

Time - To Catch It, Ya Gotta Track It



"The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot."

Michael Altshuler

(American Motivational Speaker)

Although most of us feel we can barely catch our breath during our frantic daily grinds and we don't have enough time to get done what needs to be done, various studies show that we actually have more leisure time, are less rushed, less stressed and sleep much more than we think we do. On top of this we seem to waste quite a bit of time and don't even know it!



These same studies all stress that our perception of time is quite a bit different than the reality of our time. In essence we don't **feel** we have enough time, mainly because of all the marketing and advertising that is done that says we don't have enough time.

In fact the Centre for Time Use Research (<http://www.timeuse.org/>) has been conducting multinational Time Use Surveys since the mid-1970's. The American Heritage Time Use Study (ATHUS) (<http://www.timeuse.org/athus>) portion of this project is directed by sociologist John Robinson, or better known as "Father Time" to his colleagues at the University of Maryland. Robinson, has been studying how people spend their time for more than 50 years. In 1972, he became one of the first social scientists to collect detailed time diaries of people all over the country.

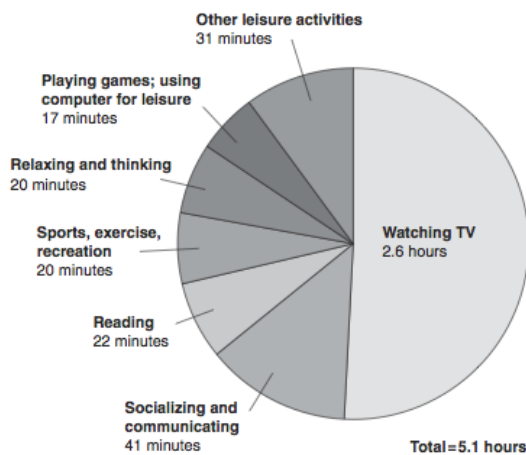


In the September/October 2005 issue of *The Futurist* examined Americans' use of time. According to the article, the common perception that there just isn't enough time isn't supported by the stats from a national study using time-diaries. Basically, the findings show that **Americans average 35 hours per week of work time and 35 hours per week of free time**. This is much more time than what most Americans perceive.

"One reasons for this is that there are many businesses who make money if you don't feel like you have enough time. Everything from self-help books to prepared foods to services depend on people who feel like they are too busy.

So where does all the free time go? According to the article, over half of it is spent watching television. (However, the article notes that time spent watching television isn't any higher than it was in 1990.)" Robinson also reported that those who watch more television also reported feeling less happy compared to those who spend their free time reading and socializing.

About Half of Leisure Time is Spent Watching TV.



Professor Robinson revealed in the Project's 2013 report that most Americans' have around 40 hours of free time per week and that modern Americans only merely *feel like* we are working more hours.

We also tend to exaggerate about our work hours since the actual hours on the job have been *decreasing steadily for the past 40 years*. In the article "*The Overestimated Workweek Revisited*"

(<http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2011/06/art3full.pdf>), Robinson and his coauthors, writes that **people tend to**

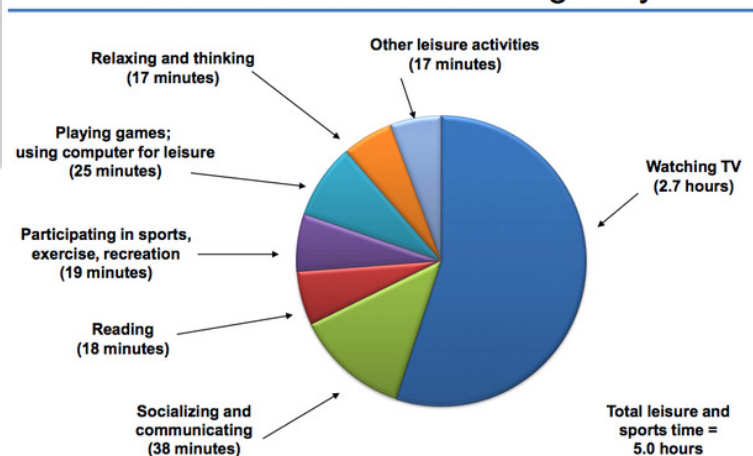
overestimate their work hours by 5% to 10%. This gap was actually much smaller in 1965 when the first national diary was collected at 1.3 hours compared to 2.4 hours between 2003 and 2007. At its highest, the gap was at 6.2 hours in 1985. The article says:

"It is argued here that the movement of the labor force into more service occupations and other occupations in which work schedules are becoming more irregular (with no time clock to punch as a vivid reminder), workers have fewer benchmarks to use in estimating the number of hours in their workweek."

According to the Bureau of Labour Statistics' (<http://www.bls.gov/tus/>) 2011 time use survey;

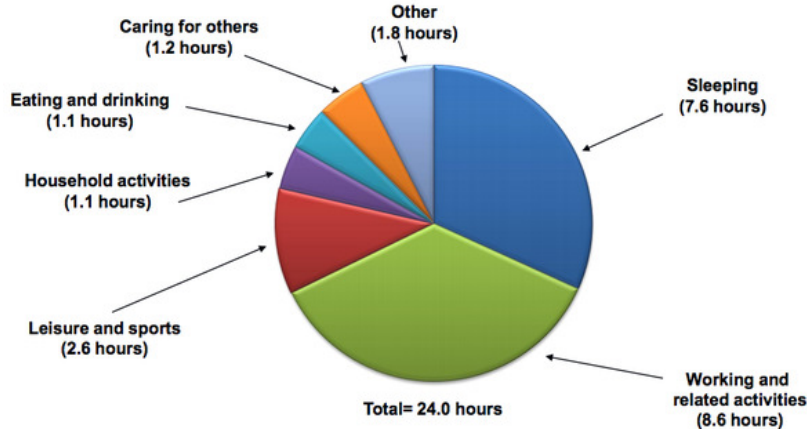
- Sleeping accounts for more than 1/3 of the average American's day and women get 11 more minutes a night than men do.
- Women spend 29 more minutes cooking and clearing up.
- Men spend an extra four minutes a day eating and drinking, an extra 10 minutes exercising and eight more minutes mowing the lawn.
- On an average day 83% of women and 65% of men spend some time doing household activities.
- On the days that people work, employed men toil 47 minutes more than employed women.
- Television accounts for the largest share of Americans' leisure time. People over 25 years old who have not obtained a high school diploma spend two thirds more time watching the box than those who hold a bachelor's degree. They also spend four times as much time thinking and relaxing. People over the age of 75 watch twice as much television as teenagers. More than half our leisure time is dedicated to watching television. It would take nine average days of reading to add up to one typical day watching television.

Leisure time on an average day



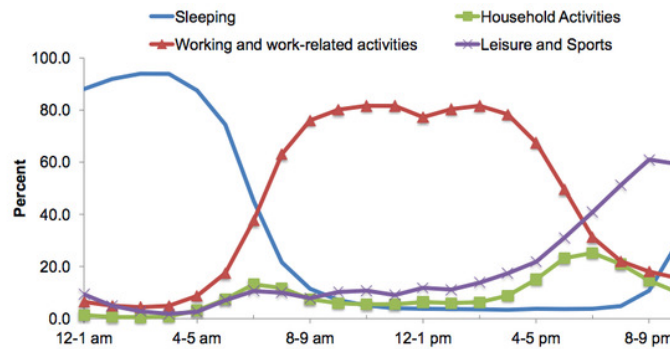
- Those academic achievements prefer to play on their computers.
- On any given day, women are 30 percent more likely to do chores than men.
- The typical college student spends about an hour sleeping for every 25 minutes he spends studying.
- Americans spend about eight-times as many hours working as we do eating and drinking.

Time use on an average work day for employed persons ages 25 to 54 with children



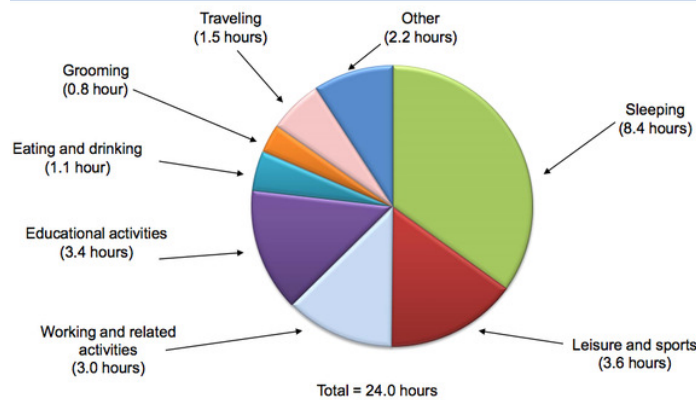
- 9PM is the only hour at which there are approximately equal shares of employed people working, sleeping, and doing household activities (such as caring for kids or cooking).

Percent of employed persons who did selected activities on workdays by hour of the day



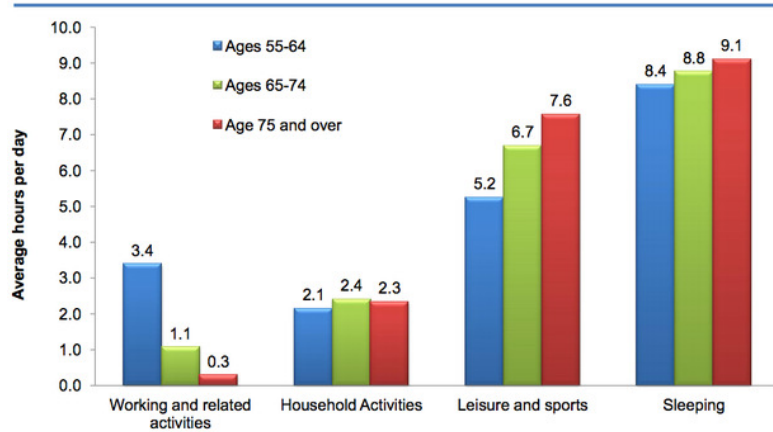
- Compared to the average American over 15, college students spend 40% more time engaged in leisure/sports and 10% more time sleeping.

Time use on an average weekday for full-time university and college students



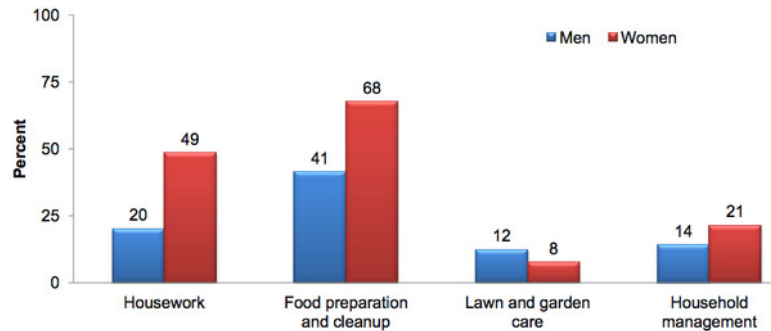
- The typical 75+-year-old American spends nearly 17 hours sleeping or engaged in leisure/sports -- which is 22 percent more than 55-64-year-olds reported in those categories.

Hours per day that individuals age 55 and over spent doing selected activities

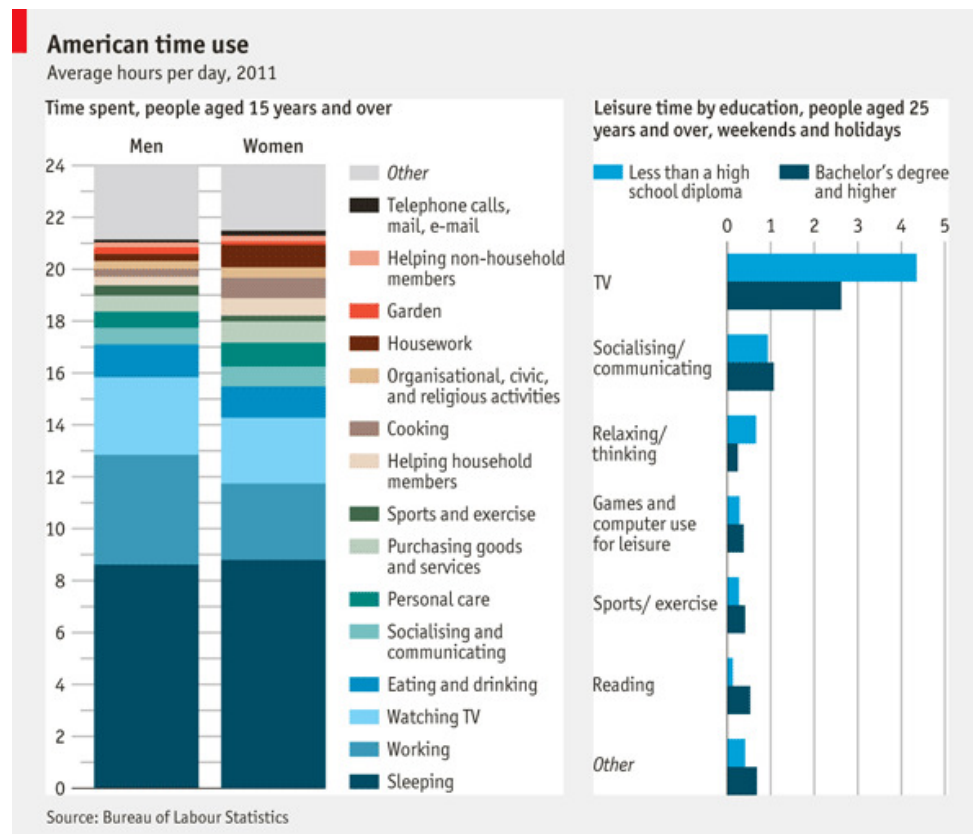


- Lawn (and garden) care is the only household activity category where a greater share of men report spending their time on an average day.

Percent of population who did household activities on an average day



- The oldest Americans spend 9X as much time reading than the youngest Americans surveyed by BLS.



In the 2013 AHTUS Time Use Report, the findings showed the **average American sleeps 8.75 hours per day** and **works an average of 7.55 hours per day**. The hours of sleep we get every night has been steadily going up in the past few years, yet the average person is still claiming to be exhausted. The findings also showed that employed people tend to sleep less because they have obligations they can't ignore. However, according to Robinson in an interview with DBK (http://www.diamondbackonline.com/article_45e67403-7249-51d6-a5af-949afa3a90e3.html), when it comes to asking people how much they sleep on a given night, they'll most likely estimate less since "it says you're busy" and "if you're busy, you're important".

In AHTUS surveys conducted between 2009 and 2010, the number of employed and unemployed respondents who said they felt "always rushed" declined by 6 to 9 points compared to surveys in 2004. However, **women are more likely than men to feel rushed**.

"They have more things going on," says Robinson. "They are more concerned about a relative or other things that they may be thinking about, but may not show up in a time diary."

The same 2009–2010 surveys showed that **women typically don't have as much leisure time as men do**, and on the plus side, they have more leisure time now than they did in the 1960s. In fact, Robinson says the surveys show that women have at least 30 hours of free time every week.

Robinson's studies also found that both men and women dislike doing housework about the same, but women still do more of it on any given day. Fortunately, split chores have become more of a reality in recent years.

Before 1965, women were doing about 85% of the housework. After 1965, there was a shift and gradually, women started doing less housework and now we're closer to 60%.

"There's greater equality in doing housework and childbearing now, but it probably won't be 50% for awhile."

According to "What People Do When Not At Work" (<http://247wallst.com/special-report/2013/07/01/what-americans-do-when-not-at-work/>) and the 2012 ATUS study, on an average day, women will spend more than 2 hours and 10 minutes doing housework while men spend 1 hour and 17 minutes.

Despite the 2009-2010 time surveys concluding that in general, Americans are less rushed, the same surveys also reported *a decline in respondents feeling "very happy."* Basically, women tend to feel more rushed than men, but Americans, in general, are feeling less rushed today compared to 2004, even though we still aren't any happier.

On the up side, the studies show that new technology hasn't played a major role in affecting our free time and social media may, in fact, lead to more visits with friends.

Let's face it no one really has more time; ***one day is 24 hours for all of us, we just spend that 24 hours in different ways.***

Bill Gates, Donald Trump, Robert Kiyosaki, MLK, Gandhi, JFK and Warren Buffet all have just 24 hours a day, not a second more and look what they accomplished. I can hear the collective: "*BUT... they have other people helping them with a lot of their work.*" That is true **NOW**, **not** when they first started. Let's face it - everyone has to start somewhere.

"Ordinary people think merely of spending time.

Great people think of using it."

Anonymous

Ok all those stats are rather confusing, so let's simplify it, really, really simplify it:



24 Hours There are 24 hours in a day, we all need some sleep so let's take away 8 hours for that.

16 Hours That leaves us with 16 hours. Most American's work, so let's take away 10 hours for that (8 hours of work, 1 hour round trip travel to and from, 1 hour for lunch).

6 Hours That leaves us with 6 hours, five days a week.

Now, we haven't accounted for all those daily "chores"; cooking, cleaning, laundry, housework and yardwork, etc., so to keep this simple let's apply our 10 hours of workweek schedule to the two weekend days for this stuff. (I know this isn't realistic, but I said this is a really simplified formula.)

6 Hours This means that on average we have 6 hours every day to do all the family and fun stuff – to devote to leisure.

This extremely simplistic formula means that we have 42 hours of free time every 7 days, which is right in the ballpark with the 35-40 hours per week all those experts get from their research data.



This very simplistic formula aids us in seeing how our perception of our time, free or otherwise, is very different from the reality of how we use our time.

All the experts agreed that when we feel like our time is being spent on very valuable things, we feel fulfilment, even though we may still "run out of time" before we complete everything we feel we need to do.



"Time sneaks up on you like a windshield on a bug."

John Lithgow

(John Arthur Lithgow, born 1945, American actor, musician, poet and author.)



The trick to having enough time is making sure that it is spent on things that you feel are important. This means setting priorities and deciding what is actually valuable to you *ahead of time*.

Although you *won't* actually end up with *more time*, by spending your busy and free time on things that you feel are truly valuable you can increase your satisfaction with how your time is spent.



"The greatest amount of wasted time is the time not getting started."

Dawson Trotman

(1906–1956, evangelist, crusader and founder of The Navigators.)

We all know there are all kinds of time management experts out there from college, to business to household experts. **All of these "pros" stress the following points:**

Know how you are currently spending your time on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. We all waste time from seconds to hours, but we can't trim this time off our schedules unless we actually know we are wasting it. This means we need to do our own little "Time Usage Survey" to **Track Our Time Usage**, at least for a week, although a month (4-5 weeks) will give us a better picture. This helps us figure out how we're spending your time and if we're doing what we want or need to do be doing.

Track your time for a week using various categories, such as sleep, work, food, household tasks, family time and exercise. See the forms @ end of this article.

- **Track your time.** Don't think you waste your time? Track it for a week. If you really want to get depressed, have a friend with a child track his/her time and compare the results. This helps you figure out how you're spending your time and if you're doing what you want to do be doing. Track your time for a week using various categories, such as sleep, work, food, household tasks, family time and exercise.

- **Make a 'To Do' List/Schedule.** The simple act of writing things down on paper has the psychological benefit of making them seem less immense and more accomplishable.
- **Plan and Set Deadlines.** Set targets to complete a small number of tasks each month. One of the biggest blockers of progress is being overwhelmed by trying to complete too many tasks at once. Multi-tasking is just a modern day euphemism for being disorganised. Better to concentrate on one task at a time and get it done properly, starting with the highest priority item and working down your list in that order.
- **Prioritize your daily actions, errands and tasks on a 'To Do' list.** If you don't put your priorities first, it won't matter how fast you work or do things, you may never get to what is important. If you think something is going to take two weeks, start on it a week before it's due. Force yourself to work more efficient by eliminating dead time.
- **Know Your Obligations.** It is common to over commit your time if you are not aware of all your obligations. You need to make a commitment list. List out and budget all of your commitments from work, life, and community. Only then can you know your remaining time balance.
- **Break larger actions/tasks into smaller ones.** It is easy to be over-awed by the size of some tasks and often in our minds molehills can quickly turn themselves into mountains. The bigger the task becomes, the less likely we are to start it.
- **Don't Try to Do Everything Yourself. Ignore, minimize or outsource everything else.** At a certain point, the only way to get more done is to have someone help. The biggest show stoppers here are some people have trouble letting others help because they feel that no one can do it as well as they can or we flat out don't think of it. What activities would you rather expel from your schedule? I bet housework, laundry and grocery shopping are on that list. We rarely think to outsource laundry or housework. We think it's too pricey or we look down on ourselves for not being able to keep up with our chores. Yet, we think nothing of outsourcing our childcare. For many people, outsourcing house stuff means more time with kids and more time spent doing things they love.
- **Spend your spare minutes doing joyful activities - Have this time set aside on your 'To Do' list.** Make a list of meaningful activities that take 30 minutes or less. Fill your day with more 'nice' things to do. Schedule an hour for a soak in the tub or at the gym. Plan that 30 minute break to read another chapter in your favorite book. Behaviorists say that the more you do the more productive you will be, but what's less obvious is the more you do the more efficient you will be. When you have a hundred things happening at once you can get in the zone and get more done more quickly.
- **Say NO.** One of the biggest mistakes people make is to take on burdens that do not belong to them. When you don't say no, you find yourself doing other people's work. This happens both in the workplace and in day-to-day life. Ever find yourself doing something you didn't want to do and felt "suckered" into; or doing someone else's job - Simply because you couldn't say NO?

- **Reduce your 'Life Frictions'.** Life Friction is self-inflicted time management. In other words, you create your own crises by your own actions and disorganization. Life friction means extra re-work, increased stress, and wasted time. Ever get back from running errands and realize you have to go back out because you forgot something?
- **Reduce Lolly-gagging and wasted time.** You don't need to spend every second of the day under a stopwatch, but be aware of when you waste time whether it is gossiping, surfing the Internet, or recapping the weekend for the third time. Know anyone who takes two hours after getting up to be ready to meet the day or who arrives late to work and then spends the next hour and 15 minutes getting ready to start working?
- **Finish What You Start.** When you don't finish tasks, you are only creating more work for yourself. Tasks undone actually create more work for you. They take more time to pick back up when you return to them. They create unnecessary complications when you leave them to the last minute.
- **Just Do It.** If you feel that your personal time/task management process is growing into an uncontrollable monster or that you are spending too long trying to do the item perfectly, just remember the concept of Just Do it – JDI. The concept is simple and straightforward – stop procrastinating and just get the job done.
- **Revisit your schedule regularly.** Check in with yourself weekly to see if your schedule reflects what you want it to. Now understand that it's not easy making changes and of course tons of interruptions will pop up from time to time. However, if you stick with it and try your best to avoid interruptions and distractions, it'll get easier.

"A year from now you will wish you had started today."

Karen Lamb

(American author)



The logs at the end of this article are to assist you into determining just where you can “catch time”.

Tracking Activities-Actions-Tasks: For one week track all your start and stop times for each activity and or task you do each day from sun up to sun down.

Tracking Movements: The next week track your “movements”. Every time you leave a room in your house or leave home - list from where to where, when and why, in your log.

At the end of these two weeks go back and look at your log. Make a note of the routine tasks, like sleeping, getting up and getting dressed, going to the grocery store, making meals, etc. Make a note of how many times you are traveling from one side of the house to the other or zigzagging all over town when you are running errands.

- Do you set an alarm clock to wake you up?
- Do you set out what you are going to wear the next day? Is it handy where you do your daily 3-S's (shit, shower, shave)?
- Do you have a 'To Do List' for each day, ready the night before? Do you set timeframes for this list?
- Do you plan your errands in advance so that you are traveling the shortest distance throughout the day?

"You will never 'find' time for anything.

If you want time, you must make it"

Charles Buxton

(1823–1871, English brewer, philanthropist, writer and Member of Parliament.)



When you take control and plan out these activities and tasks you will “catch more time”.

"A wise person does at once, what a fool does at last.

Both do the same thing; only at different times."

Baltasar Gracian

(Baltasar Gracián y Morales, SJ, 1601–1658, was a Catholic Priest, Spanish Jesuit, author and baroque prose writer.)



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Laura Vanderkam book 168 Hours: You Have More Time Than You Think. She is a member of USA Today's Board of Contributors, and her work has appeared in Reader's Digest, Scientific American, Wired, The American, Portfolio and other publications.

Stephen Covey book 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Ket-Sang Tai's blog on successful multi-level marketing

The Futurist magazine

"The surest way to be late is to have plenty of time."

Leo Kennedy

(1907–2000 a Canadian poet and critic in social criticism)



"The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule,
but to schedule your priorities."

Stephen R. Covey

(Stephen Richards Covey, 1932, Author (The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People), professional speaker, professor, consultant, management-expert)

TNTCrazyLady
FormerlyNMUrbanHomesteader.weebly.com

Use the following Priorities

Important but Not Urgent	This includes education, reading self-improvement or financial books, going to the gym, spending time with love ones etc. These are all very important but not urgent.
Important and Urgent	These are things like fixing a leaking pipe, going to the doctor because you are ill, paying your credit card bill when the due date is tomorrow, etc.
Not important but Urgent	Examples of these are dry cleaners, grocery store, buying the lottery ticket for tonight, bidding on something on eBay which is ending soon etc.
Not important and Not Urgent	These include watching TV, reading non educational magazines, going out to dinner or a movie etc.
Spontaneous/Unexpected	These things are items you did not even think about. A friend comes to your door for a surprise lunch date. Publishers Clearinghouse comes to your door with a big fat check. You have vehicle problems when out and about. The power goes out or a water pipe bursts and stuff like that.



"The great dividing line between success and failure can be expressed in five words: I DID NOT HAVE TIME."

Franklin Field (British author)

