

JANUARY IS NATIONAL GET ORGANIZED MONTH!

Part 4 - Finding More Time in your Life

40% of adults report that too often they feel that, “life is a treadmill and I can’t get off.”

In our lives today, one of the most difficult tasks for families is trying to balance every member’s schedule. There is certainly a lot to keep us all busy these days - errands, sporting events, after school activities, work responsibilities, chores, and the little emergencies life just happens to throw at you now and then.

The pressure to participate in every activity that comes along leaves people feeling stressed out, exhausted and overwhelmed. You feel guilty if you aren’t participating in at least five activities.

Many people say they don’t have the time to get organized. They dedicate very little time to doing any planning ahead in their day or their life. Scheduling is very important in accomplishing any project or goal. If you set a goal but never schedule any time to work on that goal, you won’t get very far in reaching it.

Perfectionism is another big time waster for people. Perfectionists devote all their time to trying to do things “perfectly.” Perfection doesn’t exist and waiting for that perfect time will cause you to miss out on opportunities. Have you ever heard of the Pareto Principle? That principle states that 80% of the work that is accomplished is done in 20% of the available time. How are you using your time?

Here are a few tips to help with your realistic use of time:

- Have one central calendar that you use for your whole family. Write down everyone’s activities, comings and goings for every day. A good idea is to use a different color pen or marker for each person in the family. Visually, color is a quick and easy way to keep track of things.
- Learn to say “No!” Using the word no is a very good time management tool. If you are overcommitted, the stress of feeling overwhelmed is constantly with you.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help if you need it, either from your family or a professional. Learning to delegate can be a wonderful time saver.
- Set up a staging area in your home - a “launch pad.” This is somewhere near the door everyone uses to come and go. This is where you will put book bags, library books, items to be returned, dry cleaning to be dropped off, and your briefcase for work. This will help you in the morning by cutting down on the running and searching for items that must be taken to school or work.
- Create a daily agenda or “To Do” list to keep track of everything that has to be done that day. Don’t go overboard with a hundred items on your list. Prioritize what needs to be done by the urgency of the items.
- Don’t overload your day. Allow yourself some time during the day, even if it is just 15 minutes, to just sit still and relax. Don’t fill your entire day with appointments because there will always be that occasional emergency to deal with. You need space in your day and your life to just be still.

- Set up a household notebook in a central location so everyone can find it. Some possible sections in this notebook would be:
 - School information
 - Important phone numbers
 - Emergency information
 - Birthdays and anniversaries
 - Personal data
 - Take out menus
 - Shopping information

I hope the information I've given you will help you:

- Clear up the clutter
- Reduce or eliminate your paper piles
- Make the most of the space you have
- Use your time more realistically
- Find time in your day to do what you really enjoy

Happy January and I wish you a happy, healthy, and organized New Year!

Please send any questions you have on your own personal organizing problems to www.organizeclutter.com. I'd be happy to help.

Don't find yourself saying, "I've got to get organized!" again. Make 2007 the year you set a new goal and develop a plan to change your life. Simplify and reach your goals with help from S.O.S. Please check the calendar at www.organizeclutter.com for classes in the area and information on the clutter support group starting in January as well as the next scheduled Simply Organized three hour seminar.