

Timely Tips from Karen Whiting

Handle papers **FAST**

The challenge is to sort, filter, organize, discard and assimilate the massive amounts of data we're exposed to on a daily basis.

- **F**ile documents and important information.
- **A**ct on bills and current information now.
- **S**to**r**e in a "Weekly to do folder" papers that need more information.
- **T**oss out everything else.

Ideas to Expand Your Time

- * Schedule time needed for preparations
- * Schedule your day
- * Relax
- * Understand what must be done
- * Build the right habits
- * Gather the facts
- * Use idle time to your advantage
- * Analyze the situation
- * Break tasks into manageable bits
- * Make a decision
- * Watch out for paralysis by analysis
- * Don't procrastinate
- * Plan to work and work your plan
- * Tie up loose ends
- * Do it right the first time
- * Implement your Action Plan
- * Use technology, but don't get bogged down with it
- * Prioritize on importance and need

Know your own personal **time wasters**

TOP 10 Time Wasters

1. Procrastination & excuses
2. Running errands & traveling
3. Rushing
4. Telephone, mail & e-mail
5. Paperwork, reports & memos
6. Meetings
7. Television

8. Planning & decision-making
9. Computers
- 10 Saying Yes when you do not want to do something

Setup a **phone drill**-teach children what to do when you are on the phone-

Signals

Notepads

Time limit for mom, too, unless it's a red flag call

Rewards for letting mom talk on the phone

Before important calls, spend a little extra time with a child

Special box of fun reserved for phone time

Agree to return the favor-don't interrupt them either

Habits start as consciously made decisions, i.e. What time to get up? Once established, good habits become second nature. Success is the result of habit. It depends not so much on doing the unusual, but on doing the commonplace unusually well.

Remember the **20/80 principle**: 20% of your key activities will give you 80% of your results or payoff and 80% of your work (or clients) will produce 20% of your profits.

Templates

If your email client allows you to create templates, use them. They'll save you oodles of time for those responses that require the same or similar information on a regular basis. Create new messages based upon your pre-established template and edit as needed.

Prepare for delays

Keep a book, cell phone & numbers, notepad with you

Ask for meeting agendas and if none, consider not attending as it may be poorly organized and a waste of time

* **Delegate tasks.** Ask yourself, Is this the best use of my time? If it is, plan on handling it, but if not, try to figure out a way to delegate to another. There is a big difference between I do it and It gets done .

* **If it's quick, do it. now** If it can be done in a minute or two, do it then and be done with it. You can discharge twenty items in twenty minutes and be done with them.

- **Schedule tasks.** If it will take some time to complete, decide when you will get to it, put it on your to do list for that and then put it away.
- Remember the not-to-do list
If something is not your responsibility or not a priority, don't do it

Deal with **interruptions**

Use the aller ID

Let friends know schedule of when to call

Ask to be removed from phone lists

Reach children to be responsible and to know what they can do on their own (like what snacks are available)

1. **Write It Down** With the amount of things you have to remember in any given day, why should you try to stuff it all into your memory bank? When you want to remember something, the very best thing to do is write it down. Then, when you need to recall it, it will be there for you in an instant.

2. **Keep It Together** When you write down things you want to remember, keep them in one consistent place on in your online calendar. Otherwise, you're going to spend a lot of time looking for your notes.

3. **Good Health** Eat healthy foods, get enough sleep, and exercise. These are all important for your memory, staying focused and being alert.

4. **Record Your Thoughts** Sometimes you might want to remember something, but it's impossible for you to write it down, such as when you're driving. A little hand held tape recorder is a wonderful gadget to carry around with you and record your thoughts, or your parking space number, or a phone number you see on a billboard.

5. **Call Yourself** If you're at the office, and you want to do something when you arrive home, call your answering machine and leave yourself a message. When you get home, you'll listen to your message and remember exactly what you wanted to do.

6. **Believe In Yourself** If you keep saying you have a bad memory, you'll probably continue to have a bad memory. It's important to have a motivated, I CAN remember attitude.

7. **E-mail Reminders and Calender** notes

There are many free e-mail reminder services available. You simply type in what you want to remember, such as a birthday, anniversary or event, and you then receive an e-mail reminder when the date is approaching. Try

www.calendar.yahoo.com

Or use the calendar on your computer. Add more than a date and time. Include contact onformation, location, and needed notes.

8. **Post-It Notes** Those wonderful, little sticky notes can be amazing memory helpers. Want to remember something before you leave the house? Jot it down on a Post-It Note and stick it on the inside of your door. You'll be sure to see it as you're getting ready to walk out. Have to make an urgent call first thing in the morning? Leave a Post-It Note on your telephone.

9. **Times and Alarms** Take advantage of alarm clocks and timers throughout the day. Have to take the clothes out of the wash at 3:00? Set your alarm clock to remind you. Want to leave for the basketball game by 6:15? Set your timer to beep a few minutes before.

10. **Visual Reminders** Visual reminders can help you remember and focus. I especially like visual reminders for remembering your goals. If your goal is to take a trip to a beautiful island in a few years, keep a magazine photograph of the island right on your desk. If your goal is to own your own business one day, find a picture or ornament that will help remind you of this goal each day.

11. Make your **physical surroundings workable**. Move the fax machine closer (or further away!) from your desk. Have the most frequently used and needed files within arm's reach and the less frequently required items further out. Have adequate space at your desk to do what you need to do. Remove some unnecessary items, if necessary, to make room.

12. **Plan around interruptions**. Interruptions tend to occur in identifiable patterns. I get most of my interruptions early in the day versus later in the day. I get most of my interruptions early in the week versus later in the week. So, if I plan a big project first thing Monday morning, I'm creating stress because as soon as I begin, interruptions arrive and re-focus my attention causing me to procrastinate what I

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really wanted to do. It is so much easier swimming downstream with the current rather than bucking the tide. Therefore, I plan those larger projects for later in the day and later in the week when I tend to get fewer interruptions.

13. Grocery list ease

Use three columns for 3 sections of store

Fresh

Frozen/refrigerated

Dry goods

It helps to list items according to store location then you can gather straight down list instead of rereading list

Keep extras of necessary items on hand-when one is used up put it on the list (won't need to run out for emergency stop at store)

Buy extras to save lugging time (or use small containers, label them, and keep them in the places where needed)