

## OVERCOME THE STRESS OF NOT HAVING ENOUGH TIME

It's the commonest complaint there is and the only truly scarce resource: is there anyone out there who has enough time?

The reality is that motivation trumps time. When you say "you don't have enough time" for a particular project or aspiration then this means you have put other priorities above it for now.

"Not having enough time" is a big source of stress. It is a vicious circle which seems to pen you in tighter and in the worst cases can lead to severe burnout or illness. Here are some tips to "make time" for yourself:

- **Focus your priorities to create time.** Hone in on what your true priorities are in each field of your life – professional, personal, family etc. Be very disciplined to cut them down to the core. Narrow your expectations but go as deep as possible within each.
- **Make a daily diary of where your current time goes.** Form a percentage split e.g. 40% at or getting to work, 40% with family, 30% personal or "me" time. Then create your ideal weekly time distribution and write down steps needed to move ruthlessly towards it.
- **Practise saying "no".** "No" really is a skill that can be learnt like any other. It helps to role-play in front of the mirror, giving a firm but friendly "no" to requests outside your core priorities. You can still be helpful by referring people to others who can assist.
- **Pick one personal hobby** which you have had in mind for years e.g. to learn French or play a musical instrument. Rather than re-motivating yourself each day, set a schedule that involves someone else (e.g. a private tutor) and which makes it less easy to discard.
- **"Pretend" you have all the time in the world,** even when busy. Inside you may have a thousand thoughts racing through your mind, however, take care to cultivate a sense of serenity and to make everything look effortless. Smile as you carry out your tasks. By "acting out" this serenity you'll actually create it in real life. Try it for a day and see.
- **Great planning "creates" time.** At the end of each day you can start mentally preparing the next: in fact, why not prepare tomorrow's to-do list today and leave work feeling relaxed and on top? Stay a step ahead of your tasks with a ruthless planning system. Leave work on time feeling good about what you have accomplished.
- **Keep time "in reserve" for unforeseen events.** Sometimes the unexpected "steals" time from us, however, there is no point in worrying about it. You may need to take time out to look after a loved one or new baby, or to manage an emergency project at work. Life is a marathon and you'll be able to recoup quality time later.

For further tips and advice on managing your time, we recommend [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com) which has a section dedicated to time management.

**Disclaimer.** This article is for general information only. We cannot be held responsible for any actions you might take as a result of it. Please seek medical advice before making any significant change to your habits or lifestyle.