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Organization everywhere

Vicki Salemi

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! 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. Regardless if you use an old-fashioned to-do list, your BlackBerry or Outlook calendar, she emphasizes doing the most important thing first. "This one step will greatly reduce your stress."

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 preparation as part of her organization short cuts 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 in order 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."