

PsyPAG Quarterly

Tips on...Making the most of your limited time

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All academics are busy. It is now a fact of life. None of us can fit everything we want to do into the time that we have available. Time is a limited resource, therefore, like money we have to be economical with it. Before looking at some general tips, you need to examine where all your time goes. The best way to do this is to keep a log for a week or two. However, there are lots of other simple and practical things that you can do to create more time for yourself. Here are a few of my general tips:

- **Learn to say 'no'** – Although this is much easier said than done, try to learn to say 'no' without feeling guilty
- **Know your role boundaries** – Know what is within your assigned roles and responsibilities. If you have the power to delegate then do so.
- **Be strategic** – Although there are lots of worthwhile jobs that need doing, try not to do things that do not count for anything.
- **Make use of 'to do' lists** – Draw up 'to do' lists based on short and longer-term tasks and prioritize them. Learn to know the difference between important and urgent as they are not the same!
- **Earmark particular times to check e-mails** – Check your e-mails periodically rather than answer everything as they come in. You will save time overall.
- **Be tidy and organized** – Keep your work area tidy and uncluttered to avoid spending endless time searching for things that you should have where they are instantly.
- **Be ruthless about attending meetings** – If you do have to attend meetings encourage the practice of finish times as well as start times.
- **Avoid long working hours** – Work smart rather than hard. Remember that working long hours is not the same as working hard. Build in lots of breaks.
- **Work from home** – If possible, work at home for at least a day a week. You will get far more done in one day at home than two in an office.

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