

# Don't Waste Your Time - Use it Wisely

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Do you waste time? Are you lazy and indolent or are you continuously on the go, using every minute to the maximum?

If you are in the first category, there are a lot of very obvious things you can do to improve, but in this article I want to concentrate on those of us who are already using our time constructively and examine how you can squeeze even more from your day.

You may think that your life is so full that this is impossible, but I recently ran an inventory of how I used my time and realised that there was still some room for improvement. Here's what I discovered.

Timespace #1 – For years I avoided doing any kind of exercise. It was pretty easy for me, I had been skinny all my life and even though I wasn't too fit, I was still the right weight. As I got older, though I realised that I had to take my body a bit more seriously.

Since then I have become a moderate, regular exerciser; I now go running for half an hour every second day and visit the gym three times a week. No problem there; I get satisfaction from using my time well and I appreciate the results.

However, I calculated that I am spending about five hours per week doing great things for my body, but nothing for my mind. So now when I'm pounding the streets or straining at the weights, I use the opportunity to listen to self development programs on my I-Pod, to concentrate on goal visualization, to practice affirmations or just focus on being grateful for all the good things in my life. And there's a bonus too; because the blood is racing through my veins, my brain is more alert and better prepared to learn and grow.

Timespace #2 – I drive a lot. My business requires a good deal of travel and most of it is done in the car. I used to listen to music on the radio or go into an almost trance-like 'auto pilot' mode, usually to escape the tedium of long distance driving.

Now, though, I put a self development CD in the player, or a language course, or again, I use the time to practice visualizations and affirmations. The privacy of your little tin box allows you to shout, sing, laugh or mumble. Who cares? You are on your own. It's your space.

Timespace #3 – Finally, this one is not so much about finding extra time as making better use of the time I thought I was using wisely. My personal time audit showed me that I was wasting a whole hour, sometimes more, at the beginning of the day catching up on the overnight e-mail load and then planning what I was going to do for the rest of the day.

I prided myself on being an efficient time warrior, but I now realise, that I was missing one of the biggest mistakes of all.

So how did I fix that? Simple. I changed two things. Firstly, I now do my planning, the night before, by taking ten minutes, near to the end of the evening and writing down everything I want to achieve the next day. The bonus here is that overnight, my mind works on the issues even while I sleep, so by the time I get started next day, I am far better prepared.

Secondly, I leave my e-mail inbox until lunchtime. I spend the morning getting through the goals I assigned the night before and then just before I take a break for lunch, I race through my inbox. That way, I find I already feel good about what I've done so far in the day, my mind is much more focused and I don't get distracted.

So no matter how efficient you think you are, take a look again at your day and I'll bet you can find some extra layers of time, you never knew you had. Good hunting.

The future belongs to organisations that can cultivate the right environment and build the right culture.