

Getting Back Time



**How To Put An End To Time Wasting,
Accomplish More In Less Time
And Design a More Productive Lifestyle**

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Introduction: Time Matters

Not to get too philosophical or sound too dramatic but the reality is that life is *made* from time. In fact, some thinkers suggest that consciousness itself is tied closely to time.

You are given a finite amount of time on this planet and as far as we know, that's all you're ever going to get. Life is an incredibly precious and amazing thing and you owe it to yourself to make full use of this time while you have the chance.

As we grow older, we are left with less and less time to enjoy. But we *are* able to revisit the time that we've experienced in the form of our memories and this is where the slightly subjective nature of time becomes apparent.

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Time can slow down to a crawl at times or it can speed up and appear to disappear in the blink of an eye. Time seems to speed up as we get older and it gets even faster when we are enjoying ourselves.

But although time moves faster when we are engaged and having fun, this 'type' of time also lasts much longer. When we are engaged with novel stimulus, our brain lays down and creates more memories and more neural connections. When something incredible happens, it leaves a deep imprint on our brains that won't be subject to fading over time.

Conversely, when we take part in the routine and the mundane, there is nothing worth remembering and it fades into one.

So when we look back over our lives, it is only the exciting, the novel, the new and the interesting that is retained in our databanks. This is the time that we're able to 'get back' then in the form of memories. And thus living a full and busy life becomes the secret to having not only a rich life but also what seems like a full and *long* life.

If you do the same thing every day, then your time will be compressed into one long blur of work and nights on the couch.

If you keep doing new and exciting things, if you keep challenging yourself and if you keep surprising yourself; then looking back on your life will reveal a rich, meaningful tapestry that takes your breath away.

Why There is No Time Any More

So you need love, learn, explore, discover, experiment and take risks. And yet the irony is that most of us find we don't have the time to do all those things. We are so busy running from one important job to another and so busy fulfilling our different jobs, that we never get the chance to slow down and smell the roses.

We are literally losing time...

And this creates other problems too. Being in a constant rush means we're constantly stressed and burned out. This can place strain on our health and it can place strain on our relationships.

Ironically, it also means that we're likely to be *less* successful in our careers as we spend more time rushing to solve problems and never get the time to actually work at getting better at our jobs or improving our organizations. We're constantly working 'in' our business and we never have time to work 'on' our business.

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When you think about it, this type of living pretty much renders the whole thing pointless. You're working this hard so you can afford to feed yourself and your family but in doing so, you're leaving yourself with no time to enjoy life or to *spend* with your family. What's the point of earning money when you never get to spend it on anything you enjoy?

What's the point of living to work?

It would be unfair though to say that work is the only thing that takes up all our free time and leaves us with none left for ourselves. Just as guilty are:

- Social commitments
- Commuting to and from work
- Washing, cleaning, tidying
- Dealing with admin
- Everyday chores
- Cooking

Imagine if you could get just a little bit of this time back. If you could save yourself 15 minutes a day, that would give you 105 minutes a week or 420 minutes a month! You could use this to learn a new language, to get into

better shape, to pick up a skill like painting, to go out for a nice meal with your partner, or to take your children out for a fun day.

Either way, you would be adding to your life and your memories and developing yourself as a person.

It's time to take that time back then and to start living your own life!

And here's how we're going to do it...

What You Will Learn

In this book, you will learn...

- Why energy management is incredibly important
- How to give yourself more energy so that you wake up in the morning ready to go!
- The basic fundamentals of lifestyle design and how to design your job around your life (instead of vice versa)
- How to automate tasks and get things done more quickly
- How to cut down on communication overhead
- How to budget your time correctly
- How to negotiate hours to suit you at work

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- How to fill your new time with exciting and amazing experiences
- How to learn new skills and even new languages in shorter time

In short, you will learn the techniques and skills you need to stop being reactive and to start being *proactive*. Instead of waiting for retirement, you'll learn how to make your life your own *right now* and start living it to the fullest!

And it all starts with spending a little less time washing up the dishes...



ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Chapter 1: The Importance of Energy Management

I've just spent the whole introduction waxing lyrical on the importance of time and why you need to make sure you are managing it wisely and giving yourself lots of it. Now it's time to reassess that for a moment and explain that actually, in many ways, time management isn't as important as you think.

Or at least that is to say that there are other factors at play here and some of them play a much larger role than you might expect.

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In particular, one of those factors is energy. Your energy is tied closely to your time but the two are still distinct and you still need to consider them independently.

Because arguably, you could say that you actually have a lot of time. Most of us have a lot of time anyway; otherwise how did you manage to watch that entire boxset of your favorite TV series recently? When did you squeeze in watching all that junk TV?

And even the busiest of us usually find time for sleep!

The point here is that time management only works so far without energy management. If you don't manage your energy, then you'll find that you're coming home and feeling completely wiped out at the end of the day. You probably have ample time to work out, to learn, to play with your family; you are probably just so busy at work and with everything else that you can't use that time productively.

This is why we end up crashing in front of the TV and it's why we don't live life to the fullest! Unfortunately, this then goes on to make us even tired and less energetic because our bodies adapt and become much less efficient. This literally happens; our cells lose their number of mitochondria and become less adept at converting glucose into useable energy.

And a lot of people simply don't recognize this point. People forget that energy is a finite quantity too.

The very best example of this is when someone comes up with a new training regime to get into shape. They take a look at their current lifestyle and they realize that they're spending a couple of hours in the evening watching Game of Thrones. So adding an hour of exercise most evenings shouldn't be a problem... right?

Thus they come up with an ambitious training program that they think will get them results quickly. This will often include five hours of running/lifting weights a week and probably a commute to and from the gym for each session. At the same time, they will cut down on carbohydrates.

This might sound admirable on paper but in reality... it's completely delusional!

If you're currently not getting as much exercise as you think you should be, then it probably means that you're too tired, too low on energy and too stressed from work. If you weren't, then you would likely be more active in the evenings.

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So if you're currently struggling to do anything in the evenings: what makes you think that you're suddenly going to be able to add 5 hours of intensive activity in one go? Plus lots of driving? And all while consuming fewer carbs which are what give us energy?

Do you see the problem here?

Time is only useful insofar as you have the energy to make use of it and unfortunately there's no getting around the fact that you need to rest and recuperate. Your plan may be to spend less time chilling in the evening but unfortunately the reality is that most of us can't touch that time. It's spoken for. Recharging when you're out of energy is sadly not negotiable!

This then leaves you with two options:

1. Find ways to increase your energy levels so that you can get more 'useful' hours in the day
2. Prioritize by taking other things out of your routine to free up both time and energy for exercise or whatever else it is you want to spend your time on

Chapter two will discuss how you can cut back and prioritize more. In the next section, we'll address the first point and see how you can increase

your energy levels so that you have more to use on exercise and other activities.

How to Get More Energy

Energy is the absolute key to success.

Look at any of the most successful people in the world and you will find that they're immensely disciplined and that they work incredibly hard to accomplish what they need to in their lives. A great example of this is to look at someone like Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson. The Rock went from humble origins to becoming an incredibly successful wrestler and then took that success further to become a highly paid actor and a very prominent figure on social media.

And the clear reason for his success is his work ethic and his energy and enthusiasm. Watching him on video it's hard to imagine that he has ever been lethargic or disinterested. And as his Instagram can attest, he gets up every morning at 4am to go and train in the gym.

The same kind of discipline and enthusiasm can be seen when you look at someone like Arnold Schwarzenegger.

And where does this discipline and enthusiasm come from? From energy! When you have the energy to direct into the things you want to achieve, you gain the upper hand on everyone else and you start to see your dreams become a reality.

So how can you give your body an energy upgrade? Here are some suggestions...

Exercise

One of the first things you can do to boost your energy levels is to exercise. When you exercise, you place aerobic demands on your body and require more energy more quickly. This forces the body to adapt and to thereby become more efficient and more effective at delivering from the glucose in your blood. You develop more mitochondria, your veins get thicker and your heart becomes stronger!

Of course the challenge is forcing yourself to begin working out when your energy levels are low. We address this in a subsequent chapter (Ten Minute Workouts You Can Do Anywhere) but another tip is not to start with this change.

Sleep

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Unless you are like The Rock and you're going to be working out every morning at 4am, sleep is another crucial tool you can use to increase your energy levels and to start getting a lot more done.

Most of us do not give our sleep the attention and respect it deserves and therefore we find ourselves running on half a tank of fuel most of the time. The purpose of sleep is to allow our bodies and minds to recover from the challenges of the day, to grow new tissue and to lay down new neural connections. When you don't get enough, it leaves you feeling groggy, lethargic, moody and unfocussed. You may even experience headaches.

The first thing to do then is just to give your sleep more priority. Make your sleep sacred and ensure that you're going to bed at the same time every day and staying there for the full 8 hours.

Fight the urge to have more wasted time by staying up late when you're tired and go to bed so that you can have more useful hours tomorrow. Once you find yourself unable to exercise or engage in other physical activities, consider yourself spent.

Being consistent and giving yourself enough sleep like this will make a huge difference to the way you feel and the way you perform. But there are a few other things you can do to give yourself more of a fighting chance.

For example:

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- Make sure your bed is as comfortable as possible
- Have half an hour of downtime before bed where you don't look at screens of any kind and do something like reading or writing a diary instead
- Make sure your room is perfectly dark
- Try taking a warm bath or shower just before bed – this will help your muscles to relax and help you regulate your body temperature
- Make your room slightly cool, this will again help with your body temperature throughout the night and encourage sound sleep

Light

Something else that fuels us with energy is natural light. This is why it's such a shame that so many of us spend long hours in front of a computer, shut away in a tiny office!

Try to make sure you get at least some sunlight during the day and it will recharge you like Superman. What's more, is that it will help your body's circadian rhythms, again ensuring that you'll sleep better at night.

Light also affects our hormones and our production of vitamin D, which contributes to our energy levels and to our mood. This is particularly true in

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the morning, when natural sunlight helps to flush our body with cortisol and nitric oxide to help us wake up.

One of the worst aspects of modern living is the way we treat waking up in the morning: by setting an alarm to sound loudly and startle us out of deep sleep. This causes sleep inertia because we've gone from deep sleep to wakefulness and it leaves us feeling shocked and full of stress first thing in the morning. If the room is dark when you wake up, then your body will be telling you to roll over and head back to sleep!

So instead, try investing in something called a 'daylight lamp'. This is a type of lamp that creates light with a similar wavelength to the sun. This will flood the room slowly as it gets gradually brighter in the morning and that will help to bring you out of deep sleep and into a lighter stage.

It sets your body's circadian rhythms and tricks your brain into thinking it's a nice day, combating 'SAD' (Seasonal Affective Disorder). When the alarm eventually sounds, you're already somewhat awake in a nice bright room.

This makes a huge difference to the way you start your day... so try it out!

Energy and Mental Discipline

Stress is the great sapper of energy. When you are stressed about something, your body produces adrenaline and norepinephrine along with other hormones that tax our body and our mind. You end up giving a lot more focus and energy to things that do not need them and this leaves you burned out at the end of the day.

We'll be talking a lot more about stress later in this book but for now, recognize that everything is less tiring when you *aren't* stressed about it. Thus, if you can use meditation, CBT or other techniques to rise above the stress and not let things affect you that are out of your control, you will be able to walk throughout life while expending far less energy.

Learn which battles are worth fighting and when it's time to just roll with the punches!

Likewise though, it's also important to sometimes be able to ignore tiredness and wake yourself up. If we accept that we're tired and give in to it, then it can become overwhelming. If you give yourself a little energy boost by recognizing that this is 'just a feeling' then you can often wake yourself back up!

Nutrition

Finally, one of the easiest and best things you can do to get more energy is to improve your nutrition. Nutrition is absolutely crucial for energy and if you eat the right ingredients you will find that it boosts your energy efficiency in a wide number of ways.

For example: did you know that garlic contains nitrites? These trigger vasodilation, widening your blood vessels and allowing more blood to get around your body!

Did you know that vitamin C, like tryptophan, is a precursor to serotonin? This helps the brain to create happiness hormones that make us feel more energetic and which even combat pain! Vitamin C also strengthens our immune system, giving us more energy by helping us to avoid colds and other illnesses that tax us.

Red meats contain creatine – a substance that lets us recycle used ‘ATP’ (adenosine triphosphate). This gives us fractionally more energy for lifting weights and other activities before we need to use other energy systems in the body such as the aerobic system. Red meat also contains CoEnzyme Q10 which is well known to increase mitochondrial efficiency.

Also increasing mitochondrial efficiency are PQQ, leucine, resveratrol and l-carnitine – all of which you can get from a healthy and balanced diet. The mitochondria make *all* the difference to our ability to keep going and in fact it's thought that these are what make the difference between toddlers who are always full of energy and the elderly who often feel tired.

Vitamin B complex vitamins are crucial for allowing the body to get more energy from glucose and sugar. They also help us to create more red blood cells (as does iron) thereby circulating more oxygen around the body.

Pineapple contains bromelain, a digestive enzyme. This helps us to extract more nutrition from our food by digesting it more efficiently. At the same time, bromelain is thought to increase testosterone which leads to increased muscle and reduced fat. Saturated fat is also very important for improving our absorption of fat soluble vitamins.

I could go on and on and on. Now you could start taking a vitamin supplement and that would probably do *something* for your health. But much better is to get your nutrients the natural way – from your diet. This way you'll find your body is better able to absorb and use them and that you enjoy much more energy and health as a result.

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The easiest way to quickly boost your health? Just grab a smoothie on the way into work!



CUTTING BACK AND PRIORITIZING

Chapter 2: Cutting Back and Prioritizing – How to Budget Your Time

Now you should have more energy to get a little more done in the day. This won't happen overnight though: try to introduce changes to your routine slowly and one step at a time.

Next, you need to look at how you can manage the energy and time you have. One way to do that is to cut back on the things that you don't want to do or that aren't helping you get where you want to be. Another is to manage the things you're already doing.

We'll start with the latter...

Understanding Your Body's Rhythms

Just as you can't fight the fact that you need to rest sometimes, you also can't fight the fact that your body has natural rhythms, natural ebbs and flows and natural peaks and troughs when it comes to energy.

Thus, one of the most important facets of time and energy management is to know how to time your activities.

For example, when you eat, you will naturally find your feel tired and lethargic. You won't be able to do anything very active because you'll be digesting. And as soon as you sit down, you'll find that it becomes harder to get back up as your body reads this as you giving it a chance to rest.

So in other words, if you're planning on working out after you've eaten, you're going to find that you're making life a lot more difficult for yourself.

You come home tired after work but a bit wired, then you cook which takes energy, then you eat which slows you down and then you crash on the sofa and start to feeling dopey. *Now* you plan to get back up and workout? Right before bed?

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Instead, try working out before you come home while you're still in 'go mode' and then you can completely crash after you've eaten. This is a much more effective way to manage your time!

In fact, if you want to be even slightly productive after dinner then you should avoid sitting on the couch. Sit at the table so you're in an upright position and you'll find it much easier to get up and do a bit of washing up straight after you've eaten.

And that in turn means you can wash up more regularly instead of doing it all in one go, in turn meaning that you'll spend a lot less time washing!

Likewise, learn how long it takes for you to overcome your sleep inertia. If you want to do something useful in the morning, then recognize that it takes X amount of time for you to come around. And try to identify the things that wake you up so you can be more useful in this time. Many of us perform better if we take a shower in the morning for instance. Move the shower forward and you might feel awake sooner, thus allowing you to start being productive sooner!

Prioritizing

When someone says to me that they're going to start a new training program that takes more than a couple of hours a week, I normally answer them by asking what they're going to give up in order to make time for that training.

Often they then look at me like I'm crazy but in fact it makes perfect sense. It's safe to assume that you're currently as active as you can comfortably be. If you're going to start exercising, then you need to cut *back* on something else so you have more time and energy.

The same is true if you're planning on writing a book, starting a new side project or learning a language. If you really want to do that thing, then you need to *prioritize* it.

I find the easiest way to work this out is to properly budget time and to create a timetable of when I'm going to fit things in. Think about how much time it takes you to feel rested in the evening and make sure that this is still included in your timetable. Then insert all your other commitments and things that consume time: eating, cooking, commuting, playing with family, seeing friends, going to after-work classes, doing important admin.

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Now try to find space to insert the things you want to do – whether that's writing, learning or training. And to do this, you're going to have to *remove* some other things.

What's more, is that you should then treat these plans as being concrete and gospel – as though you had made a social commitment.

In other words, if someone invited you out on Saturday but you were already seeing a friend, you would apologise and say you were busy. Treat your plans to work out or learn Spanish the same. If you've booked yourself in to do that on that day then just apologise again and say you're busy!

This may mean that you're now spending a little less time with friends. Or it might mean that you have to give up something you want to do – but the point is you only have so much time and you need to prioritize.

But you know what you should *really* think about changing? Work!

Work is a big ugly commitment that currently takes up 8 hours a day and that you probably don't enjoy. Now you see that it is affecting your health, your family time and your ability to pursue new goals. And that just isn't right...

LIFESTYLE DESIGN

Chapter 3: What is Lifestyle Design?

Lifestyle design is a concept that has been popularized recently by Tim Ferriss and his book *The 4 Hour Workweek*. The idea is that you're going to design your lifestyle to be just the way you want it and you are going to make your work fit in around that. This is instead of going the *opposite* tact of choosing your job and then changing your lifestyle to fit that.

Really this should be the obvious and 'default' way to proceed. Why compromise your lifestyle just so that you can work more hours and satisfy an organization? It doesn't seem to make any sense!

The problem is that many of us take the approach of working for as hard as we can, for as long as we can. And we think that by doing this we can en-

sure that our future will be secure and that we will be able to retire and live the life we want.

So essentially you're deferring your happiness. And by the time you're able to live that lifestyle that you want to live, you're going to be old and grey!

Many of us also picture ourselves as becoming 'successful' if we work harder though and of having all the things that we want. But again, this is often misguided. After all, what do you picture yourself doing when you're successful? Probably having a much nicer home, maybe traveling, maybe spending more time pursuing leisure activities...

...and all these things are things you don't need lots of money for! You can enjoy the lifestyle you've been looking forward to on your current budget. Sure, you need lots of money if you're going to drive a fancy sports car but is that really going to make you happy?

As for cruising around in a beautiful yacht, you can get a crewed charter yacht very affordably for the days when you want it and split the costs with your friends!

And travel is becoming more and more affordable!

So instead of working the job that you think is going to make you 'rich' or 'successful', instead ask yourself what is most important to you in life and then get a job that supports that. Being a teacher is wonderful for people who want to travel a lot because it means they can travel and see the world during the summer holidays.

Likewise, you might decide that even though the job prospects aren't amazing, being a dustbin collector suits you a lot. You'll have to get up early but it's well paid for what you'll be doing and you'll have your whole afternoon and evening free to do what you want! That might mean you can train and get into great shape, or it might mean that you just spend more time with your family!

Changing the Way You Think About Work

There are a surprising number of jobs out there that are highly flexible and that will allow you to work more convenient hours. Look for jobs that offer flexi-time for example and you can clock in two hours early and go home two hours early!

Or how about trying to find a job that lets you work from anywhere? There are some counseling jobs for instance that let you work through Skype!

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You could even discuss working 4 days a week at your current job and use something small on the side (like the Skype counselling) to make up for the lost income.

Or you could work two part-time jobs! Decide how much time you need and when you need it and then just pick the job that fits in with that!

And meanwhile, you should also stop defining yourself by your career.

The objection that a lot of people would have to working as a dustbin collector would be that it doesn't offer them much in the way of challenge, or in the way of career progression.

But then why does your job have to be where you get your sense of satisfaction? Instead, why not have a side project and use that to pursue the things you're really interested in?

You can work all day in a quiet convenience store if you like work that lets you feel rested and chilled and then you can come home and work on the next great novel, or paint and try to sell those paintings on the side!

Are you a checkout assistant? No – you're a painter! One day you might earn enough money from the painting to give up the other job but in the

meantime you can just enjoy a quiet lifestyle that leaves you plenty of time and energy to pursue the things you're interested in. And you're still a *painter* because you paint!

Oh and likewise, don't think that your salary and your wealth has to be completely tied to your job. Want to earn more money but don't want to take on more responsibility at work? Then why not try selling arts and crats in the evening, or selling your writing online? You could become a piano teacher alternatively, or cut the neighbor's hair or their lawn.

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that the only way to get what you want from life is to sink more and more hours into a thankless job!

Another tip is to try going on lots of shorter holidays. A lot of people dream of going traveling but don't have the means to give up work for a whole year and don't like the thoughts of being away from everyone for that long.

But who's saying that you can't just travel for a month by taking a short career break? Or for three weeks by saving up all your annual leave? If you speak with your employers, you might be surprised how flexible they can be.

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Or alternatively, why not take shorter trips throughout the year for long weekends and the like? You can go away for three days at a time and see some incredible things. It probably won't cost you much more than visiting home (budget flights are becoming cheaper and cheaper) and you'll be filling your life with all those incredible memories that make it worthwhile!

TEN-MINUTE WORKOUTS

Chapter 4: Ten-Minute Workouts You Can Do Anywhere

As we've seen, one of the best things you can do to increase your energy levels is to work out. The only problem? It takes energy *to* work out and it takes time. This creates something of a vicious circle: you're lethargic because you aren't active and you aren't active because you're lethargic!

But instead of trying to rectify this with a massive training regime that takes up hours of every week, why not instead try introducing exercise more slowly into your daily life?

How to Work Out in Ten Minutes

The great thing is that you can actually get some quite impressive results using exercise that lasts only 10 minutes. In fact, in terms of energy production, training for 10 minutes at a time may in fact be one of the very methods if you use something called HIIT.

And if you do this first thing in the morning before your shower (after you've had time to wake up though), then you won't have any 'extra' time taken up by washing or by having to commute to and from a gym.

So what is HIIT? HIIT stands for 'High Intensity Interval Training' and this basically means that you are going to alternate between periods of intensive activity and periods of light activity. So for example, you might run at 90% of your maximum heartrate for 1 minute and then jog very lightly around 50%MHR for 2 minutes and repeat.

This actually allows you just enough time to recover before you go flat out again and overall, you'll find you actually end up training harder and more intensively than if you had just trained at 70% the whole time.

What's more, is that going into 90% pushes you into an anaerobic state. This means that the body is now demanding more energy than the aerobic system (oxygen) can deliver. Thus the body has to look to other areas in order to get the energy it needs – which means it starts using up all the glucose in the blood and which means the mitochondria have to work more efficiently.

And as an added bonus, HIIT leads to something called the 'after burn' effect. This means that your body continues to burn calories throughout the day because you have used up all the available blood sugar and it now needs to look to fat stores in order to continue powering your movement.

In just 10 minutes a day, this type of training can help you to burn more fat *and* it increases both the quantity and efficiency of your mitochondria helping to give you the energy levels of a young, hyperactive child (theoretically at least!).

One form of HIIT actually takes only 4 minutes in total. This is called 'tabata' and it basically involves going flat out at 90%MHR for 10 seconds, resting or engaging in 'active recovery' (such as plank or walking) for 20 seconds and then repeating. You do this for a total of 4 minutes (so 8 circuits) and you can use any kind of exercise from kettlebell swings, to push ups, to running, to skipping rope – as long as you are going at 90% or above.

This might sound very easy but by the end of this short session your heart rate will be through the roof and you'll be surprised just how many calories you can burn this way!

Bodyweight Workouts

Another option is to use a resistance workout and form a circuit with it. For example, you might do 25 push ups, followed by 10 pull ups, followed by 10 jump squats, followed by 20 sit ups and do 2-3 rounds in total with no breaks in between.

This is a light aerobic workout but actually it's something that *won't* cause you to sweat too much. That in turn means you can use this anywhere and at any time – even just before work or during your lunch break! And you'd be surprised what amazing effects just a little resistance work for your muscles can have on your energy, your power and your weight loss!

Incidental Training

If you think about the way we would have exercised or trained in the wild, then of course that wouldn't have involved being largely motionless for most of the day, only to then workout intensively for one hour before returning to inactivity!

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Rather, we would have been constantly staying active, constantly moving around and constantly facing new challenges. This is how our bodies are supposed to be used and if you really want to get the best performance out of yourself, this is how you need to act as well!

Incidental training just means turning regular activities into training opportunities. So if you're waiting somewhere at a curb, why not use that curb to do some calf raises? If you need to head to the shops, why not jog rather than walking? And if you are carrying bags, why not shrug them?

This also means making smart decisions by taking the stairs instead of the lift, or walking from the bus stop before your own. These changes might seem like they *cost* energy in the short run but in the long term they will make you more efficient and give you more time and enthusiasm for the things you want to do!



OUTSOURCING AND AUTOMATING

Chapter 5: Get More Done by Outsourcing, Automating and Being More Efficient

Here is something to recognize: everything you plan to do is going to take much more time than just *doing it*.

This is one area where a lot of us go wrong when we first start making plans for how we're going to use our time. The thought goes like this: 'I have one hour to spare this evening, I will do a one hour workout at the gym!'

What people don't realize however is that while your workout takes one hour, the whole rigmarole takes much closer to 1:40. Why? Because you need to drive, cycle or bus to the gym, then you need to get changed and

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then you need to work out. After that, you will then need to shower and after *that* you need to head back.

And following that one 1:40 you are now going to be tired and less efficient than you were before. That 'one hour' ends up becoming your entire evening.

This is why we introduced the 10 minute workouts earlier and recommended doing them from home and *before* the shower. It's just more efficient!

There are many other ways you can make other time drains much more efficient too. For example, one of the worst culprits when it comes to underestimating how long something takes is the prototypical celebrity chef. Ever bought a cook book full of '10 minute meals'? How often are they *really* ten minutes?

In all likelihood, this 10 minute estimate doesn't take into account the time it takes to dice the onion (it normally just says something like 'take your diced onion') or the time it takes for you to wash all the veg.

It *certainly* won't include the time you spend washing up and tidying in the kitchen before *and* after cooking and it won't take into account the time it

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takes you to go out and buy the ingredients either. These 10 minute meals are in fact much more likely to be 1 hour meals and that's if you do everything perfectly the first time.

How can we rectify this? One option is to cook ahead of time. If you cook ahead of time, then you can save several Tupperwares full of your meals and then just reheat them as and when you need them. Slow cookers are also your friends.

At the same time, you can also look into making your life easier by investing in equipment that can help to take some of the flack for you. Tired of dicing and peeling? Then how about investing in a food processor to do that for you? Spending too long washing up? Buy a dishwasher! A non-stick pan can also make a big difference.

If you *really* want to make your life easier, you could even consider using a service that delivers ready-made meals (using fresh ingredients of course) right to your door. These services are perfect for the busy professional.

Again, this is all about prioritizing and asking yourself if you really want to spend lots of time cooking every day. Some people will be happy to spend more in the kitchen, in which case great! But if you're trying to get into shape or you're trying to set up a side business, then using a service that

has your food prepared for you could just help you save the time that you need!

There are many other areas in your life where you can make things more efficient and save time. Cleaning your home makes a *huge* difference for example as it helps you to find things you need much quicker and easier. And if you use the right systems to organize your home with, then you'll find that this helps you to keep things tidier without putting in so much work.

One thing that makes life massively easier? Just throwing things out! Throw out half your wardrobe and you probably won't miss it – but now it will be much easier to put your clothes away and to choose clothes in the morning saving you more time!

Outsourcing and Automating

Earlier we discussed getting a dishwasher in order to spend less time washing up. This is an example of **automation** – using an automated system to complete work for you. There are plenty more examples of this too: why not use a robotic vacuum cleaner in order to keep your home clean for example? Or why not use smoothie maker to make easy smoothies instead of buying them yourself? (The Nutribullet is particularly effective in this role.)

Outsourcing is similar but slightly different. This essentially means giving the job you need to do to someone else and asking them to do it (delegating) or hiring someone to help you with a job.

Often we think of outsourcing and delegating as terms we would use in a business setting but you'd be surprised just how relevant and just how *useful* the concepts can be when applied to your personal life.

For example, if you are about to make an important vote and you don't have time to spend ages reading up about all the people who are running for the position... just ask your friends to give you the basic overview. Choose friends you trust and ask a couple with opposing opinions and you should get a balanced view while simultaneously saving yourself a lot of time. This is a perfect example of 'outsourcing' and it hardly feels like it at all!

Another example of outsourcing is to hire people to do jobs that you don't want to do. For example, you can outsource the maintenance of your lawn to a gardener and you can outsource your cleaning to a cleaner. Getting a cleaner in fact might just be one of the best decisions you ever make.

No one like living in squalor and it can be very stressful when the home is constantly untidy. Then again though, we also seldom have time to spend ages tidying everything ourselves. When you hire a cleaner, you are basi-

cally 'buying back time' while at the same time getting a better job done than you could probably have accomplished on your own.

If you're paying a cleaner \$15 an hour, you're basically saying you value your time that much. What better to spend money on than time? And especially when you consider that a *good* cleaner can do much more than you in an hour!

Another type of outsourcing you might consider is to use a 'virtual assistant'. This is someone who is capable of doing any kind of work that they can do for you online and without any specialist skills. Think of them like a PA who you never meet in person – a digital dog's body. Often these professionals are located in India and other foreign countries, so their rates will usually be incredibly low (think \$5 for an hour). It also means their English might not be the best in the world but this won't be a problem for most tasks.

So what can you get a virtual assistant to do for you? Well, you can always get them to help you with your work. If your job is taking up valuable home hours then you can get a little help by using a VA in order to make calls for you, arrange appointments, gather research or perform basic data entry. There are stories of people who outsourced their entire jobs to VAs! Of course this might not be strictly by-the-books depending on your organization but no one needs to know...

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Likewise, you can also use a VA for all kinds of personal jobs and chores! For example, if you're struggling to think of a gift for your partner then why not outsource it to your VA? If you're spending ages hunting down the best car insurance quote, why not outsource that too? Need a hotel for the stag party you're organizing? That sounds like a job for a VA!

Why spend your precious time doing basic admin when there are people out there who will do it for a couple of dollars?



CUTTING BACK WORK

Chapter 6: How to Cut Back Work and Negotiate Flexi-Time

But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

Because it really doesn't matter if you're finding ways to shave 10 minutes off cooking if you're still coming home late from work.

Here's the first thing for us to address right off the bat: you must *not* spend more than your contracted hours at work! If you're currently working until 7, 8 or 9pm when you should finish at 5pm, then that is something you need to change *right away*.

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Of course this kind of 'commitment' is the culture in some places. But my advice in that case? Find a new job. Seriously: why would you sacrifice an additionally 3 or 4 hours of your time willingly?

So you can get a slightly higher salary?

But then also work even *longer* hours?

So that you can do what? Drive a Ferrari? Remember we've already seen that you can live the lifestyle you probably dream of *right now* without having to make millions first. Again, it's a matter of prioritizing the things that are most important to you and that should *always* mean your own time, time with your family and having exciting new experiences.

And really, you *should* be able to complete all your work in the hours you are given! If you can't, then this really only suggests that you have too much work (the company needs to hire more staff, not your problem) or that you need to change the way you're working.

Make sure you only work the hours you're given and don't worry if eyebrows are raised when you leave at 5pm. If you do the job that you're given, then no one will ask any questions.

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Meanwhile, why not try and take this even further by asking your boss if you can move on to 'flexi-time' (meaning you can move your working day 2 hours forward or back). This not only gives you the freedom to engage in more activities that might start earlier but it also gives you the ability to do things like skipping the rush hour – which can save you money *and* make a huge difference to your stress levels (and give you the ability to work on that book on the train).

Your office might not offer flexi-time officially but ask your boss or manager anyway. The worst they can do is say no!

And you *may* even find that if you're cheeky you can push them a little further and work at home some days (depending on the nature of your work). This too will make a huge difference to your routine and the amount of time you spend travelling.

You'll likely find you actually get *more* work done from home as you aren't chatting around the water cooler and you have more incentive to work faster. My advice is to work not *actually* from home but rather from a local coffee shop where you can get some peace and quiet and get away from the distractions and temptations that you'll get at home.

If your work isn't playing ball and if it isn't possible – then consider changing jobs for one where it is. Again, try not to think about your job not only in

terms of what you're doing at work and not only in terms of salary; think about it in terms of how it fits into the lifestyle *you* want to lead.

Because it might well be worth taking a big pay cut if your new job has flexi-hours or if it is 10 minutes closer to home (meaning 20 minutes saved *every day*). Think about what will actually make you happiest and make that the priority!

(On a related note, the same goes for choosing a house. When you choose your home, think hard about how easy it will make all the things you're doing on a regular basis. If you live somewhere where it's easy to run out and buy milk and where you can easily see friends, that will probably make you a lot happier than if you are just focussed on the investment potential!)

Becoming a Digital Nomad

The way that many people use lifestyle design is to become a digital nomad. This is the ultimate expression of lifestyle design: it means that you are working online and making a living on your computer. In turn, that means you can then work from anywhere as long as it has an internet connection and a power socket.

These people then take their laptops in a backpack and travel the world – seeing incredible sights during the day and spending their evenings typing

away on their computers in bars and soaking up the atmosphere. Because the cost of living is often a lot less in the places they visit, they often don't have to work all that much in order to fund the lifestyle!

This is something you can do yourself, you just need to learn a little about how to work online. That can mean running a blog and getting a small amount of passive income when you start out, or it could mean selling web design, programming, writing, marketing or other online skills. There are plenty of sites that explain how to do all this.

But again, you don't necessarily have to see this as a 'one or the other' decision. I personally live life as a digital nomad but I like my creature comforts and am happily married. Thus I don't really *want* to spend my whole time on the road and sleeping in hostels. This is fine too!

I live in London and I use the freedom that my job affords me in order to visit sites and work from outside St Paul's or in the British Library. Meanwhile, I get to go into London with my wife and meet up with her for lunch and I get to work outside when it's sunny. And I travel a lot more in mini breaks – this year I have been to Dortmund in Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Lisbon and Mauritius and I've taken 'staycations' to Cornwall (twice) and Kent. I've done all this while buying a house and seeing some exciting developments in my career.

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It's all about deciding what you want your life to look like and recognizing that money is only a very small factor in making that happen. Want to be less stressed with money concerns and debt? Living more simply is a better solution when it comes to having less debt than trying to get a raise!

MULTITASKING

Chapter 7: Multitasking to Do More

Another tip is to consider multitasking in order to get more done. There are some situations where this isn't a good idea – but in the right scenario it can help you to save a ton of time. For example, if you are walking somewhere to visit a friend, why not call them on your phone's hands-free kit as you head there in order to get more than one thing done at once?

Likewise you can chat to someone while you're washing the dishes and you can work on your novel while commuting home on the train. That latter option is actually a *very* good use of your time as the commute for some people can sap 1-2 hours of their life! If you're currently just using it to sit and stare forward that's a *huge* waste! You could be reading, learning a new skill or starting a business on your laptop.

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And if the train is too busy? Then consider taking a longer route that will give you a table to yourself. Again, sometimes getting more time to do the things you love means thinking outside the box! You're actually getting home later but if it means you get more time to spend doing things you enjoy, then that's a good thing!

You can also multitask when you're doing things you enjoy. So for example, if there's something on TV you really want to watch then you could always do some bicep curls while watching it. Likewise, watching your favorite TV show while you're washing up in the kitchen means you're now getting some enjoyment and value out of that time!

Another smart trick is to multitask with your socializing. Socializing takes up a surprising amount of time and one of the things you're going to have to get very good at when it comes to prioritizing your time is simply saying *no* to people and turning down invitations. It feels hard at first but you'll find that it makes you hugely happier in the long term and much less stressed! (You also have to prioritize which people you want to see...)

But to multitask and get more done when it comes to catching up with friends and keeping in contact, something you can do is to have more group meetings – even try introducing your friends to each other. If you're

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struggling to see everyone you want to see, then invite everyone to a big meal and you'll have ticked everyone off your list in one go!

Another option is to do things with your friends that you would have done anyway. The perfect example of this is going to the gym or working out. If you're struggling to see your friend as often as you'd like, then just invite them to come to the gym with you once a week. Now you'll be in better shape and you'll get twice the value out of that hour because you'll be building your friendship as well.

Likewise, if you want to start a class, why not suggest doing that with a friend? Again, you're getting double value because you have the fun of seeing the friend *and* the benefit of the class. It also makes you more likely to stick to whatever class it was that you were interested in doing.

And as one *more* excellent strategy, why not get your friends to do the things you *don't* want to do with you? If you're struggling to stay in contact and get quality time with a friend who lives nearby, then why not suggest that you do your weekly shop together? Or why not suggest that you both go shopping for clothes together? You can even time your commute correctly.

Now jobs that you had to do and that you were dreading have become worthwhile, fun and rewarding activities!



FILLING YOUR TIME WITH
WORTHWHILE ACTIVITIES

Chapter 8: How to Fill Your Time With Exciting and Worthwhile Activities

So now you've started to free back a ton of time using lots of different strategies and tips. The next question is what you're going to *do* with all this new time that you've earned yourself.

Because if you're just going to spend all of it lying in front of the television then you really may as well be working or spending time tidying up in the kitchen!

So how do you start filling your time with worthwhile and exciting activities? How do you create that rich tapestry of memories that reflects a full and long life?

Adventures and Exploration

One thing to do is to keep filling your time with novel and new experiences. As we said in the introduction of this book, novel experiences are more likely to be 'stored' in the mind as vivid, long-term memories. This means that you appear to have done more even in a shorter space of time when you think back over the past weeks and months.

So make sure that you are open to as many exciting new opportunities as you can be and that you seek out the things you think are worthwhile. And don't let yourself make excuses: money, time and energy should no longer be excuses and if you are trying to save money but won't go on the trip that you've always dreamed of, then you are really making the wrong priorities again.

And keep in mind too that you don't need to travel far or spend lots of money to have an amazing adventure. If you live in the US then there are some incredible sights and adventures to be had through short-haul travel whether you visit Alaska, Disney Land Florida, New York, Vegas, the Grand Canyon, Canada, Mexico...

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And if you live in the UK or Europe, then why not take a short flight for less than a long train journey and visit the Swiss Alps, Southern France, the Leaning Tower of Piza, London, Rome or the mini desert in Gran Canaria?

And there are probably things just down your road you haven't don't yet too! There are probably stunning walks, hidden cafes and restaurants, museums and nearby beauty spots. Very often we take for granted all the things right on our doorstep!

And what about all the activities you could be doing, free and otherwise? Have you ever been bungee jumping? Paragliding? Skinny dipping? Sand boarding? Skateboarding? Trampolining? Horse riding? Star gazing?

While it's a bad thing to live your life through Facebook, this can nevertheless be a good barometer of whether you're having an adventurous life right now. Take a look over your pictures and ask if they're exciting or if you're constantly doing the same thing. If it's the latter, then have a think about what you could do *easily* to change that!

Other Activities

Likewise, you should also think about the other activities and goals you want to pursue. Many of us seem to think our options each evening are to watch TV or go to bed. But if you look on your bookshelf, you'll probably find you have lots of unread books. You probably have games you haven't played. And when was the last time you played a board game with your family? Or how about the last time you made something out of clay?

Try to rediscover that child-like enthusiasm for doing creative and unique things in the evenings and challenge yourself to learn, experiment and grow.

The problem here is capitalism. While capitalism isn't a bad thing itself, it unfortunately encourages hundreds of companies to invest an awful lot of effort convincing us of all the things we need. We work hard to buy new DVDs, new games and new magazines even when there's *so much* we want to do that we haven't done yet. Thus we work harder, push further and continue to not actually stop and enjoy the things we have.

From now on try keeping a list. Each time you think of something you'd like to do, write it down. And then, instead of sitting down to watch TV in the evening, try doing something on that list instead!

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Oh and as a challenge, I want you to try and go without TV for one week. You'd be amazed at the creative ways you find to enjoy yourself in the evening and how much more memorable and fulfilling those are!



LEARN NEW SKILLS FASTER

Chapter 9: Accelerated Learning – How to Learn New Skills and Start New Projects in Less Time

Learning is one of the very best ways to use your time and many of us state that the reason we want *more* time is so that we can learn a particular topic or a language.

But a lot of us just don't know how to go about learning things efficiently and thus this ends up taking more time than we think it will too.

In short: you probably already *have* the time you need to learn German or electronic engineering – you're just putting it off.

Here's how to get started...

Start

The first and most important tip is simply to *start* right away. That initial point where you actually get started will often seem like a big deal *until* you bite the bullet and it becomes apparent that you were dreading nothing. And once you've actually started, you'll find it's much easier to carry on and that you actually want to devote a little more of your time to learning these new skills and abilities.

DiSSS

Tim Ferriss is a name we haven't come across yet in this book but we owe him much. He is the author of *The 4 Hour Workweek* which was one of the first best-selling books to deal with the topic of lifestyle design. More recently, Tim wrote another book called *The 4 Hour Chef* which deals with learning a new topic quickly (he uses cooking as an example). He outlines four steps you need to take to learn any new topic efficiently and uses the acronym 'DiSSS' to describe them. They are:

Deconstruct

This is where you break down what it is you want to learn into essential and reproducible parts. So for example, if you were learning something like

wakeboarding you might identify that you need to learn the posture and the terminology while developing grip strength. Likewise, you also try to identify the most crucial skills to master and you can do this by asking experts what they would tell a beginner to learn first for maximum results.

Selection

Next, you are going to take a look at all those parts and decide which ones you are going to learn. It might be that there are certain things you can learn that will allow you to save time or by-pass other tasks entirely. For example, Tim recommends that when learning a new language, you start out by first learning the 200-or-so most commonly used words. Because these common words make up such a large part of our language, this means that you can actually get by in a lot of conversations using them. Even if your grammar isn't ideal, you'll at least be able to identify what people are talking about and this is better than nothing!

Sequencing

Deciding the order to learn things in is also a very good idea. Tim points out that sometimes the best sequence isn't necessarily the most obvious one or the one that is usually taught. For instance, he believes that you can learn chess faster if you start with the finishing moves and work backwards. This way you better understand the end point so you can fill in some of the blanks to learn how to get there.

Likewise, he says that dancers should learn how to dance as though they were the opposite sex. This teaches them what effect they're trying to create *for* the other party!

Stakes

Finally, Tim recommends setting stakes in order to force yourself to learn the subject. For instance, you can give money to a friend and tell them to donate that money to a charity you *don't* support if you fail to complete your objective. This incentive might just be enough to speed you up!

Have a Goal

Finally, this tip is not related to DiSSS but comes from my own personal experience: always have a goal to work towards. In other words, don't just try and 'learn a subject' but instead learn that thing in the context of trying to achieve something else. This will give you more of a structure to your learning and will help you to better understand what everything you learn is for and how it fits in in a practical sense.

Don't learn programming – set out to make a simple app and learn as you go. Don't learn German – learn enough German to be able to order your meals and shop on a holiday you'll go on at the end of the year. This also makes the project more meaningful and rewarding and that in turn helps to motivate you!



10 WAYS TO SAVE 10 MINUTES EVERY DAY

Chapter 10: 10 Ways to Save 10 Minutes Every Day

Of course there are *many* more ways you can save time and buy back minutes and hours of your life to spend doing things you love!

The aim of this book has been to help you to understand the *principles* of saving time – as well as to understand why saving time is so important and so useful. You can then apply those principles yourself to get the desired effects.

But likewise, let's finish up by looking at a few more strategies you can use to save a little more time...

1 Team up

If there's a job you are spending too much time on and someone else is doing a similar job – why not share the burden? For example, get your friend to do your weekly shop every other week and you do theirs. It takes less time to add things to a cart if you're already out than it does to go shopping twice as often!

2 Order online

To be fair though, the *best* way to save yourself this time is simply to order your regular shopping online. You'd be surprised just how many of your things you can get on a standing order and just how much time this can save you!

3 Eat the same lunch and breakfast

While it's fun to eat different, exciting meals every dinner time – your breakfast and lunch are really just practical meals. Why not save yourself time and 'decision fatigue' by having set meals at these times. It also makes shopping easier *and* makes it easier to manage your diet!

4 Time yourself

We often go slow in the mornings when leaving the house as well as when washing up. An easy way to speed yourself up is to set a timer and to try and beat your best times when you do these kinds of tasks.

5 Check email at set times during the day

If you are checking your email throughout the day, then you will be 'responsive' in answering those messages. Instead, try to stay proactive by avoiding your email until set points during the day.

6 Make lists

Lists save time by giving you a clear set of tasks/goals to carry out in a set period of time.

7 Buy in bulk

One more shopping related tip: buy in bulk! This is an easy way to reduce trips *and* to reduce those annoying times you spend searching for more batteries.

8 Get your kids to chores

We discussed outsourcing earlier and the ideal people to outsource to around the home are your children! Get them to sweep the drive, wash the car and more for pocket money. Don't have kids? Hire the neighbors!

9 Make sure your computer is fast

We waste an inordinate amount of time waiting for our laptops to turn on and for programs to launch. Either replace your laptop with something speedy (look for a SSD harddrive) or clean your old one up!

10 Wake up 10 minutes earlier

And go to bed ten minutes later. I promise you, you'll make better use of those 10 minutes in the morning than the 10 minutes you had in the evening!



Conclusions

And with that, you should now know how to start saving time in your routine and spending less time on things that don't offer any value. Your aim is to fill your life with exciting and interesting things that make you feel as though you are really living: but you can't do that if you're working until 7pm and then spending over an hour cooking!

We've been over a ton of tips and ideas and we've seen how you can out-source, delegate and optimize a lot of the small chores you've been doing. We've also seen how we can save time and get more value from life by doing things with friends, or by learning to say 'no' to invitations we don't really want to accept. And we've also seen the *very* key role that energy plays in all of this.

The key message of this book though can really be summed up with one simple instruction: learn to prioritize.

And that doesn't just mean prioritizing your health over spending more time at work. It doesn't just mean prioritizing certain people in your life because you don't have time to make *everyone happy*.

What it really means is understanding that your time is your most valuable asset – and that this should always be your focus and your priority. Don't allow yourself to waste your years working and don't focus too much on making money.

Look for a job and a lifestyle that leaves you with more time to do the things you love and you'll be happy – regardless of financial or material gain. This is the big secret to life and now you know how to make it work for you!

Good luck and have a great *time*.