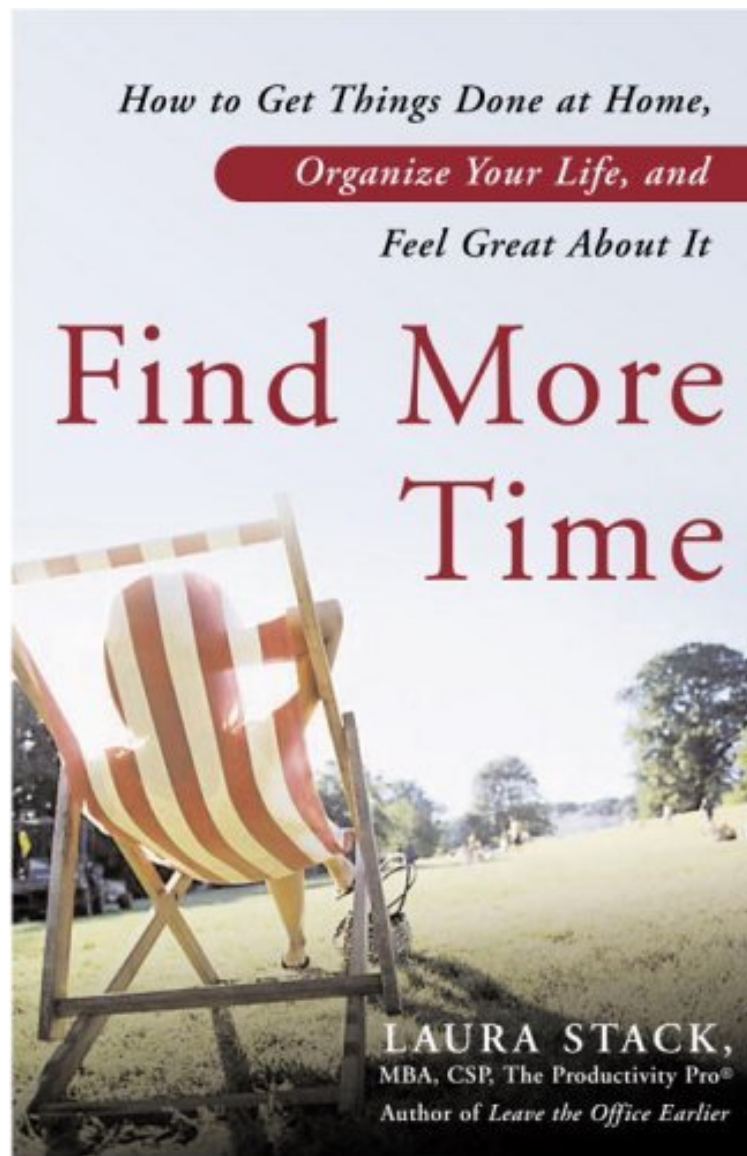


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Find More Time: How to Get Things Done at Home, Organize Your Life, and Feel Great About It

Laura Stack

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bible at the moment. When I first received it I thought it was ho hum... until I started really delving into it. I have already put into practice some of her tips and the quality of my life has improved in just a a short time. I use it constantly as a reference and have recommended it to friends. I can't say enough how helpful it has been and intend to read her book on office management as well. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. like the other time managing books By Mi This book focusses more on getting the home managed, but it is like alot of others that I have read. Unless you put into practice the lessons in these books they do no good. So just get up and do it. Try [...] this is a good time managing site. It works for homes as well as for offices. Teaching you how to form routines and good habits. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good advice By Rose but it was a bit irritating to read because the author is a superwoman and not like most average people around.

You have a sink full of dishes to wash, three loads of laundry to do, seventeen bills to pay, thirty-six e-mails to answer, a big stack of novels on the nightstand yoursquo;d love to read, and zero minutes of free time. You canrsquo;t add more hours to the day, but Laura Stack, *The Productivity Proreg;*, will help you make the most of the time you have and get things done. *The Productivity Proreg;* helps you determine what you have under control and where you need to improve. Are you good at managing your bills but canrsquo;t find time to exercise? Do you get your kids to all their activities but end up constantly behind on laundry? Laura Stack shows you how to improve every area of your life. Whether you need help on just a few things or feel like your life is totally out of control, *Find More Time* will help you organize your space, time, and information to reduce your stress and create and sustain a productive home environment, so yoursquo;ll have more time to enjoy your life.

About the Author Laura Stack, MBA, CSP, is an internationally recognized productivity expert and bestselling author of *Leave the Office Earlier*. As president of *The Productivity Proreg;*, Inc., she gives over 100 seminars and keynote speeches a year on managing time, reducing stress, and getting organized. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. CHAPTER ONE Mastering the First Pillar--PLANS Without a plan, life just sort of happens to you. But with a plan, you'll make sure your daily activities support what you want to create next week, next month, next year . . . until, at the end of your days, your activities will have contributed to creating and living a successful life. You don't want to accidentally create your life. Your plans should be purposeful, so your life moves in the direction you desire, based on your ideal vision for yourself. My father is a veteran, a retired colonel in the U.S. Air Force. I'm proud of my Daddykins (my pet name for him) for all the years of service he gave to our country. Thanks to Dad's success, I'm a veteran, too. Only my war wasn't the Gulf War, Afghanistan, or Iraq--it was the turf war that comes from moving a lot as a kid. Today, when people ask me about my childhood "home," I think about the pink bedroom in Colorado, the yellow kitchen in Ohio, the whitewashed porch in Texas. I've moved nearly thirty times in all and hated every single one of them. The fact is, moving is a traumatic experience--considered the third-highest stressor behind death and divorce. So I survived by taking control of what I could. I became a master at packing and organizing. Before the movers had finished unloading the van, I had my room up and running. And I'd already moved my Barbie and Ken into their house. Every stuffed bear, bunny, and unicorn was neatly arranged in precise formation on my bed--exactly as they'd been in the house before--at attention for the Colonel's inspection. My friends used to laugh at my perfectly clean bedroom, my compulsive list making, and my overwhelming urge to organize. But these experiences helped me with my life plan. The upheaval of my childhood taught me how to create order out of chaos, which laid the foundation for my work today. My background helped me build the systems I use today as *The Productivity Proreg;*, teaching professionals how to spend their time moving closer to their goals in work and life. You must also have a clear plan for your life's goals and dreams. When you clearly define your priorities and work productively toward them, you'll be able to accomplish your goals sooner. Planning reduces crisis and lowers your stress; buys you a night of rest, without you lying awake, thinking about tomorrow; gives you time to assess whether your schedule for tomorrow is realistic; and allows you to start each day feeling confident and ready. You have your marching orders. All you have to do is--march! PLANS quiz item 11. Have a personal mission statement for my life. Who Am I? Where Am I? Unless you're independently wealthy, you must work in some capacity. Some people don't get paid for their work in dollars but still contribute significant value to their families or communities. Some people work because of a calling to be a missionary or social worker and may not receive a lot of money for that work. Other people are paid very highly for their work outside of the home. But your work is just a part of your life. You need money to provide food, clothing, and security so you can do important things with your life. You work to live; you don't live to work. You are so much more than what you do for a living! Be careful not to get caught up in what you do, lest you define yourself by your job. To remind yourself of this truth, first create a personal mission statement that will help you evaluate how to spend your time. A personal mission statement is an essential written document that helps you make decisions about the way you spend your time and evaluate your choices. It guides you in the right direction when you're faced with many choices. Defining your values helps you describe where you want your life to go based on your ideal vision for yourself and your definitions of success. To write your mission statement, sit down in front of a computer or grab a journal and pen, and write down the most important values in your life: for example, health,

managers in a truly flexible workplace don't care when or where the work gets done as long as it gets done with great results. It hinges on giving workers more authority and responsibility. How can you add flexibility to your life? Check with your human resources department to find out what alternative schedules are available. If your child gets out of school at four o'clock and no after-school program is available, ask about arriving at work extra early on some days and leaving early to pick up your kids and your neighbor's kids on other days. Perhaps your neighbor can work the opposite schedule. Or possibly you could do your job from home, which would allow you to take short breaks for drop-off and pick-up runs. If you want flexible work hours but believe that your boss wouldn't dream of it, get brave! The trend to add flexibility is gathering steam. Even if an official policy isn't on your company's books, you may be able to create your own program. People often avoid pursuing a telecommuting arrangement for fear of their bosses' reactions. Usually, however, the concern of most supervisors comes down to this: "How can I manage an employee I can't see? How do I know if that employee is working or not?" This trend demands that managers learn to focus on results and achievements instead of attendance. An employee who is "present and accounted for" is not necessarily productive. Is Your Job Right for Telecommuting? Even if you think you have a "telecommuting personality," your job has to fit the situation. If you want to approach your employer to discuss a telecommuting arrangement, use this list to spur some introspection before proceeding. HR professionals actually use this list as a conversation document to assess the viability of this arrangement with interested employees. It notes the following characteristics of good "work at home" jobs:

- * Jobs that require frequent use of the telephone
- * Jobs that don't rely on person-to-person contact
- * Jobs in which most of the work is done on computers
- * Jobs that deal with a series of projects that have definite beginnings and endings
- * Jobs that can be done in small, possibly confined areas
- * Jobs that don't rely on constant feedback from coworkers
- * Jobs requiring tasks that can be done by one employee or combined with the work of other employees at a later date

Once you make sure you're suited to working from home and have a job that supports it, be proactive in securing the necessary approvals to make it happen. Whatever solution you choose, you must be proactive in gaining flexibility at work; it's rare that others will do it for you. Plan to actively pursue work that fits your life, rather than trying to squeeze your life into your job.

PLANS quiz item 44. Keep effective to-do lists so things don't slip through the cracks. I Know There Was Something I Was Supposed to Do Today! One important planning consideration is what you're going to accomplish each day. In his role as the dean of creativity for the Walt Disney Companies, Mike Vance had a strategy he called Do-Doing-Done. The idea is to start a task in the Do column, move it to Doing quickly, and then move it to Done as quickly as possible. That's a fine idea, but it doesn't really matter how you format your list. What does matter is that you have a list. In fact, you need several lists. Without them, your brain forgets many of the things you have to do as well as the cool ideas you come up with. Having lists will enable you to plan your day most effectively and will relieve that nagging sense of "what did I need to get done . . ." Chapter 6, Paper, also contains information on tools for planning.