you'll also produce better results (just like the computer!). Give your conscious and sub-conscious time to talk to each other - you'll be amazed at the results.
8. **Manage your energy well and time looks after itself:** Think of your energy levels as your filter or indicator as to whether you're doing the right things. Sluggish energy is a powerful clue - if something isn't flowing smoothly there are almost always ways to either change activity or improve things. Some good filter questions: 'What's blocking my energy here? What can I do about it?'
9. **Chunk your phone calls together:** It's faster to do a bundle of calls, one after the other, than to spread them randomly through the day. This creates a sense of urgency and helps you keep them short and effective. It also helps you get more calls handled in the day.
10. **Don't make email the first thing of the day:** If you get hooked into email first thing in the day, it takes over. In fact, it's an addictive medium. Instead, *you* take control of your day. Spend time on the most important tasks for the day and (unless it's *truly* vital) don't look at email until at least mid-morning and then only for a defined chunk of time. Have two or three email slots through the day and you'll keep on top of most of it, with the occasional bigger catch-up session.

If you'd like to learn more about overcoming time challenges, visit Robyn's website gettingaagrip.com.

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