

WELLBEING MATHS

Today's fast-paced, deadline-driven times hardly leave us a moment to catch our breath, let alone **boost our wellbeing**. It may sound counter-productive, but taking precious time out and spending it **more efficiently** can pay dividends when it comes to having a healthier – and **perhaps even richer** – future. Wellbeing writer Rachel Toal reveals how to reinvest your time and **multiply your happiness...**



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'Save time by using apps to schedule tweets and make online bids'

Evening planning = productive mornings

Spend a few minutes on night-time preparations to save time scrambling around when your alarm goes off. Putting bags by the front door, making packed lunches, even agreeing time-slots for the shower, can all save valuable moments at the crack of dawn. 'It's easy to waste time by being unprepared,' says social psychologist Dr Sandra Wheatley. 'Little things like choosing outfits the night before help you feel more prepared and save time in the long-run.'

WELLBEING BONUS: A calmer morning sets the tone for the rest of the day. Plus, feeling in control in the evening will help you sleep soundly. Research shows that early risers are more proactive than night owls*, so

set the alarm 20 minutes early and use the time for a mini pre-breakfast exercise session, proven to burn more fat throughout the day. And make the first appointment of the morning with yourself. 'Plan what you want to achieve that day,' says organisation expert, Cory Cook. 'You'll start feeling proactive, instead of chasing the day reactively.'

Scheduling technology = uninterrupted days

Save time checking your computer and smartphone, using apps like Hootsuite to schedule tweets, and Goofbid which automatically bids on eBay. Changing your settings so that alerts don't flash up removes the temptation to respond to everything 'there and then'. Schedule specific time slots to check emails and social media, and be strict. Responding in dedicated sessions takes less time than snatched bouts throughout the day.

WELLBEING BONUS: 70% of us now own smartphones and many people find the lure of social media, including Twitter and Facebook, very hard to



BRIGHTER FUTURE: WELLBEING

EASY WINS

Some super-effective health and lifestyle changes are also the simplest to achieve...

- Sit up straight, keeping your shoulders back
- Take the stairs instead of relying on the lift
- Drink more water
- Turn off technology an hour before bedtime
- Use your daily commute to catch up on reading
- Buy a large calendar and plot out the week ahead

resist. So it's important to monitor and control your tech time. Bidding apps can also remove the impulse to over-bid – something scientists put down to fear of losing the 'social competition'.

Streamline your home = space to focus

Invest time in regular 'decluttering' sessions to save time searching for lost valuables and cleaning unnecessary objects. With the average home stuffed with thousands of cubic feet of items we rarely use – up to twice as much as 30 years ago – it pays to be ruthless. 'Set yourself a regular weekly time slot,' says Katherine Slater, director of time-saving consultancy, Spare Pair of Hands. 'Whether it's recycling or sorting paperwork, you won't have to worry because you'll know it's under control.'

WELLBEING BONUS: Research shows that a cluttered environment restricts the brain's ability to focus and process information†. Consider selling unwanted items on eBay to earn extra cash. And, with studies showing that giving leads

to increased happiness, donating to charity will help others and give you a psychological boost, too.

Considered shopping = healthier choices

Set up an online shopping template to save hours wandering through aisles. Time spent on your first online order pays off when logging on next time, when you can repeat purchases and choose from favourite products. 'Sit down and plan two weeks' worth of freezable menus to avoid the time and hassle of "winging" your choices on the day,' says Cory Cook. Plus, you'll find money-off deals for your first online shop and promotions at [sainsburys.co.uk](https://www.sainsburys.co.uk).

WELLBEING BONUS: Shopping in a relaxed, non-pressured environment minimises stress levels and discourages impulse-buying of unhealthy food. Save cash by choosing special offers, making the most of Nectar point deals, and monitoring your spending before you check out. 'Even delivery fees are offset against money spent on petrol,' says Cory.

Green breaks = energised workflow

Take time to recharge regularly at work to experience renewed energy and greater productivity. For the ultimate energiser, try a technique which has been dubbed 'green breaks'. Stand and face something green, like a leafy plant on your desk or even a picture of a forest. Focus on the image and breathe deeply, raising your hands above your head as you inhale, and down again as you exhale, then take a few sips of water.

WELLBEING BONUS: The human body follows a pattern called ultradian rhythms. These are cycles of around 90 minutes, repeated over a 24-hour day, where the energy levels in your body gradually decline. At the end of each cycle, the body needs time to recover. 'The green break technique provides a refresher for your body and mind,' Cory Cook explains. And, with plants proven to increase wellbeing, creativity and productivity at work, investing in shrubbery for your desk could pay dividends for career progression.