



For you, your career, and your life

RAP

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Life, Organized: How to Get More Done and Have Less Stress

In the busy life of a resident, disorganization can cascade into chaos. Early in your career is the ideal time to hone the habits that will carry you beyond residency and into a productive, more satisfying professional life.

The goal is to organize and control the things you can, so that you can better manage the inevitable surprises and stresses life throws your way.

Too Busy to Organize?

Newsweek reports that the average American wastes 55 minutes a day (roughly 12 days



“It’s very easy to confuse confident motion with being productive – and they’re not the same thing. Productive to me means measurable outcomes that apply to my most important to-dos that positively affect my life. That’s it.”

- Timothy Ferriss

a year) looking for things they own but can’t find. And according to the American Demographic Society, Americans waste more than 9 million hours each day looking for lost and misplaced articles.

“Organizing saves you time and money,” says Ellen Delap, Certified Professional Organizer (CPO®) and productivity consultant.

“Research shows that most people think that they can or should organize themselves. However, without the time or skill, that may not happen.”

“The most frequent excuse I hear is: ‘Life is busy, and I don’t have time to organize,’” says Delap. Her answer to that excuse is “Life’s too busy *not* to organize.”

Master the Basics

Start with the basics for better productivity, says “The Work-Life Balance Expert®” Jeff Davidson. The founder of the Breathing Space Institute is a speaker and author of 65 books including *Breathing Space*, *Simpler Living* and *Dial it Down, Live it Up*.

One of those basics is sleep. Realistically, during your

Tackling each day with an organized, centered approach can help you manage stress. When you start to feel over-whelmed because there’s too much to do and too little time to do it, a confidential conversation with a professional may be all you need to help you gain perspective. That’s one of the many services RAP can provide.

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residency it can be a struggle to get as much sleep as you need. Yet it should be a goal.

“Sleeping properly means getting eight hours a night if you can,” Davidson says. “Going through life with too little sleep is like scuba diving with too little oxygen.”

The other basics are eating three square meals a day, including breakfast as the largest meal of the day; and making some time for exercise,” says Davidson. “Ideally, you want to walk 10,000 steps a day. That’s roughly one hour for most people.”

Learn to Pace Yourself

“Nobody’s born with an abundance of work-life balance

(Continued on page 2)

Pacing Yourself Can Help You Get More Done and Still Have Energy

(Continued from page 1)

knowhow,” notes Davidson. “We learn as we go. We learn what makes us energetic. We learn what brings our energy down. We learn what times of the day we’re at our peak, and what times of the day we’re not so good. We need to give ourselves recurring rest throughout the day. Even a 60-second pause once an hour can help us stay centered and balanced.”

“Pacing is vital,” Davidson adds. “Recognition of our own internal capabilities, our own internal rhythms and energy levels can carry us quite well over the course of a week, a month, a year and even a career.”

Your Resident Assistance Program

The RAP newsletter is provided as a benefit to medical residents at the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine and their dependents.

We welcome your comments on newsletter topics, however, we cannot provide RAP services by email.

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Multitasking is Self-Defeating

Multitasking decreases productivity by 20-40% more than those who focus on one project at a time. The time lost switching among tasks increases the complexity of the those tasks, report researchers at the University of Michigan.

“It is psychologically satisfying to dabble in five or

“When you multitask, you believe you’re being exceptionally productive, but really, you’re fooling yourself. Each time you switch tasks, you have to backtrack a little and remind yourself where you are in the process and what’s next. Invariably, you are spending twice as much time on parts of the task.”

- Karen Finerman

six things at a time,” says Davidson. “We like to say to ourselves, ‘look at me, I’m handling this and I’m taking care of that, and I’m making progress here.’ Yet the way to really get things done is to focus on one task at a time: the task at hand. Have the mental and emotional strength to let go of the peripheral issues and give your full attention to the task at hand. That is the fastest and easiest way to get through any series of challenging tasks.”

“Put your tasks in order of importance and tackle the first one first and the second one second,” Davidson advises. “That will take you further and faster than any other method you can devise.”

Tools for Productivity

Davidson offers a number of books, audios, and learning tools, along with tips for work-life balance and time management at www.BreathingSpace.com.

On her blog at www.professional-organizer.com, Delap also shares some of the resources that can make a difference. Among these are Google Calendar; Evernote for keeping information and notes; and Google Docs and Dropbox for working in multiple locations with multiple devices.

Small Steps Count

If the idea of getting organized seems overwhelming, one of the easiest first steps is to schedule a short amount of time to organize, says Delap. “You can organize for just 15 minutes and make a difference in your office. What can you do in 15 minutes? Create files, clear part of your desk, or add dates to your calendar. All of these are organizing.”

Resources

- Jeff Davidson, “The Work-Life Balance Expert®” www.BreathingSpace.com
- Ellen Delap, CDP® www.Professional-Organizer.com
- www.challengingdisorganization.org
- www.simplyorderly.com/