

# Save Hours Each Week *With These Tips!*

## In the Kitchen

- **Buy frozen veggies :**

Precut and washed, picked and frozen at the peak of freshness and ripeness...frozen veggies are not only a time saver but also a budget saver.

- **Double or Triple it :**

It really doesn't take much more time or work to double or triple a recipe and freeze the extras, but the time savings payoff is huge on those made-ahead meals.

- **Use a Slow Cooker :**

Not only does this help save time (cooking is already done when you get home), it saves turning on the oven and heating the house.

- **Chop Veggies or Shred Meat in a Food Processor :**

The key to this trick is to only pulse the food processor a couple of times, until the food is the texture you want it to be. It literally shaves 10-20 minutes off a single meal prep, depending on what you are making.

- **Use an immersion blender :**

This is great for blending soups (in the pot) to make them smooth and creamy without needing to do it in batches in the blender. Less mess too!

- **Meal plan and meal prep :**

Planning ahead saves you time (and money) at the grocery store, and dedicating an hour or two on the weekend to prepping meal items ahead of time saves time and stress during those busy weeknight scrambles.

- **Cook a large meal on Sunday :**

Then use leftovers with additional ingredients for easy meals through the week (ex: use one leftover side dish with a new meat option on Monday, and the leftover meat with a new side item or veggie on Tuesday)

- **Order groceries online to be delivered (or order ahead so you simply pick up once you get there) :**

Many grocery stores now offer this service (check your favorite grocers to verify they offer it), and Amazon is also introducing this service as they expand into the grocery market.

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## Home and Life

- **Keep things clutter-free :**

As Benjamin Franklin once said: “a place for everything, and everything in its place”. Keeping your home picked up and clutter-free helps reduce distractions and saves time by not searching for items that you need.

- **Keep everything in a calendar :**

Whether it's a big calendar on the wall/fridge or an online calendar or app, put everything into it to eliminate double-booking and ensure that everyone knows what is going on.

- **Get the kids to help clean :**

Help motivate them (or keep them motivated) by singing a clean-up song, making the job a game or even a friendly competition between siblings

- **Dedicate a basket (or pile area) at the bottom of the stairs :**

This space is to be used for items that need to go upstairs (or downstairs). Place items in this area and take them with you the next time you would normally go up or down the stairs. This saves many repeated trips and lots of time!

- **When cleaning out the car, have two empty bags :**

One bag is for collecting trash and one is for items that need to be put away in the house (toys, gloves, books, etc). When you are done cleaning out the car, take the bags inside and clean it out (or throw it away, if it's trash). This saves the time of multiple trips into the house to put things away or throw trash away.

- **Keep a giveaway pile :**

Dedicate a small space in your home to items that you want to sell or donate. As you come across items that fit into either category, add the items to the pile. That way you don't need to search high and low for items that you want to get rid of; they are already accessible and ready to go.

- **Schedule in regular workouts :**

The benefits are huge: better sleep, better focus and mental clarity, and better health.

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## Time Management

- **Disconnect to focus :**

When you really need to focus on tasks (work, etc), close your email and turn off your phone (or send calls to voicemail). Fewer distractions greatly improve focus and productivity.

- **Sign up and schedule automatic bill pay :**

I don't know about you, but the less time I spend going through bills and writing checks, the happier I am! Most banks have automatic bill pay services, and some utility providers also provide the option of automatic bill pay. Often, you will find the option of paying a set amount each month or paying the full bill amount. Just make sure to account for these expenditures in your budget so that you don't go over budget (it can be so easy to do).

- **Schedule time for your errands and personal tasks :**

Build in time to pay the bills, check email, run errands, go to appointments and dedicate that time to those activities (instead of multi-tasking - stay focused and get it done!)

- **Create and maintain an up-to-date “to-do” list :**

Do a mental dump of everything that you need to get done in a “to-do” list; this frees up your brain to focus on what's in front of you. Once you have your “to-do” list created, mark off each task once it's completed. Focus on one task at a time; don't multi-task!

- **Set up and use email filters :**

If you use Gmail, this already happens to some degree, and it can be adjusted to better meet your preferences; set up email filters to direct emails where you want them. Only send the emails you really want to deal with to your inbox; this helps reduce distractions.

- **Say “no” :**

Life gets busier and busier, and so many people tend to overbook themselves for many different reasons. Learn to say “no” to people (even if it's uncomfortable) to give yourself enough time to take care of what you need to do instead of spreading yourself too thin.

- **Communicate changes to family members :**

It can be so easy to implement some new system in the household - whether it's to save time or get organized - and forget to tell our family members what we are trying to do! If no one else knows about it, they won't participate in the system!