

## WELLNESS

## TURN BACK TIME

How to give yourself a 15 per cent time refund

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What would you do with an extra day every week? If I had asked you in 2019, you might have said spend more time with your kids, read, take up a hobby, exercise. Or maybe, catch up on some sleep?

I don't think you would have said fill the saved time with more emails and meetings. And yet, in 2020 and 2021, when many of us were working from home, we got our commute time (up to 10 hours per week) "refunded", but we perpetuated our already hectic lifestyles. Instead of recognising the time refund as a gift, we simply absorbed it back into our busy, out-of-control, overwhelmed lives.

In Australia, we work an extraordinary 3.2 billion hours a year in unpaid overtime we have 134 million days of accrued annual leave, and 3.8 million of us don't take lunch breaks. We are addicted to being busy and preventing us from getting the rest we need to perform at our best. It leads to burnout. Here, productivity expert Donna McGeor shares simple ways to overcome it.

**WIPE THE MIND**

Write down everything you have on your mind right now. This is not a to do list but a brain dump. List everything from "replace batteries in smoke detectors" to "research next holiday" to "prepare client presentation". Writing things down produces a sense of relief. It's like a weight being lifted from your shoulders that creates a sense of relaxation and control.

**BOOK A MEETING WITH YOURSELF**

How do you feel when a meeting is cancelled? If you're like most people, the primary emotion would be relief, because you have a whole hour to get some work done. Rather than being at the mercy of someone else, schedule a one-hour meeting with yourself every day that you can look forward to. A break from having to be attentive to others, when you can focus on what is important to you.

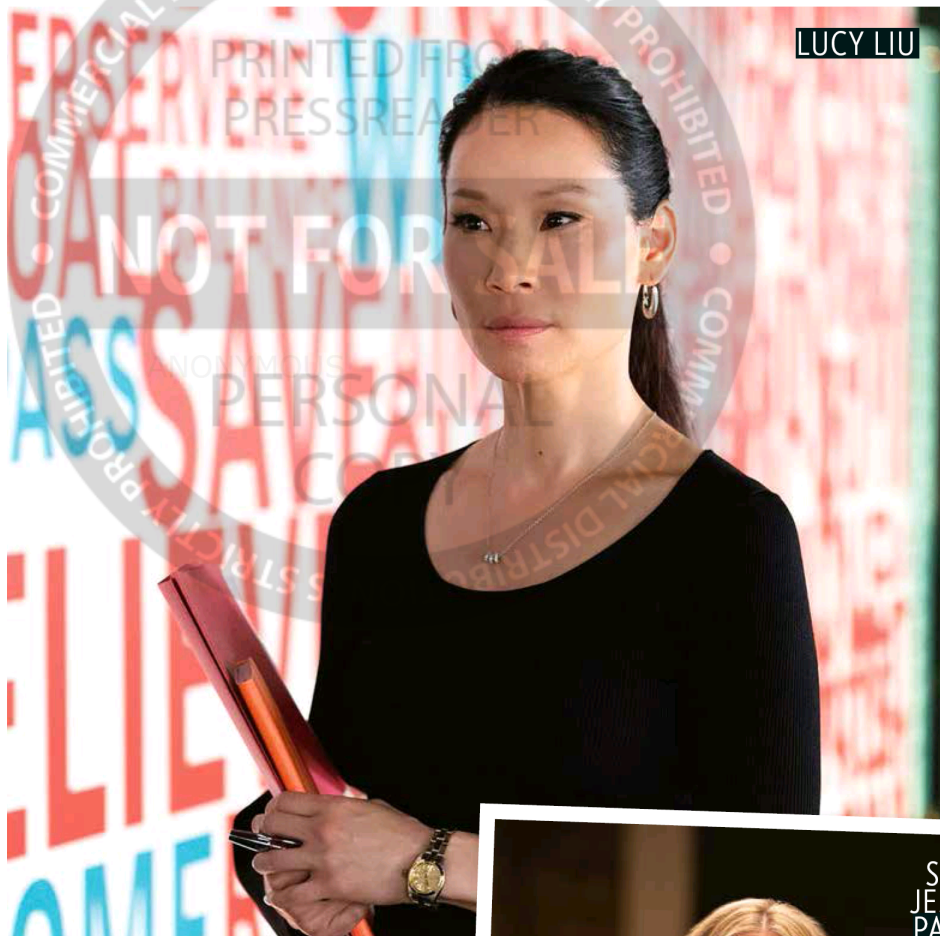
**DEFRAG YOUR DAY**

For many of us, our work days always feel busy but are not productive. You may

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consider yourself a multi-tasker, but you could actually be a “project jumper”. Jumping from task to task to keep chipping away at your never-ending to-do list. Chunk and batch your similar, or like work, together so that you can maintain focus. Time-block these activities to free up time later in the day.

## HAVE A MEETINGS BLACKOUT

Don't schedule meetings before 10am and after 3pm. This protects your most productive and mentally alert time – in the morning and the afternoon – for you to wrap things up, so you can get away from work at a decent hour.

Slow down, take stock and operate with a 15 per cent margin or buffer so you can sustain your performance over time. This might seem arbitrary or too little, and in many ways it's more about what happens in our heads than about watching the clock.

Strive to feel as though you are performing at a steady pace, always with this tiny bit of room to breathe, not as though you are constantly catching up or struggling.

SARAH JESSICA PARKER



You will feel in control instead of overwhelmed and exhausted from pushing yourself (or those around you) too far.

*Donna McGeorge is a bestselling author and global authority on productivity. Her book series It's About Time covers meetings, structuring your day and doing more with less. It is available in bookshops around Australia or can be ordered online via [donnamcgeorge.com](http://donnamcgeorge.com)*

TRIED &amp; TESTED

## RENPHO EYE THERAPY MASSAGER

**WHAT IS IT?** An eye massager device adopting trigger point therapy, oscillating pressure and rhythmic percussion massaging. It includes built-in heating pads to provide a comfortable temperature between 40-41.6°C.

**THE VERDICT** Sitting in front of the computer writing for hours gives me tremendously bad eyestrain and headaches. So, when I heard that the Renpho Eye Massager could give my tired eyes a break, I jumped at the chance. The slick white eye mask, which is extremely portable by folding 180 degrees, has a high-tech space-age look. The mask is also easy to put on and control – simply slip the eye massager over your head, choose from six relaxing acupuncture massages with soothing heat and select a choice of ambient music or Bluetooth your own. Once I turned on the device I was plunged into a world of calm. I found the pulsing movements pleasant and while the full force massage on my temples was a bit strong, the ability to choose your setting is a winner.

After 15 minutes my eyes felt completely refreshed and my mind and body totally relaxed. Although more expensive than your typical eye mask, it's a refreshing concept, so it gets a big yes from me.

- Lisa Brookman,  
Senior Features Writer

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