



For Women in Business, the ultimate fantasy – more time in your day!

9.5 practical (and thoroughly road-tested) tips for finding more time to get it all done





Whether you're a Business Owner or a Senior Executive, you're time-poor. With competing demands from work, family, and friends, the idea of having more time in your day is often a lovely, but elusive, fantasy.

Caren Hendrie (BA Hons, DFP, CFP) understands this because she's lived it. Not only does she run a very successful family business, she also keeps busy by raising a family, travelling, staying fit, catching up with friends, entertaining, writing, building a new house, and much more. She also claims to have created a recipe for the *perfect* lamb roast. Most importantly, she still has energy left at the end of each day.

So how does she do it? In this entertaining ePaper, Caren shares her own personal tips for "making" time (not just "saving" it), and how to still have something left in the tank for yourself.

Caren is a well regarded Senior Adviser at The Hendrie Group who mentors busy women in both personal finance and business growth. She's a regular presenter at Women's business events and hosts a local radio program each week.



As a woman, managing a family business with 15 staff, and with 9 people living in my home 50% of the time, I *know* what it means to be busy, and how valuable time is.

The time-saving tips I'm going to impart in this ePaper are by no means rocket science. Most of the women I work with are busy working mums, so I can't afford to offer advice that's difficult to understand or to implement. My advice is practical and road tested; you won't get anything airy fairy from me!

Some of the ideas you will have heard before and some won't suit you, so what I'm going to suggest is that you choose just 3 ideas you can implement. And then do it. After all, the only value in an idea is the implementation...

So let's get started on my 9.5 tips for getting more time in your day.

1. Train yourself to need less sleep



Let's start with the obvious.

Many years ago I read somewhere that in the years leading up to becoming elected president Bill Clinton physically trained himself to live on 3 hours sleep per night. Imagine that! *21 hours **every day** to get things done.* Almost 150 hours in a week.

Of course that's a pretty extreme example, I know I certainly couldn't cope with just 3 hours sleep each night. But the concept did intrigue me and so whenever I meet a highly successful person, I ask them how much sleep they get each night. Sure they sometimes look at me as if I'm a bit weird, but it's important to me as a business owner that I learn as much as I can from clever and successful people, so I'll go on asking the "tough" questions.

Anyway, most people tell me they get about 5-6 hours per night. So I looked into this a little further and there's a lot of research suggesting this is about right for the average adult. Not me by the way, I love my 8 hours, BUT, if you're really serious about needing more time in your day then training yourself to need less sleep will work.

As I said, it's not rocket science.

Now I can imagine a lot of women thinking, well I only get 5-6 hours a night right now. And if that's you, ok maybe you need to be more like Clinton with his 3 hours. I'm not saying it's ideal, but if you can do it and still function effectively then this method is fool-proof.

2. Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance



If you're in your forties like I am, then you may remember this little tongue twister from school.

You may not *want* to believe it but organisation is **absolutely critical** to successful time management.

If you're disorganised then guess what? You're wasting time. And unless you address the issue and do something about it, you can't change it to find that elusive extra time.

I can vouch for this one from experience. Many moons ago I used to pride myself on working best in *organised chaos*, but it was a load of codswallop. If you think you work best in organised chaos then you're kidding yourself. It's called justification folks.

Disorganisation can be very deceptive because you still feel like you're crazy busy, but a lot of your time is spent *unproductively* - chasing your tail, trying to find things, remembering where you were up to...

It's also easy to become addicted to chaos and believe you can't change, and that the time that you'll need to put into preparation is time you could be using to do other things.

Blah blah blah blah.

The fact is you *can* change, and in turn it will change your life. The small amount of time you put into preparation will be negligible compared to the time it will free up for you, not to mention the reduced stress levels.

Obviously there are all sorts of ways to be organised, so I'll just share a few of the things I do to get you started.

Oh dem crazy mornings...

Getting ready in the morning, hard enough at any given time, but if you have kids then any day you hit 9am without a headache is a good day... Oh, and for those of you with young kids thinking it gets easier as they get older, forget about it. I still have to remind our Miss 15 to brush her teeth and put deodorant on every morning, and have chased her down the street with her lunch more than once.

Mornings can be hard, and if you start the day off frazzled and running behind, it's very hard to catch up. So accepting that I can't necessarily control what's going on around me in the morning, my motto for myself is "leave nothing to chance."

Each evening I make sure I have everything ready for myself for the next day, so that I don't even need to think about me – it will all just happen.

I'm talking *everything*. What I'm going to wear (right down to my underwear and jewellery), if it needs to be ironed it's done that night, all my make-up is in one place, I make my lunch, and I decide what I'll be having for breakfast. My bag is packed, and my keys are ready and waiting.

What this means from a time perspective is that no matter what else happens, I'm like a well-oiled machine getting ready. There's no standing in front of the wardrobe panicking about having nothing to wear, and no running around looking for a lost shoe. I liken it to the oxygen mask in an aeroplane emergency, mum gets ready first, then helps the children.

This gives me extra time to deal with anything unexpected that crops up and I usually start my day ahead of schedule. Jealous? Yeah, it's a magnificent feeling.

Action lists

I'm also the Queen of Lists. I swear by them. But I don't call mine "to-do" lists, they're "action" lists. For me "to-do" is a little too loose and non-committal, whereas "action" implies serious business.

Writing things down does two things: clearly it gives you a written record that you can refer to, but also it imprints it in your memory so that you're less likely to forget it.

But you can't just stop at the list. I often have people tell me "I already tried doing a list and it doesn't help much". Then they show me their list and it's no wonder, it's just task after task with no prioritisation, and frankly it looks scary not helpful.

Scary lists can be quite counter-productive!

About ten years ago, one of our team member's, Heather, went to a time management course and came back with a system that she still swears by and uses religiously. I've included her system at the end of this email, and if you don't currently have a list system that works as well as this, then can I urge you to make this one of your three things you're going to do?

Have a list for home and one for work because they're equally important.

Where does your time go?

If you want more time in your day, then you need to know what you do with your time and take control. I tell my clients the same thing when they groan about preparing a household budget – you have to know what you're spending before you can effectively budget or save.

My business includes accounting so that means when I'm working I have to account for every 6 minutes of my time!

Now I'm not suggesting you go that far, but what about if you accounted for every 15 minutes? Did you know you have 96 blocks of 15 minutes in every day?

Even if we say you sleep for half of them (obviously not Bill Clinton) you still have 48 blocks of 15 minutes. Can you honestly say right now that you know what you do with all of them?

I recommend that you keep a timesheet for at least a week, ideally a month. Don't worry, you don't need a fancy schmancy accounting package for this, you can do it on an excel spreadsheet, in Word, or even on a writing pad. What you do need to do is make sure you update it at least hourly because it's too hard at the end of the day to remember what you did for each 15 minute increment, and that defeats the purpose. Perhaps set an alarm on your phone to remind you every hour.

This will help you identify time wasters as well as procrastination areas, both of which are your arch enemies if you're trying to make a little more time in your day.

Speaking of procrastination...

I have two sub-tips:

- a. If you're like me, you're inundated with paperwork – letters, forms, requests... My "4D rule" is to look at it once and decide whether you **dump**, **deal**, **deposit**, or **delegate**. Shall I elaborate?

Dump – if you know it's unlikely you're ever going to do anything with it, dump it in the bin. It's not chocolate, don't save it for later...

Deal – if it's something that requires action fairly soon, just do it. Don't put it on a pile of all the other work you need to do – deal with it straight away (you'd be amazed how well this works).

Deposit – if it doesn't require action but you'd like it for future reference, then deposit it in a file then and there. Don't leave it in a pile for the filing fairies.

Delegate – aaaaaaaaaaaaaah my favourite. If it makes more sense for someone else to do it then give it to them straight away. Then the 4D decision becomes their problem not yours!

By the way, all these rules apply equally for emails.

- b. Do the poeey stuff first. If you have a job you know is going to be difficult or unpleasant, and you can't delegate it to someone else, then do it as soon as possible. This not only makes you feel better, it stops you wasting precious time thinking and worrying about it, which is always the case when there's a task we don't want to do...

3. Set goals with deadlines



The reason we set goals is because it's pretty hard to achieve anything concrete without them. I'm talking about both business goals and personal goals. One of my favourite sayings is "Most people aim at nothing...and they hit it with amazing accuracy."

When you're setting goals it's vital that you include *time goals* as well, because without a time target, it's still too open-ended.

Deadlines

As women I sometimes think we've been genetically programmed to meet deadlines. We have to pick kids up from school at a certain time, we need to attend meetings at a certain time, we prepare meals by a certain time, and we meet these deadlines because we "have to".

So it stands to reason it would work the same way with goals you impose upon yourself.

When you're setting a goal whether it's big or small, give it a specific time-frame. For example, don't just get up in the morning and say to yourself, "gee I really need to do the vacuuming today". Put it on your action list as "vacuuming by 2pm".

Of course you need to hold yourself accountable because otherwise it's too easy to procrastinate or get distracted. When it's something like a household chore, my suggestion is to set the alarm on your phone for 5 minutes beforehand to keep you on track. Or set yourself a reward. Maybe you've decided to do the vacuuming at 2pm, and once that's done you can sit down with a cuppa and an afternoon snack.

When it comes to business related issues I highly recommend you always make a third party commitment to your goals. Give your client, customer, or supervisor a specific time frame. Never say, "I'll get this to you as soon as I can" (that could mean anything), or "in a few days", or "in a week or so". Be specific. For example, "I will have that to you by close of business Monday."

Why does this work? Because you have someone else to hold you accountable, so you are more likely to achieve your goals. And remember we are women, so we don't like to disappoint, we meet our deadlines! Think about it, the reason you meet the school pick-up deadline isn't because you have nothing else you'd rather be doing, but because there are people to hold you accountable - your children and the school.

A couple of things to bear in mind when you're making your third party commitments – don't forget to under-promise and over-deliver, and if for some reason you can't meet the deadline, contact your client, customer, or supervisor in advance to let them know. Most people are pretty reasonable, but nobody likes to be left hanging.

Focus

The reason setting goals with deadlines is a time saver, is because it gives you laser like focus. Rather than wasting time, even inadvertently, you concentrate on meeting your deadline as effectively and time efficiently as possible.

Think about it, have you ever done something fairly routine, that should have taken you an hour but you've ended up spending two hours just because you could? Housework is the perfect example.

I'm a massive advocate of every working woman having a cleaner. The most common objection I hear from women to this idea is that they can do it themselves for nothing. BUT if you own a business or have a demanding job, then it *doesn't* cost you *nothing* at all. It costs you time away from your work where you may well be earning more than what you'd pay a cleaner for that time, and it costs you time away from doing the more enjoyable things you like to do when you're not working.

More importantly, it gets done efficiently. For most of us, the housework gets done when we can get it done, often not all at once. Even if we set aside a time, something can crop up and we get distracted from it, so that you can end up stretching the cleaning of your house over an entire week! Whereas a cleaner sets a goal to have your house cleaned on a certain day, at a certain time, and within a certain number of hours. That's because it's his or her job, and they don't stretch it out because they don't get paid for fluffing around. So for \$20-\$25 an hour, your floors are vacuumed, the toilets are cleaned, your surfaces are dusted and you actually save more than two hours of your time because you would never have done it that efficiently and can do something else with that time.

By setting a goal and giving it a time frame, you're able to focus on exactly what you need to achieve so that you can get it done in the most time efficient way.

4. Decision making



I drive a Volvo and people regularly feel the need to question my choice of automobile. They love to tell me what I could have bought / should have bought, not to mention the snide remarks about my lack of taste. But it's all ok because I'm completely certain that my Volvo Sports is the ideal car for me. I'm the only one that truly knows what I need in a car, I was the one that did the research, I'm the expert in my vehicular needs. No second guessing.

And I'm the same in my business, one of the things that I believe makes me a good business owner is that I'm decisive. Don't get me wrong, there are definitely times where I pull a "Scarlett O'Hara" and decide to think about it tomorrow at Tara, but in most cases I make decisions fast. And you should have the same practical belief in your own ability.

Back yourself all the way. Even if it's the wrong decision, you can always change it, but most of the time it's going to be the right decision. Don't waste non-productive energy and precious time second guessing yourself or your decisions.

5. Learning the art of compromise



This is another tip that completely changed my life, particularly in business, but at home as well.

Now if you have children then you already know how to compromise – you spend half your life negotiating deals. But what I'm talking about here is making compromises with *yourself*!

Perfectionism is the silent thief of time. The reason it's silent is because we think we're doing the right thing, and we're unaware of its sneaky nature.

You might be surprised to learn that a lot of the things you do in the name of getting it "just right" isn't valued by the people you're doing it for – whether that's clients, customers, friends, or family.

I was more than surprised, I was shocked. Even a bit angry when I was confronted about this very issue and how it was holding our business back. One of my friends, Tony, is an absolute business guru. ING used to pay him a small fortune to head up their Mergers & Acquisitions division, before he left to start up not one, but several of his own businesses. I think he has at least five on the go at the moment... Anyway the point of that is, he knows his stuff, and I respect every word that comes out of his mouth when it comes to business.

A few years back I asked him do an analysis of our business and help us to identify any areas where we could be doing better. When he came back with his official report, this is what he wrote about me:

"Caren needs to find a way of balancing her perfectionism with delivery reality."

He also rang me and said, "Caren whilst your quest for perfectionism is admirable, you are most definitely holding the business back from achieving it's true potential."

Ouch. "Most definitely" even!!!

He explained to me that there were a lot of areas where I was spending time doing what my clients simply didn't value. For example, I majored in English and History at Uni, so I was pretty good at writing. And I'm not kidding, I probably wrote the most well constructed and well worded financial plans in Australia. Not only that, I would re-write everyone else's to make sure they were worded perfectly as well. You can imagine the time I was spending on this...

Now if someone comes to see me about their personal finances and long-term security, how much do you really think they care about the written plan I give them at the end? In fact, when I finally asked my clients about the value they placed on it I discovered, half of them didn't even read it! They told me they valued the relationship they had with me as well as the advice and support I gave them. To them the written plan was just confirmation of what I'd already told them, and frankly somewhat boring.

He suggested that I compromise with myself and allow these plans to be 80% as good, and free up time to concentrate on things that my clients would value.

And the same goes with the home. Do you ever clean your house from top to bottom if you're expecting guests? And yet the reality is that they wouldn't even know a lot of what you've done. I probably shouldn't admit this, but I even used to change the toilet roll if I had guests coming so it would always be a full roll. And I didn't do it because I was worried about my guests running out of paper, I did it because I thought it looked better. So you see what I'm getting at?

My workplace challenge to you is to find out exactly what your clients value from your business. And don't assume, because when I get my business women clients to do this exercise, they are almost always surprised by some of the answers they get, and are almost always spending unnecessary time on things that their clients don't value.

Finally, if you have staff that aren't as qualified as you but can do a task 80% as well as you can, then *you* shouldn't be doing that task anymore.

6. Do it faster



Well this is another obvious one isn't it? If you do things faster then of course you'll have more time in your day.

But if you want to work as fast as possible, you need a reasonable amount of energy.

People often ask me how I can sustain my energy levels all day, and still have something in the tank when I go home. The bad news is there's no quick fix, the good news is that everyone can enjoy great energy with a bit of work. And it's not really hard work, it just takes some commitment. The *only* way I can do what I do, and still have energy left at the end of the day is through eating well and regular exercise

But let's face it, both of those things are time consuming whether we like it or not. We'd all eat well and exercise if it was quick and easy right?

Hopefully some of the tips I'm about to give you will give you some extra time to concentrate on this.

Food for thought (and body):

I'm lucky to have a sister-in-law, two close friends, and several clients in the nutrition industry which gives me great access to information. It was my friend Nicole who explained to me that when you get right down to it, the science behind what we eat is pretty simple. Input leads to output. What you put in your body is what you're going to get out of your body.

No matter what we like to tell ourselves, we need to eat well if we want to function at our best.

What I've learned is that we're all different and what works for one person doesn't necessarily work for someone else. I used to think that I was healthy because I ate things like toasted muesli for breakfast, rice cakes for lunch, salads for dinner, but as it turns out my body and brain need a low GI and high protein diet. Even though what I was eating was technically healthy food (ok, I might have been kidding myself with the toasted muesli), it wasn't the right type of food for *me*. One of my girlfriends helped me with meal and snack ideas, and I kid you not, the change was almost immediate and it was both mental and physical. I haven't stopped thanking her! I recommend that everyone have a few sessions with a qualified dietician. Yes you'll pay for it, but the advice could be life changing.

At the very least, take the time to listen to your body and design a healthy eating plan for yourself and your family. It doesn't *have* to be time consuming. We live in the age of information so just get on the internet and Google something like "healthy quick meals".

Can I just hark back to that organisation tip for a minute, and suggest that you dedicate 30-40 minutes each week to sitting down and working out a 7 day meal plan and making your shopping list. Yes you have to make that initial time investment, but you will get it back plus more during the rest of the week I absolutely promise you. It's just a matter of starting it and making it a habit. I put it on my Action list every week.

Exercise:

When it comes to exercise I do have a bit of a secret solution. It may even rival KFC secret herbs and spices except that unlike the Colonel, I'm happy to share.

I'm often asked whether I go to the gym, or if I jog etc, and the truth is I find exercise incredibly boring.

I love those ads that tell you all you need to do is exercise for 20 minutes three times a week. I mean yeah it sounds easy when you say it like that, but seriously most of us genuinely find it hard to find 20 spare minutes *once* a week let alone three times.

My solution is to combine your fitness regime with other things you need to do. How? I hear you ask, well let me share.

Firstly, I practice something I like to call the "Turbo Tidy. If my house needs a mid-week spit and polish, I get all my cleaning gear out, put on some loud (motivating!) music, and give myself 45 minutes to clean as much as I can. I literally run from room to room, I vacuum like a maniac, and you can barely see my arms because I'm wiping with them so fast.

By the time I'm finished, I'm sweating, my heart rate is well and truly up, and I have a clean house! I needed to clean the house anyway, but this way I also fit in some exercise. Nice hey?

More "combo" time-saving tricks:

I call my next exercise, "purpose running". If I am going to exercise, then running is generally my preferred option. That said, I still find it hard to justify just running for the sake of it. I'm a destination girl. So whenever I have the opportunity to walk somewhere outdoors, I try to run instead. Or if you're not a runner, then a serious power-walk.

Let me give you an example. Say you're going to the supermarket, and while you're out you also need to pop into the Chemist and the Post Office at the same time because they're close by. Park at the supermarket and make that your last destination. Then run or power-walk to the Chemist, from there run or power walk to the Post Office, and then back to the supermarket. They were all places you were going anyway, so you've achieved your original purpose and at the same time slipped in a bit of exercise.

That's just one example, once you start doing it, you find all sorts of opportunities, but you do need to be prepared to leave the house in your trackies and runners.

Oh and if you're worried that people will look at you strangely, don't be! I've found that most people really aren't concerned about anything other than what they're doing, and even if they do, who cares! They've forgotten you within seconds, but you'll always have those calories burned.

So that's exercise for when you'd ordinarily be walking, but what about when you're sitting? *Butt and tummy clenches ladies!* It doesn't matter where you're sitting – at your desk, in front of the TV, in the car, on a bus – you can squeeze and tighten those muscles while you sit.

When you're in the supermarket, you can do your butt and tummy clenches *AND* use the weight of your trolley for some arm muscle resistance.

But wait there's more...

Let's go back to the home. As well as the Turbo Tidy, there are lots of other every day jobs that you can turn into an exercise opportunity:

- Unpacking the dishwasher is an awesome opportunity for squats and lunges, as is bending down to pick things up from the floor;
- Use your tummy muscles instead of your legs every time you get out of bed, up from a chair, or any sitting position;
- Mowing the lawns is great for the biceps if you concentrate on them while you're mowing;
- Bringing the shopping inside from the car can also be great for the biceps if you do it properly.

That's my secret sauce, and well may we laugh but ladies it works!

By no means am I recommending it be your sole fitness regime, I'm just giving you back time to at least do *some* exercise. These are all tasks you were going to do anyway, so it's a real two for one time bonus.

7. Just say no



As women we are notoriously bad at this but if it means having more time, isn't it worth learning how to do it?

A really important lesson to learn is that if *you* don't value your time then no one else will. *And* if you don't value your time then how can you create more of it? Where's the motivation?

It's time to stop making the assumption that other people's time is more valuable than yours – because that's what you're doing every time you say yes to something you actually don't have time for.

So how do we break the “yes” habit? Well it's imperative that you give time for yourself, your work, and your family, the same respect you give to other people's time. This means physically scheduling time for those things, not just for everyone else.

Have you ever had a weekend where you've said yes to every request or invitation because technically you were "available", only to find by Monday that you'd barely spent any time with your family, or getting things done for yourself? Of course you have. That's because you scheduled everything except time for yourself or the family!

My sister does this, and I love it. She used to get really excited by the prospect of a free day with the family on the weekend, but as it came closer, someone invariably called to make plans, and because there was nothing on the calendar she'd feel guilty and agree.

Now she physically schedules "family time" on the calendar. So if someone phones to organise something, she'll check the calendar and if "family time" has been scheduled she'll explain that unfortunately she does have something on that day, and would it be ok to make it another date. Isn't that great? She isn't lying, and because she gave time with her family the same respect as she would any other event she put on the calendar, she felt ok to say no.

If you happen to work even partially from home, this can be very hard for people to understand. I work from home two days a week and in the early days friends were always asking if they could "pop around for a catch up" on my "day off"!

Right from the outset, I learned to say "No, I'm working from home, but let's make a time for the weekend or an evening during the week".

It's extremely important to educate your friends and family about the value of your time. I don't mean by telling them over and over how busy you are, because do you know what everyone's thinking in their own head when you do that? "Not as busy as me". But if you're always available, and never say no, then it's not their fault they don't value your time – it's your fault.

You need to find a comfortable way of saying no, but do it. Practice makes perfect.

8. Work smarter not harder



This concept has been around for a long time, and it's definitely stood the test of time.

I remember in my early years of working there never seemed to be enough hours in a day to get everything done. So I started getting into work earlier and earlier. But still there wasn't enough time, so I started working back later and later. The upshot was that I was arriving at and leaving the office in the dark!

I began to get really frustrated and finally sought counsel from my dad about why it was that despite significantly increasing my working hours, I never seemed to get on top of everything. He explained to me that no matter how many hours I worked I would always find something to fill the time. That working longer hours wasn't the key, being more efficient and effective with my time was the answer.

When it comes to working smarter in the workplace, it's all about making sure you have great systems. If you have a task that you do on a regular, or even semi regular, basis, there should be a documented system in place, with templates and links to any information you need. Not only does this save you time but it makes your business very attractive to buyers when you decide to exit...

When I first learned to cook, I used to prepare every single meal ingredient before I actually started cooking. I learned that this technique had a pretty cool French name, “mise en place”, what *wasn't* cool was that it was taking me three hours to cook dinner! Of course a much more efficient and time saving method was to look ahead to what I'd need to be doing, and prepare some food while the rest was cooking. So obvious now...

You need to always be aware of what you're doing and how you're doing it. Just because you're busy doesn't mean you're being as effective as you could be.

9. Ask for help - delegate



So if women are bad at saying no, we're even worse at asking for help.

A couple of years ago I was explaining to my 13 year old stepdaughter why I was frustrated by whatever she hadn't done that day, and I started listing all the things I had to do each day. She looked up at me and said “Caz, why don't you just ask us to help? We might not like it, but we'll still do it.”

Wow! Lightbulb moment!! She was absolutely right of course. We don't always like doing everything we have to do, but we still do it. Just because we don't do a massive eye roll and sigh, doesn't mean we want to do it anymore than the person we've asked.

And it's the same in the workplace. Have you ever had those employees or colleagues that huffed and puffed when you asked for help so that you stopped asking because you felt too awkward? Well guess who won that battle? It's called passive aggression and it's their problem not yours. Especially if you're the employer who's paying them to do what you ask.

The truth is that most people *are* happy to help if they know that you need it. And having a helping hand can make a huge difference to your time. But to date none of my friends, family, or work colleagues are mind readers, so we're only going to get help if we *ask* for it! Put it on your Action List. More importantly, use your Action List to quickly determine what tasks other people could help you complete.

9.5 Get over it!



You'll note the title of my paper promises 9.5 practical tips and strategies. Why didn't I just say 10? Because 10 is expected, and I wanted to get your attention. Even though I've only attributed half a point to this tip, as far as I'm concerned it's one of the most important.

Also, I want EVERYONE to implement this tip. On top of the other three that you choose.

I *never* say *never*, but so far I've *never* come across a single working woman that's not striving to find the perfect home/work balance. Note I don't say work/life balance because that suggests when you're at work you're not alive...

I'm going to rock your world right now by telling you that if you are a female business owner or executive, the perfect work/home balance does not exist for you!

I'll let you process that for a moment, it doesn't exist.

You know why? Because if that's the path you've chosen, then girlfriend, balance is not in your nature. You're motivated, you're a go-getter, you're fierce, but you're not balanced.

Biting off more than you can chew and multi-tasking is just the way you roll.

But how is this a time saving technique?

As working women, we spend *at least* 10 minutes a day wracked with guilt over the fact that we're not achieving the perfect balance and either our work life or home life is being neglected. Now the guilt may be all in one hit or spread over the day, but it's there.

So if we know that it doesn't exist and that trying to achieve it actually flies in the face of who you are and all the other things you want to achieve in life. Then we can let that guilt go yeah?

Make peace with it. More than that – embrace it, because it's what sets you apart from other people. Let it go, and get over it.

Can I just get you to do a really quick exercise. Take a really deep breath and hold it for a second, then exhale sloooooowly. That's you letting go of "balance guilt". And I want you to do that from now on every time you start to feel stressed or guilty about the lack of balance in your life. Don't spend 10 minutes thinking about it or worrying about it, just breathe in, let it out, and move on.

Where to from here?

I mentioned at the start that ideas have no value until they're implemented. We've all read books or been to presentations where we found a great idea, thought "I must do that", and then done nothing more about it.

Some of the ideas I've suggested in this paper are potentially life-changing, I know, because some of them changed mine. And for the better I can assure you!

So what should you do with all this information. Well, don't try to implement everything at once, it's not possible let alone practical.

What I strongly urge you to do is choose the **three** time saving ideas that most resonated with you - then implement them. Once they've become habit, you can go back and choose another three! And so on.

If you'd like to know more about me, The Hendrie Group, and our services, go to our website at www.hendrie.com.au

You also have the option to subscribe to our email database which means you receive lots of free business ideas, marketing tips, sales techniques, ePapers on things like networking and aligning your business and personal goals, invitations to our free events – in short oodles of stuff! We get a lot of very positive feedback about the information I send out but of course it's easy to unsubscribe if you don't get value out of it.

And if you'd like to say "hi" please shoot me an email at c.hendrie@hendrie.com.au and introduce yourself. My passion is helping working women succeed, and I'd love to hear your story.

I wish you every success, and loads of extra time in your day!

Caren Hendrie

Bonus ideas:

Here are a few bonus ideas, including some I picked up from a few other time efficient people I know...

- Know where everything is – don't kid yourself about organised chaos
- Do a clean out every season, not just Spring, look for what needs attention – handbag, wardrobe, briefcase, desk, business cards, emails, car;
- Prioritise – always do the “musts” firsts, and the “should” next;
- Have a “not to do” list of things you can delegate to others;
- Be wary of the social media “time-suck”;
- If you have blue tooth in your car, take the opportunity to make calls to save you time when you get home;
- Get business and marketing tips on CD so you can listen to them while you're driving;
- I prepare a huge salad and have a massive Tupperware container with the corrugated bottom. Line with paper towelling. Chop fresh uncooked beet root, carrot, fennel, capsicum, add spinach and other greens of choice, add fresh chopped basil and other herbs of choice. Then top with paper towelling. Lasts 7 days.

Each day fill your lunch container with a serving of this salad, grab your protein of choice for the day (tinned salmon or left over chopped up steak or chicken from night before) and dress with mix of apple cider vinegar, Himalayan salt, some oil (either olive, almond, coconut, flaxseed) and GO FOR IT!!! Have an apple or pear for morning and afternoon tea! It takes less than 5 mins to get this ready for work and the pay off? We are lean, healthy and happy!

Isabella and Michael Carter, Practice Paradox

- Unsubscribe from email lists you don't really need;
- Hire someone else to do the stuff you don't like, don't do we'll, or of lower value, and use your time more productively;
- Hire an expert, don't feel the need to reinvent the wheel;
- Buy takeaway;
- Don't drive around after the bargains - shop in one place;
- Better still, shop online;
- Shave every second day;
- But for pete's sake don't put your makeup on while driving!

John Hendrie, The Hendrie Group

- I read about this in one of the blogs I enjoy reading. They suggest you need to do some food preparation immediately after doing the food shopping to make packing your lunches easier, and it saves you money because you won't need to buy lunch. Things like chopping up salad items ahead of time and storing them in bulk in the fridge. This way you can throw it together the night before or day of, add in some left overs from dinner, no extra prep time necessary all week!

They also say this helps people that need to take their lunch to work as well as people that are at home all day as most of the time people at home can skip lunch or grab something because its quick and they get busy and forget/don't want to stop.

- De-cluttering! Most people spend a lot of time looking for things, whether it be a piece of clothing, a bill, paperwork, the other shoe, matching socks, that set of sheets you prefer, or important documents stored 'safely' away somewhere never to be seen again. Having a clean out is the best way to get organised. There needs to be a place for everything and whatever doesn't fit has to go. There are plenty of rules you can follow when cleaning out the things you don't need, but I think this one helps me stick to the minimalist way of thinking 'have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful'.

Kathryn Christie, The Hendrie Group

- To think ahead and plan ahead. Organise everything down to the last napkin, and write everything down. You may think "I'll remember it" but when the event gets closer and everything happens at once I guarantee it won't be remembered.
- Always have a pen and paper on hand to write down any ideas you come up with when you don't expect it.
- These will both save time in the long run.

Tanya Morrison, The Hendrie Group

- When seeing clients, customers or colleagues in your office/ work space, have two clocks or one clock displayed so you can both keep an eye on the time you had allocated for the task at hand.

Julie Woulters, Psychologist

- When receiving mail, instead of letting it pile up, anything that can be dealt with there and then for example paying an account, filing a document or accepting an invitation, I act on it immediately rather than my previous "ill deal with it later" policy. It helps me to be organised and does, in fact, save time.

Leonie Bailey, Lawyer

- As I would drop the girls to school every morning and pick them up in the afternoon, I would pick up any food shopping, banking or run any business errands then, so that it was the only time I was out. So it was a matter of being organised whether it was at the beginning or the end of the day.
- Even though both the girls are at University now I'm still playing netball in the morning I still do everything while I'm out, so that I get everything done so you only leave the home once.
- Being organised is the key factor when you are running a business from home and running a home as well.
- Make sure there is time for yourself to have some physical activity – I will work out of "normal hours" so I can play my sport.

Lynne Cleary, BPL

- Identify how you currently spend your time by keeping track of it for several days. Where are you wasting time (i.e. watching TV)?
- Take the time to write down weekly, monthly, yearly and life time goals.
- Create a daily and weekly “To Do” list.
- Prioritise your To Do list with ABCs. The A list must get done. The B list is important, but doesn’t need to be done today. The C list is for activities you’d like to get to, but if they never happen, it’s OK.
- Schedule your time so that you are using your energy and creativity on the tasks that need it. For example, if you are a morning person, work on that book you’re writing in the morning.
- Remember the 80-20 rule. 80% of results come from 20% of your activities. Where do you want to focus your 20%?
- Give up the Superwoman complex! Down grade your need to have the house spotless, delegate some of your tasks, if possible!
- Learn to say “no” to requests for your time that you don’t want to do. It’s really OK!
- Evaluate tasks only once. Take care of the unpleasant phone calls or tasks first in the day. Use the circular file!
- Schedule some time that is free of interruptions so you can focus on what needs to be done. Close the office door. Turn the telephone off.
- Breathe deeply often and relax your back and shoulders.

Lisa Marsden, Professional Counsellor

Heather’s brilliant “Action List” system:

Every morning take a few minutes to write out your Action list (do it while you have a cuppa).

Don’t use yesterday’s list and add to it because it gets too messy. Besides it looks better at the end of the day to see all the things you have crossed off and in my case makes it easier to complete my time sheet as I know what I did for the day.

To write this out I start at the top of yesterday’s list and write out all the tasks that haven’t been crossed off. If any have now become urgent I mark them as such – see below.

Write down everything you have to do in a format that you will understand. I recommend columns.

Include a brief description of what you need to do (or where to find what you need to do). For instance if I receive an email to do some paperwork for a client my list will show: Surname P/W em.

Ensure you have a column showing the estimated time you think the task will take ie: Surname P/W em 10min. This is really worthwhile because if you have 10 minutes before lunch you know you can get that task done and then go to lunch and you have one more item crossed off the list.

Once you have completed the task put a line through it. This is a great feeling and it also feels great at the end of the day to see a page with lots of tasks with lines through them. Doesn’t happen every day of course...

The other thing to use is a priority asterix. I put these in a column before the tasks. I use ** for very urgent tasks that must be done today and as soon as possible. Then I have * for jobs that need to be done today.

If it looks like I am not going to get them all done in a day then I discuss this with my supervisor to prioritise those that *must* be done and then make the others the ** very urgent for the next day.

Try not to have more than 3 or 4 very urgent jobs as this just adds stress. You need to work out if they really have to be done immediately, or if some time later during the day will be fine (change them to * tasks if this is the case). If you have more than this you should talk to your supervisor about getting a priority order for them.

If you have a large job to do with lots of components to it (ie organising a conference) then it should have its own task listing sheet and have all the tasks that need to be completed for the whole job on this sheet. Work out what task only needs to be done today and then add this to the major task listing ie: Women Go Show (WGS is what I would abbreviate this to) print CH bio 1,000. Once this task was complete cross it off both the daily task list and the WGS task list, this can be done the next morning when writing out the list as the large job lists can be put in a folder away from your desk. You don't need to access them all the time only in the morning when you write up your daily to do list.

You would be amazed at how easy it is to then get a big job done if it is broken down and a little bit done every day. It also stops the panic attacks on trying to work out how you are going to achieve such a big job with all the other things you need to do.

It is very important that you add tasks to the list during the day as they come in, even if you intend to do it straight away. It still feels good to cross it off when it is done, also you don't forget to add it to your timesheet. That way nothing will be missed.

I find that the best part about writing the list is that although it can look imposing if it is a page long I don't have to keep all the information in my head. I can concentrate on doing one task at a time and I am always surprised at how well this works and at how much I can achieve in a day and not get stressed about it.

Sometimes I have a task on the list and I am waiting on information or someone to get back to me. So instead of putting a line through the task, as I have done part of it, I put in brackets what I am waiting on ie: Surname P/W em (waiting MC). I know I still need to do this task but can't at the moment. When I hear back I cross out the brackets so that I know the task now needs to be done. I will also most likely put an asterix beside it so that I know that I have to do it today.

I have to admit that I do have tasks that make it to the top of the list and stay there for some time. These are jobs that are not urgent but still need to be done. I find that if I have to write them out every day I get sick of looking at them and manage to find time to get them done and off my task listing.

	Archive files	2 hours
**	Jones Share Trade – em	10 min
	Investor Update portfolio	30 min
*	Smith P/W – em	15 min
*	Customer – ph – em	10 min
**	Sample P/W – ph – p/u at 1pm.	20 min
	WGS – print CH bio 1,000	1 hour