

MONEYWISE

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TIME WELL SPENT: ORGANIZING TIPS FOR INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity allows you to make progress on and complete necessary tasks. However, many people are not as productive as they would like to be. To be productive you must be intentional with your time and space. This can be hard to do if your spaces are cluttered or disorganized, or if you lack routines at home or work.

THE POWER OF CLUTTER

Clutter can distract from completing tasks. Whether at work or doing household chores, having organized spaces can reduce stress and improve your overall well-being. You can apply many organizational strategies to at-home and on-the-job workspaces. You can organize a home or an office over time. Start small with one drawer, closet, cabinet, or bookshelf. Then work your way through your home, garage, or office — one space at a time.

- 1. Clear the clutter.** Begin by removing visible trash or other items that need to be discarded. Broken? Toss it. No longer needed? Consider donating it to an individual or organization who could put it to use.
- 2. Group like-items.** Next, sort items by purpose. Group like-items together and find a way to contain them. Use simple storage solutions (like bins, baskets, or baggies) that you already have on hand.



- 3. Give everything a "home."** After grouping your items, be intentional about how you store them. Everything should have a "home" in your home or office. When everything has a designated space, it keeps clutter at bay. When storing an item, consider how frequently you use it and how easy it is to access.

THE POWER OF PERSONAL ROUTINES

Three powerful personal routines to establish are sleep, meal, and exercise routines. Develop a *sleep routine* by setting consistent sleep and wake times, even on the weekends. Create a set of tasks that you do before bed to signal to your body that it is time to sleep. This might include putting your phone away for the night, taking a shower, or reading a book.

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REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU CHOOSE TO ORGANIZE YOUR TIME AND SPACE, REMEMBER THAT IT MUST WORK FOR YOU.



Planning and shopping for your weekly meals in advance helps establish *meal routines*. This can minimize the daily stress of, “What’s for dinner?” It can also help you plan for affordable, healthy meals. Finally, *exercise routines* (such as an evening walk) can ensure you get the recommended 150 to 300 minutes of exercise per week for general wellness, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

THE POWER OF PROFESSIONAL ROUTINES

As you consider “professional” routines, note that these routines might apply to more than just paid employment. For example, you may volunteer, provide care for loved ones, or enjoy hobbies for which organizing your time might increase your productivity. Consider the 4 P’s:

- **Prep.** Develop the routine of prepping for the next “work” day before you go to bed. This might include packing your bag and/or lunch, laying out clothes, or making a to-do list.
- **Production.** Create “production” routines. For example, group like-tasks together throughout your workday or gather all necessary supplies before starting a task.
- **Pause.** Take small, intentional breaks to help you recharge throughout the day.

- **Play.** Set aside time each week to focus on taking care of yourself and having fun with friends, family, or co-workers outside of work.

Regardless of how you choose to organize your time and space, remember that it must work for you. Take time to explore what works — and what doesn’t — and adjust your organizational systems or routines as needed. Additionally, look for ways to incorporate organization into your routines. For example, part of your “sleep” routine might include tidying up before bed.

TIME WELL SPENT CURRICULUM

Interested in learning more? Contact your county Cooperative Extension office. Ask your FCS agent about the free four-lesson curriculum, *Time Well Spent: Productivity Skills for Success*, developed by Kentucky FCS Extension. Topics include productivity versus procrastination, organizing your time and workspace, prioritizing tasks, and work-life balance.

REFERENCES:

Huff, N., Bejda, M., May, K., & McCulley, M. (2022). *Organizing Your Time and Workspace*. University of Kentucky Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Service. #FRM-TWS.002.

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