

How to Get stuff done

**FEELING LIKE YOU HAVE SO MUCH TO DO BUT SO LITTLE TIME?
USE THE FIRST TWO HOURS OF YOUR DAY TO TAKE BACK CONTROL**

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1 Manage time like you manage money

When we are truly managing our time, we are thinking about it as a valuable resource that we want to get the best return on. Like money, once time is gone, we are unable to get it back. And, unlike money, we can't save it or store it, so we have to make the best use of every minute of the day. Some people earn very little money and still manage to do a lot with it, and others who earn a lot often don't have much to show for it. It's the same with time, except we all have the same amount of time. And some people seem to be able to achieve a lot more than others.

2 Identify your best time

Answer the following questions honestly:

- * Is there a time of day when you feel the most alert and energetic?
- * Is there a time of day when you feel foggy and tired?
- * Which of these two times, therefore, would you consider the most valuable?
- * If you consider your alert and energetic time to be twice as valuable as your foggy and

tired time, doesn't it stand to reason that you would be more discerning about what and who you give that time to?

3 Design your best day

Designing your day better means figuring out what needs to be done that day but it goes beyond to-do lists. Rather than writing down and working through a long list of tasks, we should run our tasks through the filters of intensity and impact. Intensity is the amount of brainpower a task will require. Does it need deep thinking, concentration and focus (high intensity)? Or can you do it with a blindfold on and one hand behind your back (low intensity)?

Impact is the return you will get on the time and energy you spend. If a task will have a high impact or return, it should be prioritised more highly than something that has low impact.

4 Protect the first two hours of your work day

Scheduling high-intensity and high-impact work for the first two working hours is the first step to truly managing your

time. Not only are the first two hours likely to be our optimal time for getting stuff done, it's also the time where we can set ourselves up for success.

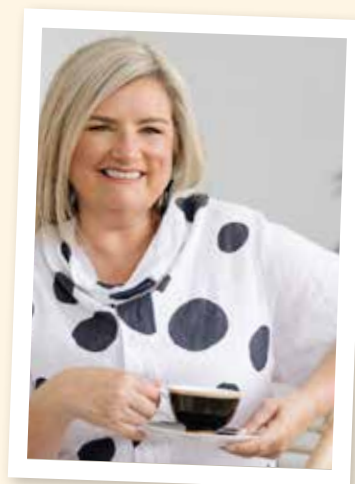
It's the time of day when we can be proactive by choosing what we need to do and taking control. It's the time for you to work on the things that will give you the greatest return on your energy-input investment.

The first two hours is when we have the greatest levels of alertness and mental capacity, so we need to make the most of it on the most difficult jobs or the things that require great attention. Protect this time vigorously! Block it in your diary so you have greater control as to how it is used.

5 Do things your future self will thank you for

Think about things you could do today that will make the first two hours tomorrow better. For example:

- * Meal preparation
- * Planning what you will wear
- * Getting the kids' school gear organised
- * Booking a meeting with yourself so you know you have at least one hour of peace. ☺



Remember
It's always the simple things done consistently over time that have the greatest impact. Protecting your first two hours daily for your most important things will move your activity horizon from behind you (playing catch-up) to in front of you (getting ahead of the curve).

Donna McGeorge is the best-selling author of the *It's About Time* series and a global authority on productivity. Visit donnamcgeorge.com