



Essential

LIVING SKILLS

TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS



K-STATE
Research and Extension

Acknowledgments

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Originally developed by:

Doris “Katey” Walker, Extension Specialist, Family Resource Management and Public Policy
Emily Mark, Extension Specialist, Family and Consumer Sciences, Northeast Area

Updated by:

Elizabeth Kiss, Ph.D., dekiss4@k-state.edu, extension specialist in Family Resource Management, K-State Research and Extension

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EVALUATION

Evaluation instruments are included to measure progress toward the following overall objectives:

- A. Participants will determine which time management skills they want to acquire or improve.
- B. Participants will develop and implement a plan to achieve these skills.
- C. Participants will increase their competencies in time management.

Participants may write NA in any blank if it is not applicable to their situation.

Participant's name will not be attached to this piece of paper or to answers.

Confidentiality will be respected at all times. The information participants share with us will help us evaluate, develop and deliver Extension Family and Consumer Sciences programs more effectively.

Participants should return their completed evaluations to their local extension agent or program facilitator.

TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS EVALUATION

Measurable Objective A: Pre-Assessment

“Identifying My Need to Know More About Time Management Principles and Skills”

Please use a ✓ or ✗ or fill in the best answer for each line.

	1	2	3	4	5
How important is it for me to know more about...	Not Important At All	Not Important	Not Sure	Important	Very Important
How I manage my use of time?					
Where I really spend my time?					
Whether I use my time on what is important to me?					
What to do to reduce my stress in how I use time?					
How to use my time to balance my life?					

TIME EVALUATION: A SPECIAL RESOURCE

— *Instrument to be administered before classes* —

Measurable Objective B: “My Plan for Improving My Skills”

1. During the next six months, I would like to improve my skills in how I manage my use of time:

Yes No

2. My goals for positive change in the area of how I manage my use of time:

(please check all that apply)

Think about my time use as way to a happier life.

Learn to plan time use carefully.

Learn what are my time wasters.

Other _____

3. Date I plan to achieve these goals: _____.

4. My plan for achieving these goals includes:

Making a list of how I use my time.

Discussing my time use with others.

Other _____

5. My plan for putting these goals for time management into action includes:

To know that I have time resources.

Review my list of how I use my time.

To avoid spending my time on things that don't help me reach my goals.

Other _____

TIME EVALUATION: WHERE IT GOES

— Instrument to be administered before classes —

Measurable Objective B: “My Plan for Improving My Skills”

1. During the next six months, I would like to improve my skills in where I really spend my time:

Yes No

2. My goals for positive change in the area of where I really spend my time: *(please check all that apply)*

Learn where I spend my time.

Know that I have choices for my use of time.

To have time to _____. (Your choice)

Other _____

3. Date I plan to achieve these goals: _____

4. My plan for achieving these goals includes:

Make a log of how I spend my time. 1 day, 2 days, 3 days, one week

Identify my time challenges.

Adjust my time use to _____. (Your choice)

Other _____

5. My plan for putting these goals for time management into action includes:

Arrive to appointments/job on time.

Have time for myself to _____. (Your choice)

Spend time with family and friends.

Have time to do household activities.

Read to my children.

Other _____

TIME EVALUATION: DO FIRST THINGS FIRST

— Instrument to be administered before classes —

Measurable Objective B: “My Plan for Improving My Skills”

1. During the next six months, I would like to improve my skills in my use of time on what is important to me:

Yes No

2. My goals for positive change in the area of my use of time on what is important to me: *(please check all that apply)*

Decide what is urgent.

Decide what is important.

Learn to set priorities that support my responsibilities.

Work toward doing what really needs to be done.

Other _____

3. Date I plan to achieve these goals: _____

4. My plan for achieving these goals includes:

Make a to-do list.

Select one urgent action.

Select one important task.

Other

5. My plan for putting these goals for time management into action includes:

An urgent action I will do today _____.

An important task I will do today _____.

Other _____

TIME EVALUATION: MAKE YOUR OWN PLAN

— *Instrument to be administered before classes* —

Measurable Objective B: “My Plan for Improving My Skills”

1. During the next six months, I would like to improve my skills in how to plan and do what is important to me:

Yes No

2. My goals for positive improvement in the area of how to plan and do what is important to me: *(please check all that apply)*

Learn how to make a plan.

Make a plan that fits my needs.

Learn to act on my plan by importance of the items.

Decide what does not have to be done.

Other _____

3. Date I plan to achieve these goals: _____

4. My plan for achieving these goals includes:

Make a plan to accomplish important things.

Make a “to-do” list.

Give priority to important A items; if time allows, do B and C items.

Other _____

5. My plan for putting these goals on how to plan and do what is important to me into action includes:

Define a “to-do” list.

Act on importance of items.

Other _____

TIME EVALUATION: A STRESS CONNECTION

— Instrument to be administered before classes —

Measurable Objective B: “My Plan for Improving My Skills”

1. During the next six months, I would like to improve my skills in what to do to reduce my stress in how I use time:

Yes No

2. My goals for positive change in the area of my use of time on what is important to me: *(please check all that apply)*

Learn what situations cause stress in relationships.

Learn what to do to reduce stress when rushed.

Learn ways to reduce emergency situations.

Other _____

3. Date I plan to achieve these goals: _____

4. My plan for achieving these goals includes:

Identify what stresses me in relationships.

Identify what stresses me when rushed for periods of time.

Identify what stresses me when emergency situations occur.

5. My plan for putting into action these goals for reducing my stress related to time use includes:

Develop a technique to better manage stress.

Develop a plan for handling emergency situations.

Develop a plan for ways to reduce emergency situations.

Develop a positive attitude.

Use humor.

Other _____

TIME EVALUATION: WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

— *Instrument to be administered before classes* —

Measurable Objective B: “My Plan for Improving My Skills”

1. During the next six months, I would like to improve my skills in how to use time to balance my life:

Yes No

2. My goals for positive change in the area of how to use time wisely to balance my life:
(please check all that apply)

Learn about effective time use.

Learn about how to determine prime time.

Learn to prevent problems.

Learn to balance time use.

Other _____

3. Date I plan to achieve these goals: _____

4. My plan for achieving these goals includes:

Determine prime time for me.

Avoid interruptions.

Take control of how I give time away.

Reduce procrastination.

5. My plan for putting into action these goals on how to use time wisely includes:

Use prime time effectively.

Divide big tasks into manageable actions.

Make sure to give myself time.

Develop a positive attitude.

TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS EVALUATION

Measurable Objective C

“Evaluating My Progress Toward Meeting My Goals”

Please use a ✓ or ✗ or fill in the best answer for each line.

	1	2	3	4	5
Progress I have made toward accomplishing my goals in these areas ...	I Do Not Plan to Change	I Plan to Change	I Have Made Limited Change	I Have Made Many Positive Changes	I Am Meeting My Goals
How I manage my use of time?					
Where I really spend my time?					
If I use my time on what is important to me?					
How to plan and do what is important to me?					
What to do to reduce my stress in how I use time?					
How to use my time to balance my life?					

TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS EVALUATION

Measurable Objective D: Follow-up

“An Assessment of How My Time Management Activities Affect My Health and Well-Being”

Please use a ✓ or ✗ or fill in the best answer for each line.

	1	2	3	4	5
How often does the following occur ...	Never	Sometimes	About Half of the Time	Often	Always
I manage my use of time.					
I know where I really spend my time.					
I use my time on what is important to me.					
I plan and do what is important to me.					
I have reduced my stress in how I use time.					
I use my time to balance my life.					

LEADER'S GUIDE

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program is designed to assist adults, particularly those who are feeling overwhelmed, facing changes, or who lack management experience, to use their time to achieve their goals in life.

Many people feel guilty if they can't "do it all" and are uncomfortable in protecting their resource of time. They want to be seen as helpful, caring, and generous and do not always realize this can lead to tremendous time pressures as they seek to keep everyone else happy. Many individuals find it requires considerable effort and practice to become effective in their use of time to achieve their goals.

This lesson series will help individuals set basic priorities based on the aspects of their life that they have determined as most meaningful and most important.

The lessons focus on personal, family, and household time use, although the methods suggested may also apply to paid work or volunteer situations. Attitudes toward time differ among individuals, families, and cultural backgrounds. This series is designed to help people manage situations where careful attention to "clock time" is important. A key concept is that people can make choices about the way they use their time. An individual's need for balance among time uses is recognized as important.

OBJECTIVES

Participants will learn:

- How to manage their use of time;
- Where they really spend their time;
- How to use their time on what is important to them;
- How to plan and get done what is important to them;
- What to do to reduce their stress in using time; and
- How to use their time.

CONTENTS

The lesson series includes six topics:

- **Time: A Special Resource** (*How to manage their use of time*)
- **Time: Where It Goes** (*Where they really spend their time*)

- **Time: Do First Things First** (*How to use their time on what is important*)
- **Time: Make Your Own Plan** (*How to plan and get done what is important*)
- **Time: The Stress Connection** (*What to do to reduce their stress in using time*)
- **Time: Work Smarter, Not Harder** (*How to use their time to achieve goals*)

The suggested sequence is for a series of group lessons. The first topic might easily be included by the lesson leader as part of an overall introduction.

The sixth topic consists of a variety of management techniques that can be used in many different situations.

A pre-assessment form to help participants identify their own needs and interests should be completed at the first session and returned to the lesson leader.

A general get-acquainted and sharing activity is also recommended for the first meeting. Three suggestions are presented in this leader's guide.

The pre-assessment forms and participant planning forms can be given at the first meeting to help participants decide what they want to know more about. This provides the leader the opportunity to select topics or add emphasis to others.

Sharing of ideas among participants is an effective learning experience. It is important to remember that managing time is an individual choice. What works well for one person may or may not work well for another. No one should criticize the way another person does things.

The Evaluating Progress Toward Meeting Learning Goals form can be given at the beginning of the session, following the lesson series, and/or at 6 months and 12 months, to assess participants' accomplishments.

The lessons can be given on a one-on-one basis. Each fact sheet is a separate topic and can be given to those who prefer to read on their own.

Each lesson includes:

- A fact sheet
- Learning activities — to do at the group meeting or as a take-home project (assignment)
- Evaluation forms

Two learning activities are available in support of each fact sheet and are in support of its measurable objectives. One activity involves leader preparation and direction for a group activity. The other activity handout can be used in class or independently, and involves the participant in inventories of skills, needs, logs, and

written assignments. Please keep the group's abilities and needs in mind and make adjustments to the activities as necessary.

PLANNING THE LESSON

This lesson will provide your group members with an overview of basic time management principles and ways to apply the principles to their own situation.

Preparation

- Review this teaching guide and the fact sheets carefully as you begin planning your presentation.
- Make enough copies of the fact sheets for everyone in your group.
- Make a copy of each evaluation form for each group member.
- Select one or more learning activities.
- Gather supplies and make other copies of information if needed.
- Decide what parts of the fact sheet you think are most relevant to your group, based on their choices as much as possible.
- Remember that sharing experiences is often the most valuable learning activity — although you need to watch the time and keep the discussion moving to avoid too much repetition.

Try to emphasize exchange . . . giving as well as getting ideas.

Example

Example of a time schedule is:

- 5 minutes Warm-up activity.
- 10 minutes Presentation of principles or key concepts in your own words.
- 10 minutes Group members complete one or more learning activities.
- 2 minutes Distribute the fact sheet now or at the close of the lesson.
- 5 minutes Ask each person to share one idea they have learned or reviewed.
- 5 minutes Complete the program evaluation.

Example of Three General Introductory Activities

Time Use Cards Activity

Give each person a 3-by-5 card.

Tell them they don't have to write their name. Ask them to jot down one of the following:

1. Something they would like to have more time for, such as something they like to do for fun or relaxation.
2. One specific challenge they have with time management, such as being late, or not having time to spend with their children, not getting housework done, or not having time to be physically active. (Ask them to be specific — not just indicate an overall lack of time.)

Pictures Activity

Cut out and bring some pictures (from magazines or cartoons) that show people doing things that take time (such as a person, family, or other group working, traveling, eating, preparing food, reading, or enjoying being outdoors). You will need a few more pictures than the people in your group. Put the pictures out on a table.

Ask each person to select one picture and tell the group why they chose it. Suggest that they think about the picture in terms of something they like to do, would like to have time for, or was a special time in their lives.

This activity is good for groups of people who don't know one another. Describing a picture is often easier for shy people to begin talking in front of the group.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Several other parts of the *Essential Living Skills* curriculum provide supplementary information on several topics. The sections on Controlling Clutter (in *Essential Home Maintenance*, S134C), *Money Management* (S134G) and Keeping a Job (in *Job-Ready Skills*, S134A) might be particularly helpful.

TIME: A SPECIAL RESOURCE

Time is a special resource because it takes time to accomplish anything. The way you manage time, like the way you manage your money, energy, and other resources, plays a large part in determining the goals you can accomplish, and the satisfaction you receive from everything you do.

You really manage yourself with regard to time. There are many ways to make the most of your time.

TIME IS:

- Measured — by clock or calendar, by season, by life stages.
- Limited — we all have 24 hours.
- Unique — we really manage ourselves in relation to time.
- Perishable — we cannot save it for future use.
- Money — it has a dollar value.
- The key — to finding satisfaction and enjoying life.

Time is a special resource for anyone trying to meet family, work, community, and personal needs. Some say time is the most valuable of all resources because it is limited. Others think time is endless . . . thinking they can always do their tasks at another time. Most busy people have to plan carefully to meet all their time demands. Jobs, schools, and other events require you to be on time, even though you would prefer a more relaxed schedule.

Time itself is not the real problem: The key is how you use your time. Time cannot really be managed; you manage yourself in terms of time use.

THINK ABOUT TIME

Time is unique. It is the only resource every person has in equal amounts. We all have 24 hours a day.

Time is perishable. You cannot really save time. You can “lose it or use it.” A problem with time as a resource is that you cannot borrow minutes from one day, and use them the next day. Although time cannot be saved, you can use your time effectively through careful planning and action.

Time is a measure. When time is discussed, many people think first of the clock. America tends to be a clock-and-calendar centered society. Being on time for work, school, and appointments, and for payments such as rents and bills, is a necessity for almost everyone today. In other cultures, time may be measured by the sun and the seasons.

Time has a dollar value. An old proverb tells us, “Time is money.” It takes time to earn money. It takes time to develop new resources. It takes time to get the most from your shopping dollar. Sometimes you choose whether to “buy time” in the form of convenience foods or household repairs.

Time has other values. We look for “quality time” to spend with children and other family members. We need time for rest, leisure, and personal renewal, as well as for friends, neighbors, and our community.

BALANCE YOUR USE OF TIME

Plan to balance your life and share time with family, friends, neighbors, paid work, and volunteer work with your church, neighborhood, or community.

We all invest time, waste time, and use time. Think carefully about your use of time. Make sure you invest time in the things that are important to you.

LEADER ACTIVITY: TIME TOSS

Supplies:

Six to 10 inexpensive soft objects, may be pre-labeled or shaped to represent the time use activity stated such as beach ball with a clock face, soft frisbee with food for meal time, soft car for travel, etc. Each item should be different in size, shape, or color and easy to catch.

Instructions:

Ask the group to stand in a circle, with the supply of soft objects to toss. Leader will toss the first object to someone and state a way to use time. Getting ready, family meals, laundry, cooking, shopping, work, travel to/from work, children's activities, church, reading, TV, talking, walking, etc.

The activity using time will move with the object as it goes around the circle. Explain the need to toss to the same person each time. Now continue with the first object and its use of time, then add another object and its use of time. Continue until you have about five or six objects representing time use being tossed from person to person.

Discussion or reflection questions for group:

- How did you feel as more objects were added?
- Why is it harder to manage your use of time with many needs?
- How do you use time?
- What are some of your time wasters?
- What methods or tips do you use to be on time for work and events?
- How do you invest your time?

ACTIVITY: MY TIME USE BINGO

Below are 24 squares for you to list one or two words that describe the activities you do for 24 hours.

Examples: Sleep, getting ready, paid work, reading with children, going to the park, grocery shopping, etc.

Midnight	1am	2am	3am	4am
5am	6am	7am	8am	9am
10am	11am	FREE	Noon	1pm
2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm
7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	11pm

- Color those that involve family as you use your time Yellow.
- Color those that involve paid work in Green.
- Color those that involve rest in Blue.
- Color those that involve others giving away your time in Orange.

Ask yourself:

Does the way I use my time make me satisfied?

TIME: WHERE IT GOES

Do you know where your time goes? Keeping track of how you spend your time for a few days can help you figure out what you are doing that works for you and what you would like to change. You may be surprised to learn how much time you spend doing things that really do not matter to you.

It may take some thought to realize that you can take charge of the decisions related to time use. Learning how you use your time now is a good first step in deciding if and how you want to manage time differently to achieve your goals.

You have the right and the responsibility to make choices about where your time goes. It is sometimes easier to let other people make all the decisions.

TIME USE IN 2014, AVERAGE HOURS PER DAY*

Household activities: 1.77 in 2014

Eating and drinking: 1.17 in 2014

Leisure and sports: 5.30 in 2014

Sleeping: 8.80 in 2014

Caring for and helping household children, parents: 1.38 in 2014

Working, employed persons: 5.33 in 2014

Working on days worked, employed persons: 7.75 in 2014

*Source: <http://www.bls.gov/tus/> retrieved October 5, 2015

This is not very satisfactory in the long run, because you may not be spending your time on what is really important to you.

You usually find you have a number of tasks that must be done within a set time or date schedule, and have no flexibility. You will also find a number of things that must be done, but the schedule is flexible. There are also things you want to do just for fun and relaxation.

TRACKING YOUR TIME

Where does your time go now? Think about these categories as you determine how you spend your time:

- Eating and sleeping
- Working for pay
- Commuting to and from your job
- Recreation, either at home or away from home
- Family activities

- Home and personal care and maintenance
- Religious activities
- Community activities
- Other activities not listed above

Think about volunteer work, education or training, and other activities that you do. The categories are listed to help you in thinking and planning; not to suggest how you should be using your time.

Home, personal, and family activities may include such things as menu planning; food preparation and clean-up; household cleaning and maintenance; family care (including physical care such as bathing, dressing, and feeding children; as well as maintaining relationships with all family members, such as reading to children or helping them with projects or homework; trips to the doctor or dentist); money management, including paying bills, record keeping, and shopping. Some family and personal activities may fit under recreation.

You will see that caring for your family, managing your household, working or going to school, eating, sleeping, and personal care take many hours every day. You must identify your challenges and plan carefully to do those tasks that need to be done, and have some time left for the things you would like to do.

IDENTIFY YOUR TIME CHALLENGES

Tracking your time will help you see where you can do things differently.

- *The limitation of time.* Many problems with time occur when you do not accept the limitations of time. You have to set priorities because you can't do everything all at once.
- *Balance your time.* Sometimes you need to balance your use of time. It is important to make time for yourself as well as others.
- *Minimizing household work time.* Getting the essential household chores done is sometimes the main challenge.
- *Failing to set priorities.* Priority setting is necessary to achieve your goals. Ask yourself, "Is this the best use of my time?" to decide what is most important.

Remember that time management is not a device to make you work harder and longer. It is a tool to help you "work smarter," to accomplish your work more easily and rapidly, and include time for all the other things you want to do.

LEADER ACTIVITY: MY TIME PICTURE

Supplies:

Inexpensive plain white paper plates or 10-inch circles, one per person. Colored markers, crayons, or colored pencils in at least 12 colors.

Instructions:

Fold the plate/circle in half, fold again, then in half again. You should have eight sections — each of these sections represent 3 hours of your time. They can be divided into smaller amounts to represent the smallest amount of time you use. Prepare and show an example of your time picture. Identify your time use for the following activities:

Where do you spend large amounts of time — at least four or more hours at one time? Refer to the fact sheet for categories. Using a different color for each large use of time on an activity, color in total time spent. Do not divide an hour into more than two sections (or thirty minutes each). Complete your circle, being sure to use a different color for each activity.

Some questions for discussion:

- When you view your time picture, do you feel you get the full use out of your 24 hours?
- Does your time picture show what you value in the way you use your time?
- Is there something you have wanted to do but do not find the time for?

ACTIVITY: YOUR DAILY TIME USE CHART

Below list the activities you did during the past 24 hours. You may want to keep a chart each day for a week to get an accurate idea of your daily time use.

6AM		6PM	
7		7	
8		8	
9		9	
10		10	
11		11	
NOON		MIDNIGHT	
1PM		1AM	
2		2	
3		3	
4		4	
5		5	

- What do you see as your time use challenges?
- Do they involve people other than you?
- How might you plan for adjustments in how you use your time?

TIME: DO FIRST THINGS FIRST

Finding the time to do the things you need and want to do is often a big challenge. Effective time management means deciding what you want out of life and moving toward your goals.

Long-term goals are based on the people, activities, and things that give meaning to our lives. Short-term goals help us measure our progress toward long-term goals. Priorities provide a ranking of the activities that help us achieve our goals. You may think of goals in several different categories, such as: goals dealing with physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health; financial; job; education; family relationships; and social goals.

EXAMPLES OF GOAL SETTING

Mental — develop an optimistic attitude

Physical — eat balanced meals each day

Spiritual — grow in courage, kindness, and unselfishness

Family — make home life happy and enjoyable

Job — improve skills and accuracy

Financial — start a savings account

Social — get involved in community service activities

Consider the goals of your family when you set individual goals. To be most successful, families need to agree on the goals to be achieved.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU?

People have many different goals. Goals are the specific things you want to do within a certain period of time. They should be challenging, but realistic. You may also need to think about the goals of family members and others so you can fit them all together. You need to set priorities because you cannot do everything at the same time. Having clear priorities helps us do “first things first” instead of spending time on less important things, and then wishing we had done things differently.

Busy parents and people facing change in their lives often have an especially difficult time managing the actions that help them achieve their goals. If you are feeling overwhelmed by everything you feel you need to do, it is often helpful to stop and think about what is really important.

Think about your goals in terms of balancing your life — making time for family, friends, work, community, and yourself. Focus on what you think is important, coordinate this with your family’s goals, and identify actions that will help you reach your goals. These should be your highest priorities. If you are new at management, it may help to work on one goal and set of priorities at first. Ask yourself, “What really needs to be done?”

SET YOUR PRIORITIES CAREFULLY

You can set your priorities in two ways:

1. *According to urgency.* Some things must be done immediately. If you wait too long, it may be too late to do some of these tasks. Examples of urgent tasks are: calling the doctor when you or a family member are sick, or filling out your income tax forms when the calendar says April 14. Helping your children find their shoes and homework in the morning may also seem to fit in this category. Try to gradually reduce the number of urgent, crisis response actions.
2. *According to importance.* Some tasks must be done before others, while some can wait until a better time comes along. Important tasks could be such things as replacing a tire that has no tread left, taking medicine that the doctor ordered, or planning your budget and grocery list before going shopping. For long-term, important projects, try to do one part at a time.

After you have worked on goals and priorities, think about making a plan for using your time. Make a list of everything you might do. Then make a “To-Do” list, with tasks ranked in order of importance. This serves as a guide for your daily activities.

Remember that urgent matters are usually easy to see. They are right in front of us and are hard to ignore. Frequently they are pleasant, exciting, or fun to do. They are popular with others — you feel good when you have done them. But all too often, these things to do are not very important, and do not help you move toward your long-term goals. Think carefully when planning your time use. Don’t waste your time on unimportant things — even when they seem urgent.

Importance has to do with results. Some examples of important matters that are not urgent might be: relationship building, personal care and recreation, problem prevention, recognizing new opportunities, and educational activities. Take some time on a regular basis to plan ways to work on important things.

LEADER ACTIVITY: IMPORTANT — URGENT ... YOUR CHOICE

Supplies:

For each person, copy the activity below and give each a bag of at least 24 colorful candy pieces. (A small bag of hard-coated chocolate pieces works great.)

Instructions:

Have each person rank the Your Choice list.

After ranking, open the bag of candy and separate into color groups. Place four candies on the items that are urgent, and two on important, but not urgent. Some items may not be important to you, so it is all right for them to not have candy. Invite the group to discuss their urgent and important placements with another person in the group.

Some questions to ask: How do you use your time to do what is important? How do you use your time to do what is urgent? What happens if you spend all your time on urgent activities?

Your Choice

What is important to you? In what areas do you place emphasis in planning your time?

Think about what areas are important to you. Then rank the list below. Number them from 1 to 12 in the order of importance.

_____ Paying Bills on Time

_____ Enjoying Your Job

_____ Appearance

_____ Clean Home

_____ Physical Recreation

_____ Keeping Your Job

_____ Hobbies

_____ Shared Family Activities

_____ Entertainment

_____ Health

_____ Family Safety

_____ Church Activities

ACTIVITY: SETTING PRIORITIES

Take time right now to list five to 10 things that you need to do this week. Examples are: Pay the rent/house mortgage on time, spend play time with the children, plan meals and buy groceries, get to the dentist appointment on Friday, check on a bill, fix the storm door, discard leftover food in the refrigerator more than three days old, do laundry, return DVDs to the library, and take my child to a swimming lesson on Wednesday. Remember that each person's list will be different.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

As you look at your list, put a star by those tasks that absolutely cannot be ignored.

Next, ask yourself if there are any tasks that can be delegated to another family member. Put that person's name beside the task and decide when you will talk with this person about the task.

Place a second star (two stars) by those tasks that need to be started or done today.

Look at the list at the end of today and determine the accomplishments you have made. Make your list for tomorrow, indicating which tasks are a priority for that day. Repeat, making a new list each day for a week. Ask yourself: How are you doing in getting others to help? What is your success in completing tasks?

TIME: MAKE YOUR OWN PLAN

A time plan can be a general outline of things you plan to do in the near future, or it can be a highly detailed schedule. It is important to get things written down, because it is almost impossible to remember everything that needs to be included.

Deciding what task to do, and how you are going to do it, can often save time. The small amount of time needed to make your plans now can save many minutes later. When you do have extra time available, you have the peace of mind of knowing what you are going to do, and how you are going to do it.

Making out a plan means that you look at your entire day or week and set priorities — that is, you make decisions about the importance of various activities. This will help gradually reduce the number of urgent actions you must take, and work more effectively in the long run to meet your goals.

TYPES OF TIME PLANS

The simplest time plan is a list of activities to be done as time is available. This list may work if you have plenty of free time and when there are no special deadlines for getting things done.

The series of activities plan is a list of projects or tasks with a time sequence. You have to decide which item will be done first, which second, and so forth. For example, you often must shop for groceries before you can cook.

A detailed time schedule plan includes both a sequence of activities and estimates of the amount of time needed to do them. This type of plan is helpful for people who have little experience in managing their time or who have very little free time.

PLAN WITH GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN MIND

As you make out your plan, decide what you really need to do. Then decide how you will do it. Your activities should help you accomplish your goals. Ask yourself: “Why am I doing this?” “When should I do it?” “How will I do it?” “Who will help me?”

The ABC System

Usually you end up with a list that can be broken down into things that “must be done today,” “should be done today,” or “should be done sometime — but there is no hurry.” You may even have a category of things that should not be done at all.

After making a list of possible tasks for the day, give an A to the most important ones, a B to those of medium importance, and a C to those that are not important. This list becomes your daily “To-Do” list. To put the plan into action, start to work on an A priority task. There is often a temptation to finish up all the C’s and get them out of the way first, but often this means you never get around to the A tasks.

EXAMPLE:

“TO-DO” LIST:

- Grocery shopping – A
- PTO Meeting 7:00 p.m. – A
- Send thank-you notes – B
- Plan Brian’s birthday party – B
- Laundry – A
- Call Linda – C

FROM PLANNING TO ACTION

Decide when and how to begin — tomorrow morning at 7 a.m., for example. Remember that your daily “To-Do” list can also include rest and fun, as well as essential chores.

LEADER ACTIVITY: THE TIME LINE

Supplies:

Assemble several sets of pictures or words that can be used as ways to visualize the time sequence needed to accomplish something. You will need as many pictures as group members; if a large group, they can work in pairs. Example: Sequence what goes into having an enjoyable meal. Use pictures of a family eating, someone preparing the food, a shopping cart, etc. Use words such as creating the shopping list, doing dishes, setting the table, washing hands, conversation, laughter, etc. *Copy Getting It Done* for the group.

Instructions:

- We are going to line up in order of what needs to be done in sequence (first to last).
- Pass out one picture or word to each person.
- Give a location in the room as the beginning spot and the ending spot.

Ask the group to move where they see the picture or word fitting to accomplish the task. When all have selected a place, have the group check to see if the group agrees, make suggested shifts. Continue discussion around how to plan next steps to act on important items in a work plan.

Getting It Done

Results I want to accomplish today:

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 4. |
| 2. | 5. |
| 3. | 6. |

Now put a number beside each item to give you a suggested time line (first to last) for completion.

Is there something on the list that does not need to be accomplished? Cross it out.

Can you think of a big task that can be broken down into smaller parts? Make a time line for completion.

ACTIVITY: BE YOUR OWN TIME KEEPER

As you begin to make time plans, you need to first know the things you need or would like to do.

Make a list of at least three things you need or would like to do.

MY TO-DO LIST:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Keeping your goals and priorities in mind.

Make a CHECK ✓ on those that must be done. This is your ACTION. Put a time to start and finish beside the task. Can others help you complete this task? Cross it off when it is done.

Place a Happy Face Circle ☺ by those that should be done. Consider how much time will it take to do. Put a time on when it needs to be done. Would others be willing to help with the task, or do part of it by a certain time? What would happen if it does not get done?

Place a Sad Face Circle ☹ by those that should be done sometime, but there is no hurry. When is the time it must be done? Put the date that it must be done beside the task. If it does not get done, what will happen?

Is it something that can be crossed off and not be done?

Now you have a plan to arrange your time so the things that must be done today, will be done today.

How does your plan support your goals and priorities?

TIME: THE STRESS CONNECTION

Stress is defined as the wear and tear on our bodies caused by living. It involves physical, mental, and chemical adjustments that our bodies make to the changes in our lives. Some stress adds motivation and challenge to our lives.

When the demands of your life exceed your resources, you can experience the damaging effects of bad stress or distress. You can help control stress through effective time management. It is helpful to identify periods when you feel “stressed out” or overwhelmed, then plan some strategies to manage these situations.

MAKING THE TRANSITION

Commuting Time	—	Think about the next activity (home or work) or take this time to relax.
Help Each Other	—	Share household responsibilities with your family.
Change Clothes	—	Changing clothes after work helps change your focus.
Set Clocks Ahead	—	It helps you stay ahead of the game.
Plan Slack Time	—	Try to keep some flexible time in your schedule.
Be Assertive	—	Say you would be happy to do the task in the morning.

The stages of stress include alarm, resistance, and exhaustion. The alarm stage occurs when you begin to feel upset or nervous about something that is happening. During the resistance stage, your body tries to restore balance and repairs any damage from the stress reaction. If the stress continues, you may feel exhausted, unable to cope, and lose interest in your activities. Some symptoms of too much stress include rapid heartbeat, stomach upset, irritability, forgetfulness, making mistakes, and feeling ill.

CAUSES OF TIME/STRESS PROBLEMS

Too much stress can be the result of your own expectations, thinking that you can “do it all” without help. It might be the result of external demands of work, family, friends, or others who expect you to do more than you possibly can. Most often, stress comes from a combination of these factors. Maintaining a positive attitude helps reduce stress. You need not feel guilty when you say “No” to something that does not fit with your plans.

You can reduce stress by setting realistic goals and priorities. Reviewing your decisions on goals and priorities helps you stay on track. Planning helps you do the best you can with the time and resources you have.

STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

Some of the situations that result in stress for busy people include:

- Getting ready for home, work, or school/day care in the morning and returning home in the afternoon or evening.
- Unexpected or emergency situations, such as changes in job schedules, illnesses, or car problems.
- The feeling of being caught in a time crunch, of being overwhelmed, and constantly behind and unable to meet the needs of children, spouse, teacher, or employer.

TRY THESE IDEAS

You can develop some techniques to better manage your time and to reduce the demands that cause stress. Sometimes you can change your attitude toward those demands. Don't "sweat the small stuff." Try some ways to reduce these problems, for example:

- List emergency phone numbers and other important numbers that are often used in one central place, usually near the telephone and in your cellphone contacts list.
- Determine how you will handle the situation if your child gets sick, you need to go to work, and your regular child-care provider does not take sick children.
- Do some "emergency" meal planning. Keep your kitchen stocked with enough foods to prepare a meal if you are short of time, or have not been able to go to the grocery store.
- If mornings are hectic, do as much as you can the night before. Have children lay out their clothes, book bags, and homework. Set out some of the breakfast items. Be sure you know where your keys are.
- Make a special toy or activity kit for your children to use when you need uninterrupted time.

In general, organize your living and work environment. Develop systems to keep things running smoothly. It also helps to maintain a positive attitude and sense of humor.

LEADER ACTIVITY: GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES

Supplies:

Recorded music (not vocal), something relaxing. Masking tape or sticky notes and markers. The *Managing Your Time (How Do You Rate?)* activity sheet can be copied and given to the group for individual assessment.

Instructions:

Invite the group to form a circle. Give each person a piece of masking tape or sticky note with their initial on it. Have them place it on the floor in front of where they are standing now. Instruct the group that those individuals who agree with a statement (YES) move left (clockwise) TWO steps. Those who disagree with a statement (NO) move right (counter-clockwise) ONE step.

Read the statements on the *Managing Your Time (How Do You Rate?)* activity sheet to the group. Have the group look where they are standing at the end, in relation to where they started. In groups of two or three people discuss:

- Where are you in relation to where you started?
- How might this activity help you change how you look at using your time?
- Are there any “aha’s” to share with the total group?

LEADER ACTIVITY: MANAGING YOUR TIME (HOW DO YOU RATE?)

DO YOU: PLACE A CHECK OR X IN BOX THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOU.	YES	NO
1. Start the day by thinking through what has to be done?		
2. Do the important tasks during your “best time?”		
3. Know exactly what you want to get done?		
4. Never leave jobs before they are complete?		
5. Delegate the work around the home rather doing it all yourself?		
6. Frequently have control of your own time?		
7. Anticipate crises and have a plan?		
8. Make one trip by grouping errands rather than making several trips?		
9. Set reasonable deadlines for yourself?		
10. Seldom become distracted while working in the house by TV, social media, friends, etc.?		
11. Make sure the important tasks get done first?		
12. Say no, when immediate request does not fit your use of time goals?		
13. Know you will finish projects you start?		
14. Often take your time when making important decisions?		
15. Feel able to handle many jobs at a time?		

ACTIVITY: A CONTINGENCY PLAN

A person doesn't need to spend a lot of time and energy worrying about things that may never happen. But the reality is that little things can happen each day to throw you off of your routine.

What would happen if:

- Your child care provider can't keep your children this week?
- Your child gets sick in the night?
- Your car doesn't start?
- You spill coffee on your jacket right before leaving home?
- You have not been feeling well for several days?
- The electricity goes off and your cell phone needs to be charged?

Now choose a situation and ask yourself: What if ...? Think of alternatives if it were to occur. Discuss in a small group or with family or friends different alternatives for each of your "what if ..." situations. You may get new ideas for helping your family deal with an unexpected event.

List below some "What if" situations that just happen. Now consider what you can do to avoid feeling the situation is an emergency, and allow you to approach your day with a positive attitude.

My "What if ..."

Ideas for "I can ..."

What are some of your family's "What if" and "We can" ideas for positive action?

TIME: WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

There are many different strategies to make more effective use of your time. Think about which one of these might work well for you.

Remember that the purpose of improving your time management skills is to make time for the most important things in your life. Look for balance among responsibilities at home and work, and fun time for yourself and others. Learning to use your time more effectively should result in more satisfaction with your life, not just a longer list of tasks finished.

There are many ways to make the most of your time. You can improve your productivity, prevent problems, reduce procrastination, protect your time, share the work, simplify jobs, and get your family involved.

Be Productive	—	Determine your “prime time” of the day.
Prevent Problems	—	Communicate and be prepared.
Protect Your Time	—	Say “no” and delegate.
Avoid Procrastination	—	Do unpleasant tasks first.
Simplify When Possible	—	Find ways to make things easier and quicker.
Reduce Clutter	—	Organize storage areas, desks and drawers.
Find Time For	—	Yourself, family and others.

BE PRODUCTIVE

Recognize the time of day when you are most productive. Are you an early bird or a night owl? Your “prime time” is the time of day when you have the most energy. Whenever you can, take advantage of your prime time to do the important and difficult tasks. You will not only do a better job, but time will pass much faster and you will accomplish your goals more easily.

Do more than one thing at a time. This is often called dovetailing your tasks. For example, you can fold laundry or sort out “junk mail” or other clutter while watching TV. There are some things you probably can do without thinking about how to do them (dishwashing, ironing, making beds). This is a good time to plan other activities.

Use bits and pieces of time. Fill waiting time by doing other things. Many tasks can be finished in only a few minutes and can be fit in with others. For example, you can water your plants while dinner is cooking. Keep pen, paper, and something to read with you. You can work on other activities or relax by reading while you wait.

Do not spend time moving things around to reach tools and utensils you use regularly. Arrange storage areas and work centers so items that are used often are at your fingertips.

Try to eliminate times when work seems to pile up. What time of day do peak load periods happen for you? Maybe you can shift some of the work to earlier or later periods to free up time for other things.

Figure out which time management tools will work for you. Think about a big calendar to hang on the wall, a small calendar to carry with you, a planner/organizer book, or an electronic calendar. Notepads, envelopes, and file folders are practical for many people.

PREVENT PROBLEMS

Improve communication with family members and other important people. Misunderstandings and jumping to conclusions are often a result of not taking time to listen. If you are giving instructions, make sure the other person understands what to do. Writing down times and dates reduces confusion.

Be sure to fill prescriptions, return phone calls, and pay your bills on time. Remember the proverb a “stitch in time saves nine.” Take care of problems when they first start so they don’t become worse.

Repair or eliminate any household hazards, such as loose carpets, cracked electric cords, or breakable containers.

Keep medicines or cleaning products that may attract children out of their reach.

Keep a flashlight handy in case of power failures. Keep your cellphone charged. Many crises occur from failure to act until a matter becomes urgent. This means more time is required to do a job or correct difficulties.

PROTECT YOUR TIME

Learn to say “no.” Part of your time challenge may be that you are involved in too many activities. When you become too involved and “spread yourself too thin,” you do not have time to enjoy yourself. You also do not have time to do the things you really need to do in a high quality way.

Delegate as many tasks as you can. Get someone else to do a job or help you with it. Children often enjoy sharing household chores if it means time with you.

Expect interruptions and devise methods of dealing with them and returning to your high priority work. Sometimes a short phone call or visit provides a helpful break, but often it is just a distraction. You might let people who text, call, or visit regularly know when you have time to chat and would most enjoy talking with them. Children usually need your attention “right now,” but you can often spend a few minutes giving them your full attention and then return to your chores.

Do not feel that you have to listen to telemarketers or other automated phone calls. Simply say “I’m not interested” and hang up.

AVOID PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination — putting off what must be done — is a big time waster. Are you lingering over coffee or sodas, socializing between tasks, doing one thing when you should be doing another?

If you have an unpleasant task, do it first and get it out of the way. Give yourself a reward for accomplishing it.

If it is a big, difficult project, divide it into separate, smaller tasks and do them one at a time. For example, clean cupboards and rearrange storage a shelf at a time.

SIMPLIFY WHEN POSSIBLE

Remember that there is often a better way to do things. Look for ways to improve every task you undertake. Look at ways to make tasks quicker, easier, simpler and less tiring.

Develop a series of meals you can prepare in a short time. Keep staple food items on hand.

Organize a home business center so bills and important papers are easy to locate.

REDUCE CLUTTER

The idea of clutter varies with different people. To some people, clutter may be unwanted objects lying out of place around the home. Clutter could also mean various decorative items found in the home. You may regard these items as dust catchers, or they may serve a real purpose by helping you maintain a cheerful attitude.

REMEMBER THE BASICS

Effective time management can help you find:

Time for Yourself

An important part of time management is to allow time for yourself. You need special times to be alone or time to do something just for yourself. There should be at least a few minutes every day when you do not have to answer to anyone, but can do exactly what you want to do. Give yourself a special treat once in a while — go somewhere or do something special. These small things can serve as rewards from past experiences and encouragement for the future.

Time for Your Family

Who are the most important people around you? Members of your family demand a lot of your time. They depend on you for many things. But, you also depend on them. That is why time with your family is so important. Although it may seem that you have an endless amount of things to do, there are certain times when you need to let outside or household work go and consider your family's feelings. You are an important part of your family. While it can be a challenge, you can balance their need for you with your need for time by yourself. Sometimes, when you give more time to your family, you find that the other tasks seem less important than you thought.

Time for Others

Many others — friends, neighbors, people you work with on volunteer projects, church, school or other organizations, or other community interests, as well as on the job — also need some of your time. This shared time is of benefit to you also. But when time is limited, you need to set priorities in this category also.

Many of the methods suggested here can also be helpful in your paid job. Be creative about looking for ways to be more productive in whatever you do.

LEADER ACTIVITY: THE TIME WASTE SHUFFLE

Supplies:

Copy each of the Major Time Wasters on index cards. Make a set of cards for each person in the group.

Make a second set of cards with Helpful Hints For Time, statements for getting unstuck. (A simple way to do this is to print in color on large labels and stick to index cards).

IDENTIFY YOUR MAJOR TIME WASTERS

Instructions:

Hand out a set of cards to each person. Ask them to arrange the cards from their major time waster to least waster of time. There may be some that don't apply to them, these are discards. Have the group hold up their major time waster card. Find someone who selected the same card. Discuss what you can do the next time you find this time waster in your life.

Go through at least three different matches. Encourage them to write on their cards the suggested ways to avoid their major time wasters.

Now give each individual a second set of cards with the Helpful Hints For Time. Pair helpful hints to wasters. Select a helpful hint and put it up somewhere you will see it as a reminder, select a different one weekly.

(Major Time Wasters)

- Attempt too much at once
- Drop-in visitors
- Cannot say “no”
- Leave tasks unfinished
- Do not know whose job it is
- Too many errands
- Family and friends take up your time
- Telephone, text, or social media interruptions
- Personal clutter
- Socializing
- Screen time

LEADER ACTIVITY: HELPFUL HINTS FOR TIME

<p>Investing time in yourself is like recharging your phone! There will be something there the next time you need it.</p>	<p>Time is life. You waste your time, you waste your life.</p>
<p>“NO.” A word that needs a more prominent place in our vocabulary.</p>	<p>Nothing controls your time unless you give it the OK. Time management is self management.</p>
<p>If you are here today and take no action tomorrow, you will be exactly where you were yesterday.</p>	<p>Everyone has the same amount of time, but we choose to spend it differently.</p>
<p>It is important to make time in your life for your family, hobbies, and civic concerns, just as it is important to work at work.</p>	<p>Dovetailing is a way to get more out of your time by doing more than one thing at a time.</p>
<p>“If we take care of the minutes, the years will take care of themselves.” Benjamin Franklin</p>	<p>Time is not an enemy but an opportunity. Used wisely it feeds success, used poorly, failure.</p>

ACTIVITY: HOW TO BREAK DOWN A TASK

Do you find yourself putting off doing tasks that are difficult, time consuming, or that you do not like to do? That is human nature. We often are overwhelmed when a job seems too large or is one we don't like doing. Waiting until the last moment to complete a task may actually increase your stress level. Think about one of the tasks on your list that you do not like to do or that is difficult to complete.

Can someone else help you with the task or do it for you?

If you assume responsibility for the task, how can the task be broken into parts?

Can parts of the task be done ahead of time?

What other ways can you break it into smaller tasks that would work well for you and your family?

- Name the “BIG” task . . . putting a name to the task is the beginning step.
- Now what are some parts that make up the “BIG” task that can be done in little ways?
- Could some of the smaller tasks be done as you fill bits and pieces of time while waiting?

ACTIVITY: REWARD YOURSELF

Celebrate when a major task is completed or a major challenge is met. One of the problems with a hectic life is that you can be so busy that you fail to notice the completion of a major piece of work. You just move on to the next job without celebrating your previous success. This failure leads to focusing on what is still left undone instead of enjoying what has already been accomplished.

Set up a reward system for yourself that serves as both a motivator to get certain difficult tasks done and an acknowledgment that you are making effective use of your time — be it a bubble bath, two chapters in your new book, or a phone call to a friend. Acknowledge your accomplishments by rewarding yourself, keeping in mind that the most enjoyable rewards don't always cost the most.

- What do you like as a reward? (list)

- Share what rewards you like with others. (list people)

- Learn how others like to be rewarded. (list)

ACTIVITY: PRIME TIME — ENERGY TIME

Learn to work with your inner clock. Most people have a prime time of day when their energy is at its highest and concentration is best. You may have heard someone say “I’m not a morning person.” The key is to determine which time of day is your energy time so that you can plan your work. For most people, their prime time is approximately 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. or 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. But you may be someone whose prime time is 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. or 2 a.m. to 4 a.m. — the person who really loves night work.

Choosing a job that lets you honor your prime time will help in your productivity and satisfaction. It may even lead you to understand why you never want to go to sleep at night or have trouble concentrating on a big task.

To determine your prime time, use the chart below to find when your natural energy is highest. Place an X in the appropriate box for each two-hour block of time. This will help you see your high, medium, or low level of energy during your day.

ENERGY LEVEL	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
5 – 7 a.m.			
7 – 9 a.m.			
9 – 11 a.m.			
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.			
1 – 3 p.m.			
3 – 5 p.m.			
5 – 7 p.m.			
7 – 9 p.m.			
9 – 11 p.m.			
12 a.m. – 1 a.m.			
1 – 3 a.m.			
3 – 5 a.m.			

Once you have determined your prime time of day:

- **Respect it.** Plan your most important and difficult activities during this time.
- **Protect it.** Block off the time on your calendar and minimize interruptions or distractions.
- **Honor it.** You will not only do a better job, but time will pass much faster and you will accomplish your goals more easily. Keep your goals in mind as you spend your prime time for yourself, your family, work and others.

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