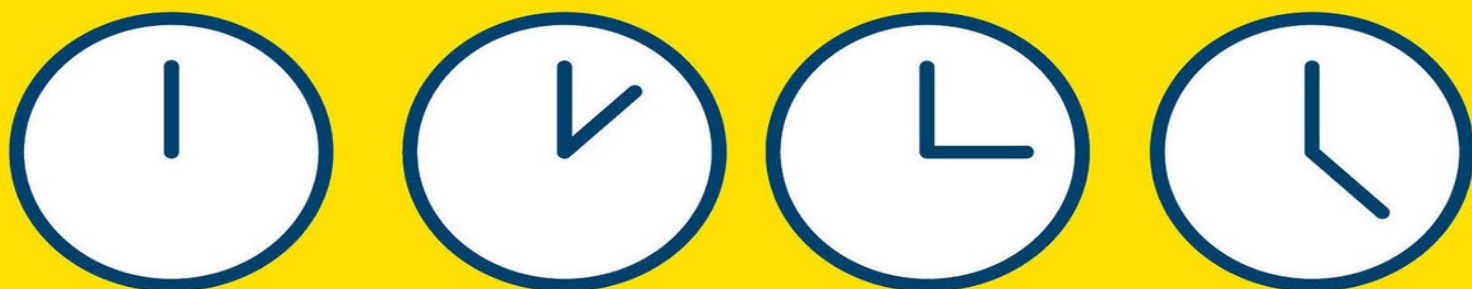


HOLLY REISEM HANNA

TIME MANAGEMENT



IN 20 MINUTES A DAY

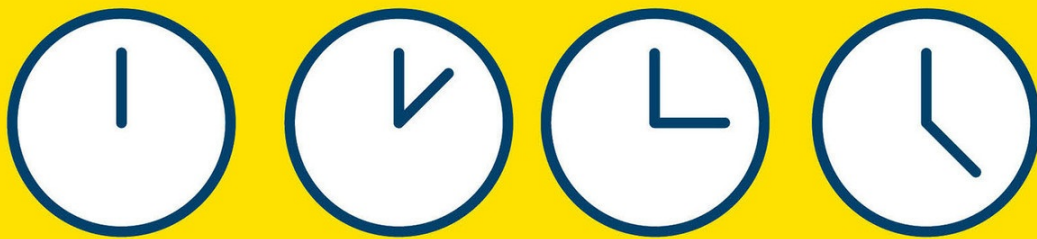
Simple Strategies to Increase Productivity,
Enhance Creativity, and Make Your Time Your Own

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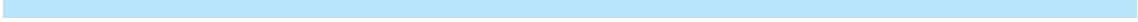
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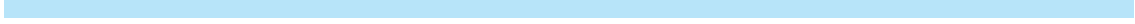


TIME MANAGEMENT IN 20 MINUTES A DAY

Simple Strategies to Increase Productivity,
Enhance Creativity, and Make Your Time Your Own

HOLLY REISEM HANNA





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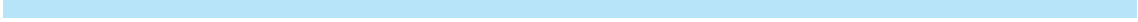
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR





Introduction

Before I became a mom, I didn't worry much about time management.

On the professional front, I had an office job with set hours, a relatively consistent workload, and goals and milestones generally set in advance for me. I showed up on time, did my job well, and at the end of the day, I went home. My schedule rarely wavered and almost never called for structural “outside-the-box” solutions. On the personal side, however, my story was a bit different. During weeknights, my usual mode of operation was to find a last-minute online recipe, swing by a grocery store, and prepare it on the fly when I got home. Meal planning for the week was far from a priority. Instead, my husband and I lived in the moment. This time of our lives consisted of joining friends for impromptu happy hours and dinners out, carefree days on the lake, and unrestricted travel. Our free time was our own, and we never really thought about how running errands on demand and accepting last-minute invites to events and gatherings was a luxury. Life was spontaneous and easygoing. But all that changed when I became a parent.

My husband and I planned on having children one year after we got married, and when the time came, we were thrilled. Finally, a little one to complete our family! The decision to leave my job and become a full-time stay-at-home mom was an easy one, as I wasn't happy working as a nurse. I figured I could use this “time off” to explore different career paths and eventually start something new. Looking back, I now know this is when I began to spread myself too thin. Caring for an infant was challenging, to say the least. Throw in sleep deprivation, a newly formed freelance business, and my old carefree ways of managing time, and I was a mess.

For the first few years, I found myself in a constant state of exhaustion, trying to juggle play dates, doctor's appointments, freelance work, and household chores. I would often wonder, How do other people do this with such ease? I was constantly questioning my effectiveness in every area of my life.

I remember one time when my daughter was two years old. I was at the airport headed to my friend's bachelorette party, when I realized my credit card wasn't in my wallet. In a panic, I called my husband and told him that I thought I had lost it. He immediately switched into investigative mode and started

calling the establishments where I had last used it, but none of them had it. Then, as a last-minute thought, he half-jokingly asked our daughter if she knew where mommy's credit card was. Sure enough, she did. The day before, when I was trying to juggle work, entertain her, and manage the household, she had removed the credit card from my wallet and put it in her purse. While I was relieved to know that my credit card was safe at home, I felt like I was failing as a mother. It was then and there that I knew my fly-by-the-seat-of-my-pants methods had to change.

When I returned from my trip, I began devouring time management books and articles. I experimented with different calendars, planners, and online productivity tools. Slowly but surely, I tested and tried out different strategies to see what worked and what didn't. It was through this experimentation that I found systems that helped me gain clarity, streamline processes, and get more done in less time. It wasn't always smooth or successful, but it taught me that I was capable of being a dedicated mom and a successful business owner at the same time.

Today, I run a flourishing business from home, manage multiple freelancers and clients, and also handle normal day-to-day activities like cooking, cleaning, picking up my daughter from extracurricular activities, and helping her with her homework. But now, unlike when I first started out, I use simple, effective time-management tools that allow me to work less while earning more money and having more free time.

Did I mention that I also make time for weekly yoga classes, coffee dates, leisure travel, and lots of quality time with family and friends? Using the tools in this book, I believe that you can create more free time for the important things in your life, too.

If I can do it, so can you.

How to Use This Book

Picture this. The alarm goes off, but instead of wishing for 20 more minutes of sleep, you wake up feeling refreshed and ready to take on the day. You glide through your morning routine, and you even have enough time to enjoy breakfast and a few minutes of reading the news before heading off to work. When you arrive at the office, you review your schedule for the day and start knocking tasks off of your to-do list. When lunchtime rolls around, you opt for a smoothie and yoga class, which leaves you feeling relaxed, yet energetic.

Your afternoon, which is filled with back-to-back meetings, ends up being productive and poignant, and when you leave work, you feel accomplished and fulfilled. Back at home, you enjoy a glass of wine while making dinner. And after homework and chores are out of the way, you and your family sit down to play a board game. You end your day with some leisurely reading and a long, hot bubble bath.

Does this sound fictitious, kind of like a dream? Nowadays, most people rush through their days feeling exasperated, flustered, and anxious. Honestly you would think that with all of today's technological advances and modern-day conveniences like robotic vacuums and mops, email at our fingertips, and the ability to download movies, books, and music on demand, we would have more free time to do the things that we love. But now, more than ever, people feel maxed out, stressed, and in desperate need of something different.

While there are many theories on why we are so busy all of the time, one fact remains a constant and that's no matter who you are, where you live, or what you do for a living, we all have the same 24-hour time period available to us. So why is it that some individuals seem to flow through each day with joy and ease, while others are continually pulling their hair out trying to squeeze in the bare minimum?

I'm glad you asked because, in this book, you are going to find seven impactful sections for getting your life in order so that you can fill it with more of the good stuff and less stress. From managing emails and meetings to finding your focus, creating and prioritizing your goals to getting organized, you'll be able to navigate these areas with simple strategies and methods that are laid out step-by-step in front of you.

But, before you jump in, I want you to know that creating new habits and introducing new strategies takes time and effort. You can't just snap your fingers and instantly become more productive. You have to be willing to do a little work on the front end so that you can reap the benefits on the back end. Changing old patterns, habits, and behaviors may be uncomfortable, maybe even a little scary, but if you want to see significant changes in your life, you have to be willing to embrace the process.

This book will serve as your personal guide to creating the life you have always dreamt of. In it, you'll explore many different time-management strategies, tools, and methods that can help you achieve more free time in your day. While these approaches aren't new, they will give you a complete framework for reorganizing your day, which in turn will change your life forever.

Don't worry—if you come upon a method that doesn't suit your personality or time-management style, move on to another. There are multiple tools and approaches included in this book. But always keep in mind, the best time-management system is the one that works for you—there is no “one size fits all” when it comes to productivity.

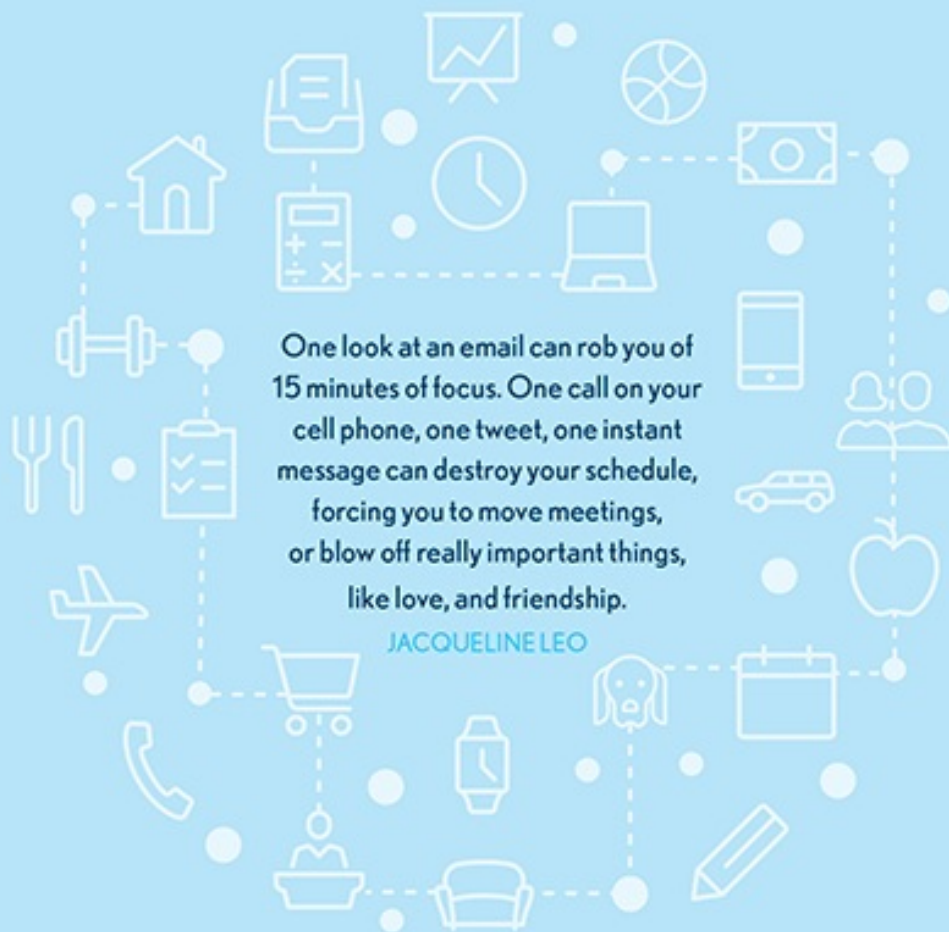
As you are progressing through the book, you may notice that you have some areas in your life that need more attention than others. While it may be tempting to skip ahead or cherry-pick through the information, the best way to use this book is to start at the beginning and work all the way to the end. Each chapter builds upon the next, to give you a complete time management overhaul. As you are working your way through the book, I encourage you to take notes and highlight ideas and tools that you would like to implement in your life. And if you find yourself struggling in one area, go back and review what you just learned. This is your personal time-management journey, and it should be treated as such.

Ideally, after you finish reading each chapter you should set aside 20 minutes to work through the steps that are outlined in each section. You may find that you excel in some areas, and that you need a little more work in others. Don't get discouraged if it takes you a little bit more time to work through some of the processes. Time management is an investment in yourself where there the initial deposits made up front pay off in dividends throughout the course of your life.

If you are ready and willing to make the necessary modifications to your daily routine and habits, I invite you to settle in and get started with this guide.

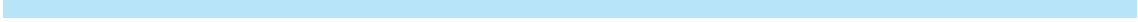
I am not going to sugarcoat this: You will have some work to do. But, if you're willing to do the work, you too can have a life where you move through your day with more ease and satisfaction, accomplishing the things that are most precious to you. In fact, I would never have been able to write, let alone finish, this book if it weren't for utilizing these simple time-management hacks.

Ready to get started? Let's dive in.



One look at an email can rob you of 15 minutes of focus. One call on your cell phone, one tweet, one instant message can destroy your schedule, forcing you to move meetings, or blow off really important things, like love, and friendship.

JACQUELINE LEO



CHAPTER 1

Attack Your Inbox

Technology is a beautiful thing—it simplifies our lives in so many ways. We can stream movies on demand, order groceries online, all while checking our email in between. But, at its worst, technology has caused us to become hyperconnected and overly distracted, which dramatically affects our productivity.

First Things First

Nowadays, most people have ditched traditional alarm clocks in favor of using smartphones to wake up each morning, which makes your smartphone the first (and last) thing you see every single day. Games, social media, world news, our bank accounts—they're all just a tap or swipe of the finger away. And of all those apps, one stands out for its widespread use and unique capability to make so many people groan internally every time they open it: email.

It's easy to wake up and casually check your email to see what's going on. Unfortunately, this causes you to start your day off on the wrong foot. Instead of focusing your energy on your most important projects and tasks, your mind becomes distracted by other peoples' wants and needs. Instead of starting the day off proactively, you've now flipped the switch to a reactive mode.

To make the most of your mental clarity, schedule a time to check your email when you're not at your peak. Your projects and tasks should take precedence when you're most focused. By making this one simple change and properly utilizing your prime time, you can save yourself countless hours each week.

But how do you break the habit of checking email first thing in the morning? If you're using your smartphone as an alarm clock, turn off all automatic push notifications so you're not tempted to sneak a peek when an alert goes off. As soon as you get out of bed, grab your phone and put it in your

purse, computer bag, or somewhere where you won't be inclined to check it—as they say, out of sight, out of mind. Do the same with your computer and/or tablet. Turn off all email alerts and don't open any other apps that aren't relevant to projects you are working on.

If you're still struggling in this area, try using an alarm clock instead of your smartphone and turn off your smartphone before you go to bed. Leave your phone off while you're working; only turn it on again when you come to a natural stopping point in your project or task. If you still can't break the habit, download the Freedom app, which blocks distracting websites and apps during certain periods so you can focus on the task at hand.

To prevent unnecessary correspondence if you do keep your phone on during these no-email periods, activate your phone's "Do Not Disturb" mode (available on iPhones and most Androids), along with an autoresponder that informs others what times you answer email throughout the day. Also, having a well-crafted email signature with essential details such as your name, address, phone number, website, office hours, and social media profiles is an excellent way to prevent unnecessary emails and questions.

If you have a job that requires you to be constantly connected, request that critical communications come through another medium, like a text message or phone call. This will allow you to receive your important messages without having to dive into emails first thing every morning. If your company requires you to be accessible via email, set up email filters that will sort your messages according to priority, so only essential communications are visible on the main window.

IMPLEMENTATION: Turning off push notifications and email alerts, setting up priority email filters, crafting a descriptive email signature, and downloading the Freedom app should take a total of no more than 10 minutes.

Organize and Prioritize

Now that you're on the path to creating healthy email habits, it's time to get your inbox in order. Just like the physical files that you keep for important

documents at home and work, you should have a system for organizing essential and critical email correspondence. For work emails, create individual folders based on your clients, projects, and priority status, such as “urgent,” “today” (items that need to be completed immediately), “next week,” and “monthly” (things that can wait). You can use this for your personal emails as well.

When you prioritize and create folders, you have a virtual filing system in place that makes it easier to locate and reply to your messages. Setting up folders also prevents your inbox from becoming your virtual to-do list, and it reduces stress by keeping emails to a minimum.

FILTERS AND TEMPLATES

Once you create an organizational system for your email inbox, take it one step further by setting up automated filters and pre-written responses to help streamline your workload and keep your system in place.

If you subscribe to newsletters, industry-related publications, or anything else that is delivered to your inbox on a regular basis, set up automatic filters to sort these emails. For instance, newsfeeds and monthly updates from professional organizations can easily be filed into different folders to be read later, keeping your inbox free for your most pressing emails.

No matter what your job is, you most likely encounter the same questions time and time again. The easiest way to deal with this is to craft a series of response templates like, “Thank you for asking about our return policy. All items can be returned within 30 days of purchase for a full refund when accompanied by the original receipt.” By composing your responses up front, you save yourself the hassle of having to think up something each time and rewrite the same answers over and over again. What’s great about this is that you can create a template list as the questions come in so you don’t have to do any extra work. Once you have your canned responses, just copy and paste them into a Word document so that you can easily retrieve them.

Using a Word document will work fine for storing your templates, but one trick I learned from Michael Hyatt ([MichaelHyatt.com/Templates](https://michaelhyatt.com/templates)) that’s even more efficient is saving my canned email responses to different email signatures. When an email comes in, all I have to do is select the appropriate email signature and the text is automatically generated into the body of my email.