

**Family Living Focus**  
by  
Multi-County Extension Agent  
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**Plan to Make the Most of Time**  
When I was in college, I received a coffee cup that was decorated with one word: "Procrastinate."

Although it was originally bought as a joke, the idea of "putting it off till tomorrow" fit (and still does fit, twenty years later) into my way of doing things far more than I'd like to think.

As much as I like to blame that familiar balancing act of job, home, and family, putting things off is a problem that is far more basic — tied up in the habits of self-management.

The truth of it is that "Gone with the Wind's" heroine, Scarlett O'Hara, is not alone in her decision to "think about that tomorrow."

Many people are dissatisfied with the way they spend their hours, days, weeks, and months. Use of time seems to be a universal problem. It is important to remember that people are the only "things" that can be managed. Time can not be managed (contrary to what is promised in workshop flyers), nor can it be saved — it can only be used. Becoming an efficient time user has many pay-offs, including increased satisfaction, more relaxation, and much less stress.

Not getting things done is the result of two factors, according to time use consultant Alex MacKenzie. These are external ones, caused by other people, and internal ones, coming from within the person, herself. Although most people think of those external time wasters as the most important ones, the internal ones are the most common, and the easiest to fix because the person who is most easy to control is yourself.

To use time wisely, you have to control time wasters. Only through self-discipline and a dedication to change will you have the time to do the things that are important to you.

Jean Woloshuk of West Virginia University offers the following actions you can take now to become a more effective time user:

- **ESTABLISH A PLAN** to help you see all of the tasks you have to do. Set priorities so that the most important things get done. Break large jobs into many little tasks.

- **USE A TO-DO LIST**, writing down those things you want to accomplish during a day. Prioritize this list, and move from the most important item to the least important one. Stay with each task until you have finished it. This will give you a sense of accomplishment because you are now completing the tasks that are most important to you.

- **USE YOUR "PRIME TIME"**, the time of the day when you're at your highest energy level to do the jobs requiring the most attention and effort.

- **TRY DELEGATING TASKS** to others who have more time. You don't need to do everything yourself. Remember to make this a positive experience for you and your "helper" by telling them what needs to be done, any time limits, and the resources available.

- **LEARN TO SAY "NO"** to tasks you shouldn't be doing. As Patricia Fripp, author of "Get What You Want" said, "There is no point in doing well that which you should NOT BE DOING AT ALL." Exercise control over your life so you can spend time productively on meaningful activities. Although no one can create additional minutes to add to the 24

hours he was allotted each day, there are ways to free up time to use it more wisely.

**PRACTICE THE BARTER SYSTEM**, swapping jobs with others in your family or workplace.

- **USE SERVICES** for pickup, delivery, travel and cleaning assistance (if resources allow). Some of these services may be free; others may pay for themselves when you are able to take time doing something far more important.

- **DO TWO THINGS AT ONCE** — unload the dishwasher while talking on the phone, or exercise while you watch the evening news. Bank your waiting time by investing it in small tasks. Write store lists or meeting agendas while your car is being serviced.

- **CLEAN THE CLUTTER** out of your home and workspace. Throw away unnecessary papers, sell or give away unused items, and have a place for everything (this is the hardest step for me — yet to be mastered).

- **ELIMINATE ANY HABITS** that once made sense but are now time-wasters. As children grow older, remind yourself that part of growing up is taking over tasks that parents once did.

A good time user tackles projects with the belief that time is a most valuable resource that needs to be divided among important tasks, according to a plan. You are an important person, who needs time and space, not only to work but to concentrate and relax. Become "responsibly selfish," planning time use in a way that benefits you — and you'll find that this benefits others, too.

By making the most of your time, you can go a long way toward making the most of your life, gaining the freedom to do the things you thought you could only dream about.

# Nutrition Education Made Fun And Easy

**HARRISBURG** (Dauphin Co.)—Lancaster County cattle producers have teamed up with others around the country to help fund the production of two new high-quality nutrition education materials through the beef check-off. The *Discover Nutrition Tool Kit* and the *Lean 'N Easy—Preparing Meat with Less Fat and More Taste* video kit both offer fun new ways to teach consumers to take charge of their nutrition habits. These unique programs are the products of a joint effort by The American Dietetic Association (ADA) and the National Live Stock and Meat Board.

The *Discover Nutrition Tool Kit* was designed as a guide to implement nutrition education programs in supermarkets and restaurants throughout Pennsylvania and across the nation. The kit, which was created with an additional partner, the Food Marketing Institute, builds on ADA's National Nutrition Month campaign, "Discover Nutrition Anytime, Anywhere." It has been distributed to dietitians and supermarket consumer affairs professionals.

Part of an industry-wide effort to teach Americans about nutrition and healthful eating, the *Discover Nutrition Tool Kit*, succeeds in helping health professionals edu-

cate Americans in a fun, easy way. Dozens of "idea starters" including a supermarket tour with several themes, such as a "Spring Shape-Up Tour" and a "Focus on Food Safety Tour," take Pennsylvania dietitians and retailers through the year. Furthermore, how-to tips for promoting the "Discover Nutrition Lunch Club" along with details on how to host a Nutrition Day once, or several times a year, are included for Pennsylvania dietitians and foodservice operators.

A second project, the *Lean 'N Easy* video kit covers all aspects of eating meat as part of a lowfat diet — from how to choose lean meat cuts to healthier cooking methods. The educational program, featuring a registered dietitian, takes a humorous, yet educational approach to patients' fears about low fat eating, showing that it can be delicious, easy and not something to fear.

This kit was distributed to dietitians in a focused effort to teach consumers that by following just a few simple preparation and cooking guidelines, favorite main dishes can become even healthier. Other materials are included to assist the instructor in reinforcing the cooking principles demonstrated in the video.



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