



Neat Freak News

Bimonthly organizational tips for home, work and life.

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NEAT FREAK NEWS: April/May 2007

The issue of time has been on my mind a lot lately. Perhaps because I feel as if I'm suffering from a significant shortage this spring (which may help to explain why my April newsletter is mailing out in early May!). Spring brings about busy end-of-the-school-year activities, the introduction of spring sports, the return to outdoor warm-weather pursuits, and a general desire to freshen up, air out and shovel up the mess leftover from a long winter indoors. But are there enough hours in the day to get it all done and still have fun?

Here are a few of my tried and true Time Management tips that will help to save time so you can get out there and enjoy all that spring has to offer.

**** Save yourself some morning time and stress by doing "it" the night before, and by "it", I mean everything you possibly can to prepare for the next day. Pack the kids' lunches, prep your coffee maker, pick out your clothes (and make sure they're ready to put on!), have your children pick out their clothes, pack backpacks, purses, diaper bags and briefcases. And, with the exception of the children, put everything you need to take with you in your car the night before so you're ready to go.**

****On average, we waste 20-50 minutes per day looking for stuff (you know, keys, glasses, cell phones, PDA's, that little scrap of paper with an important phone number on it). Save yourself that time by creating a place for everything—and then don't forget to use it. I dare you to do the math and see how much time you could save over the course of a year!**

****If you're living in a mess, but the thought of getting organized completely overwhelms you, set a timer for just 10 minutes and dive in. Knowing that you won't be spending ALL Day working on an organizational project makes the project much more approachable. At the end of 10 minutes, walk away and come back tomorrow for another 10 minutes. At the end of the week you'll be amazed at your progress.**

**** I've lost count of the number of times I've been asked to join a committee, volunteer for an event, or participate in a group that I just don't have time for. Rather than saying "yes" and then kicking myself later, I practice some creative role-playing using the word "NO" so I'm prepared with a quick response when I want to opt out of activities or responsibilities that won't fit on my calendar.**

****Organizing time is really no different than organizing space. If you decide to take on a new activity, you must first decide what current activity you need to give up. There's not cheating! Whether you're a six year old playing soccer or a sixty year old CEO, we all only get 24 hours a day. Make the most of them!**

FREAKIE FREEBIES

Put your computer to use as a time saving tool by creating reusable "to-do" or "to-buy" lists. For example, create a list of frequently purchased groceries and save it on your desktop. Group items from each aisle of your favorite store together...e.g. dairy, produce, condiments, meat, snacks, etc. You can always update the list as your needs change. When grocery shopping day arrives, just print off your list, circle the items you need and you're ready to shop!

Looking for other ways to use your computer to save time? Here are a few more of my favorites:

****Create a to-pack list, including all of the items you and your family members need when you take a trip**

****Create a gift giving list including who you purchase for annually and items they might enjoy**

****And my personal favorite (as my mind turns to vacation season)...A to-go list, including all of my favorite must-go-one-day vacation spots. Now...if I can just find the time to plan the trip and go!**