



YOUR PRACTICE / BUSINESS

Time-Saving Tips for Your Practice & Life

Kelley Mulhern, DC | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

Of all the finite resources we possess, perhaps the most valuable one is time. There never seems to be enough time to accomplish everything that must be done, and all too often we sacrifice things in our personal life to meet the demands of our practice. Let's discuss some simple time-saving tips you can implement in the office or at home to regain some precious time.

Tip #1: Delegate

Most people think of delegating tasks to employees or subordinates, but I encourage you to expand your definition to include other businesses and even your family. Yes, you can save money by managing every detail of your practice, but consider what you can make in an hour or how happy you could make your family by spending an hour with them. What about cutting your grass at home? Sure, you can do it, but you need to consider where your time is best spent.

At home, as your children grow up, give them age-appropriate responsibilities. This teaches them accountability, skills and conscientiousness, and has the added benefit of freeing up some of your valuable time to focus on other things.

What home responsibilities can be delegated to the kids? Cleaning their rooms, doing their laundry, setting the table, loading the dishwasher, taking out the garbage and more. Older kids can even practice their culinary skills by preparing some meals for the family. If you're not quite there yet, you can still delegate this task to one of any number of healthy meal-prep companies that are now popular.

Tip #2: Scrutinize

Take a hard look at your processes and procedures. First, what is their purpose? Second, are they meeting that purpose in the most efficient and effective way possible? Third, are they redundant,

outdated or obsolete? If this is not your forte, you can delegate this task by hiring an outside consultant, coach or practice-management company to help you.



At home, turn the same close eye to your home routines. Are you doing things purely out of habit or because it's the best way to reach your goal? For example, many people clean the house in a haphazard way when they have a little extra time, or go on a cleaning rampage because they can't stand it anymore. Cleaning professionals say it's more efficient to do all like chores together.

Instead of cleaning one room thoroughly and then moving on to the next room, they recommend you do all of your dusting ... all of your picking up ... all of your vacuuming ... etc., before moving on to the next chore.

Tip #3: Cluster Book

You've probably heard this in relation to peak patient hours versus long appointments. For example, instead of scheduling all appointments whenever the patient wants them, book them according to your office flow. Decide what times of day are typically slower and book your long appointments (consults, exams, re-exams and such) during those times. Book your regular appointments during your busy hours when you can keep the pace moving.

Take this a step further by having your staff "cluster" their time, too. Have them set scheduled times for doing things like checking email, opening mail, cleaning the office, etc., so they don't jump inefficiently from one thing to another. This can also help prevent the email or social media "rabbit holes" people sometimes fall into!

At home, look for ways to rearrange the schedule for convenience and efficiency. Consider blocking out one weekend day every couple of weeks to do your own meal preparation – there are so many great recipes you can prepare ahead of time and put in the freezer. Then all you have to do is take it out and cook it when the time is right. Try to plan your errands so you aren't backtracking, and use a list so you don't have to return to the store for forgotten items.

Tip #4: There's an App for That

Are you trying to organize your social media posts? Perhaps you want to do better with self-care, but struggle to fit it into your day. Ask your friends for their favorite time-saving apps, or do a Google search. HootSuite and Social Report are two popular ones for coordinating and scheduling social media posts. They even offer analytical tools, reports and more.

Are you maximizing the potential of your EHR software? Many EHR systems today are incredibly robust and have a multitude of features to explore. For example, investigate to see if your EHR program allows for patients to complete the subjective portion of their notes. That could be a game changer for some practices!

There are also apps to encourage and track everything from water consumption, to workouts, to meditation and everything in between. Even the most technologically challenged person can find an app or two that makes their life easier. Work smarter, not harder, and let technology serve you.

Tip #5: Macros

In line with tip #4, this tip also has to do with adopting technology to save you time. In terms of a practice, macros are found in our EHR programs and can be very helpful when writing SOAP notes. Essentially, a macro is a button you can click on which then creates a sentence or paragraph to flesh out your notes.

For example, I created an "AOx3" macro button. When I click this button in my software, it adds the following statement to the patient's record: "Susie is a 40-year old yoga instructor. She's alert and oriented to time, place and person, and is in no apparent distress."

Another great use of a macro is to define a specific orthopedic test or procedure. For example, the macro might state the name of the orthopedic test, how it's performed and what a positive test indicates.

Macros take some time to set up initially, but they can save tremendous amounts of time in the future. One word of caution: Don't take macros too far. Your SOAP notes must be individual and relevant, not "cookie-cutter."

Jim Rohn said, "Time is more valuable than money. You can get more money, but you cannot get more time." You can create more time in your life – and obtain a better balance – by delegating tasks, reviewing and updating procedures, cluster booking, and using technology. Imagine how different your life would be if you "found" five to 10 hours a week. Commit to implementing one tip per week and watch your life change!

