

Stay organized all day: At home, at work and in the kitchen

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Organization Everywhere

The Home. The Office. The Kitchen. Let's not forget the family! How does a busy woman keep it all together? Our experts weigh in on how to stay organized all day and manage your life so it doesn't end up managing you.



Pat Heydlauff, author of *Feng Shui: So Easy a Child Can Do It*, says the key to staying organized 24/7 boils down to one little word. "Prioritize!," she says. "Treat time as a finite quantity so you don't over-commit. Take steps to un-clutter your calendar by scheduling only things that are important to your work life, family and household duties. Learn to say 'no' to everything else."

In fact, Pat recommends looking at your calendar in one-week increments and organizing it as one block of time: "Place everything you need to do that week on your calendar, including the routine and mundane, as well as the important task of taking care of yourself." She says the issue of looking at your time in one-day increments usually results in micromanaging your schedule and overbooking it. "Once you know what you need to do in a one-week period, you can allocate your time based on both daily needs and importance."

Managing your time at home really crosses over into your office space, as well. If you have the organizational tools to succeed with one realm, you'll also be successful at the other. Whether you use an old-fashioned to-do list, your BlackBerry or an Outlook calendar, she emphasizes doing the most important thing first. "This one step will greatly reduce your stress," she says.

Time in the Cucina

Lorraine Brock, a professional organizer and mom of three teenagers, keeps it simple in the kitchen. "My first kitchen tip would be to pre-cook meats for dinner, especially ground meats. Freeze them and add them to foods accordingly when cooking dinner." As for another shortcut, if you want to make homemade mashed potatoes, peel the potatoes the night before then submerge them in water and keep them in the refrigerator until they're ready to boil the following day.

Kirsten Ivey-Colson of the MommyBlueprint Mommies mentions that preparation, as part of her organization shortcuts, isn't limited to just the kitchen. "Prep the night before. Get your clothes lined up, ironed and ready to go. Have your kids pick out their clothes for the week on Sunday."

Lorraine also suggests keeping the house intact by always taking something with you that does not belong in the room you are in when you leave it. "If you get up off the couch to check on the laundry, take an item or two that does not belong in the living room and put it up. A little at a time... is better than nothing."

Schedule time for YOU

Amidst all of the organizational tools, Pat strongly recommends putting some "You Time" in the calendar to do something special for yourself. "You need to regenerate your personal energy every week to continue the hectic pace of being a mom. Find a corner in your bedroom, light a candle and play some peaceful music to regenerate your heart and soul so you can keep up with everything else on your schedule."