



GET SMART

The Secret Weapons of Organised Women

Find more hours in every day with these shortcuts to sailing through life. Twelve busy and motivated women share how they stay on top of their game

By Hanna Marton

Log your time

"There are 168 hours in a week," says **Louise Di Francesco**, head of public-relations company Verve Communications (vervecommunications.com.au), board member at Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and mother of two. "There's no point trying to manage your time if you don't know how you spend it, so keep a detailed diary for two weeks." When you read it over at the end of the fortnight, patterns may emerge, and these give you insight into how you can better manage the minutes. "Once you know where you spend your time, plan every hour to be constructive. Buy a large diary and set out the recurring tasks—daily, monthly and weekly—then every night before bed, fill in the detail of what you need to schedule for the next day. Add 20 minutes to your schedule every day to sit and do nothing. Relax."

If you open an email, action it

"Don't read an email three times before responding—just do it! If you find that emails disrupt your workflow, turn off the alert and log in at certain times of the day," says **Antonette Golikidis**, founder and director of Little Innocents (littleinnoscents.com.au) organic-baby-care products. "And never leave documents cluttering your desk: file them or bin them."

Embrace technology

Carolyn Bollaci, Australasian head of MediaMind (mediamind.com), a global provider of digital-advertising solutions, is constantly on the move and swears that technology powers her life.

For example, she uses the FaceTime app [99 cents; itunes.apple.com/au] to video-chat with her young son during the day. "And I'll use recipe apps on my way home in a taxi to work out what to cook that night," she adds.

Download Evernote

"I've recently discovered Evernote [evernote.com]*—an amazing free tool that makes anyone an organisational genius, even if they weren't born one,*" says **Lissanne Oliver**, director of organising and decluttering company Sorted! (sorted.net.au). A virtual scrapbook, Evernote stores web content, documents, notes, audio bites and photos; it even has handwriting recognition. "It will blow your mind," promises Oliver. (And get your life in order!)

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Work smarter, not harder

Lorna Jane Clarkson, founder of Lorna Jane Activewear (lornajane.com.au), hits the treadmill for better productivity. "I believe that getting 30 minutes of exercise when I'm tired gives me four hours of renewed energy—and it helps me think. I lose my breath, I find my answers."

Good thinking, 99

Stay in touch

Want to catch up with more friends? Heed the advice of the New South Wales Minister for Health and Medical Research, **The Hon Jillian Skinner MP**: "In the past, I've held monthly 'Coffee with Jillian' sessions. I letterboxed about 2,000 residences near a coffee shop to let them know I'll be there and that they should join me. I'm looking to start it again in 2012." You may not know 2,000 people, but seeing even 10 friends at once makes sense. It's social multitasking!

Reset your body clock

Not a morning person? Turn yourself into one. "A pre-6-am start means you can check emails and exercise before your day begins," says **Debbie Wosskow**, mum of two and founder of UK home-swap-holiday company Love Home Swap (lovehomeswap.com). "When things are hectic, I also get healthy food delivered, so I don't have to cook." In Sydney or Melbourne? Try eatfitfood.com.au or research a local company.



Buy gifts in bulk

We know it sounds impersonal, but buying multiples of great finds saves you time and money in the long run. Another tip: “Buy birthday presents in advance. When you see something you know someone will love, get it then and there,” suggests **Melanie Gleeson**, co-founder of the Endota Spa chain (endotadayspa.com.au). “And, delegate, delegate, delegate. Surround yourself with people whom you can really trust, people who can make decisions and comments on your behalf.”

Be app-y

“Apps are my new best friends,” says **Ashleigh McInnes**, director of media and communications consultancy Papermill Media (papermillmedia.com.au). “Sleep Cycle [99 cents; itunes.apple.com/au/app] monitors my sleep patterns to analyse whether I’m getting enough quality sleep and wakes me up when my natural waking cycle dictates. Coles Shopmate [free; itunes.apple.com/au/app], another good one, allows me to scan the barcodes of products I buy and save the list for my next shopping trip.”

Take time out

“I never leave home without my diary,” says fashion designer **Leona Edmiston** (leonaedmiston.com). “I write everything in pencil, and once it’s locked in, I rewrite it in pen! I’ve always made a point of having beautiful accessories: a lovely pen, diary and iPad cover, as it makes them a joy to use.” But,

Embrace Gmail

Elizabeth Ta runs her own promotional-merchandise company, exercises six days a week and is a mum. “I use Google’s Gmail, which incorporates a calendar, task list and contacts sheet, all of which sync to my smartphone. The calendar emails me a reminder 15 minutes before every appointment—and I can access it from any computer. Even better, I can share my calendar with family and friends, so we can all see what everyone else is doing and easily schedule time together.”

she warns, you need to know when to stop all the planning. “Sometimes you need 10 minutes to recharge,” says Edmiston. “Just sit in the fresh air, chat to a girlfriend or colleague or check out your favourite website. It’s a great way to refocus!”

Outsource social media

Executive coach **Rhondalynn Korolak** (imagineeringnow.com), a Twitter user, has her personal assistant tweet on her behalf. “She’s synced all my accounts so that if I blog or write an online article, it automatically sends the link to Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn,” explains Korolak. “She also monitors my friend requests and replies to posts.”

A TECH EXPERT’S PICK OF THE BUNCH

BlackBerry Bold 9900 smartphone (free with a \$79/month 24-month contract with Optus, optus.com.au, or \$699 from blackberrystore.com.au)

“This is great for people who need email and web browsing fast, and it’s sturdier than most gadgets,” says Damian Francis, writer and technology expert. The Qwerty keyboard is still a feature, but you can choose from the touch screen or the track pad to breeze from function to function.

iPhone 4S (starting at \$799; store.apple.com/au)

The latest incarnation from Apple connects to the iCloud, another innovative service from the company, which automatically pushes all your documents, music and photographs to your other Apple devices. Speaking of happy snaps, the phone’s 8-megapixel camera takes shots like a pro, and the voice function, Siri, is like having an actual personal assistant: your voice is its command.

Wunderlist (free; 6wunderkinder.com/wunderlist)

It doesn’t cost a penny, yet it streamlines your to-do lists and organises your schedule like a dream. “It’s a great application you can use on your iPhone, Android device, iPad, Mac, PC and the web; plus, it allows people to collaborate with each other on lists and ideas,” says Francis. “I use it all the time.” Set reminders for important tasks so you never miss a deadline again.

iWatchz Q Series watchband for iPod nano (\$34.95; store.apple.com/au)

It’s like a watchstrap, but it ingeniously holds your 6th-generation iPod nano instead of a watch face. Now you can listen to music and podcasts at the flick of your wrist or while you work, workout and play. You can use the built-in preferences on your nano to change the background wallpaper (and match it to your outfit!). Or, keep it simple and just use it to tell time.