

HOW TO CREATE MORE PEACE IN YOUR LIFE

& MAKE SPACE FOR
WHAT REALLY MATTERS



By The American Institute of Health Care Professionals, Inc.

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Introduction: Do You Feel Pulled in Too Many Directions?

When you look up the word "frazzled" in a dictionary, is there a picture of you? Do you constantly feel out of sorts, out of time, out of control and out of patience? Is stress a normal, everyday part of your life? If those conditions apply to you, you probably want desperately to trade in all of those negative emotions and feelings for peace, serenity and free time.

People today are being pulled in so many directions. Women and men, whether adults, children or teens, seem to have so many responsibilities. Add the constant bombardment of digital data and marketing messages, electronically delivered information and 24/7 exposure to electronic monitors and smartphone displays, and it is no wonder that men and women, young and old, have a constant desire to develop a healthy balance between their career, their family life, and personal "me" activities.

This guide on how to replace the daily chaos and madness in your life with peace and tranquility, while creating ample time to spend on the things that truly matter, is made for the following people.

- Busy moms that never seem to have enough time
- Male and female small business owners and entrepreneurs that need to reach a healthy balance between their work and family lives
- Internet marketers with tabletop businesses that are interfering with their personal growth and relationships
- Stay-at-home moms and dads that are simultaneously managing a home and running a business
- Anyone that feels like they are spinning their wheels, headed nowhere, stuck in repetitive tasks and obligations that create little real value, people who daily think, "What am I doing this for?"

If you identify with any of the people just described, if you feel less than fulfilled, stressed out and on edge most of the time, this guide can help. You will discover guilt-free ways to use boundaries to create more peace and tranquility in your life. You will learn the art of clearing clutter and distractions from the workplace and home, how to manage your time to beat stress and simple ways to minimize. Let's get started handing you back your life by applying sensible boundaries that prioritize what really matters to you.

Create and Stick to Boundaries (That You Choose Yourself!)

Sometimes we think of boundaries as holding us back. Actually, when you set specific limits on your activities and behaviors, the results can be very positive. Take up the following boundary-setting practices, stick to the boundaries you create, and you will enjoy more peace and fulfillment.

Never work past a specific time – Obviously, this is going to apply to entrepreneurs and self-made business owners. If you work for someone else, you are going to have a schedule made for you. Even so, you can promise yourself that you will not work one minute longer than you have to. For the self-employed person, setting a specific work schedule each day and sticking to it is a great stress-buster. This can even apply to housework if you often find yourself trying to catch up when you should be resting and recharging.

Write down your limits – We all have personal limits. Emotionally, spiritually, physically and even mentally, we have certain limitations. Sometimes, pushing yourself past your limits can be refreshing and positive. When this happens too much, especially when someone else drives you to this point, negative things tend to happen. You can't set boundaries until you know your limits, so take some time to write down what you can tolerate and what you cannot.



Don't be wishy-washy – If someone is overstepping boundaries you set, be very direct with them. Let them know specifically how you feel and this will not only give you a sense of empowerment, but you may find out the person overstepping your boundaries didn't even realize they were doing so.

Give yourself guilt-free permission to say no – No one should be expected to always put others first. It is certainly nice to be a good friend, but sometimes, you let your friends and loved ones run you over because you always say yes when they ask you a favor. Start loving yourself and trading in stress for peace by saying no more often.

Start small – There are probably several areas in your life where you would like to develop and maintain healthy boundaries. Rome wasn't built in a day, and all of the many boundaries you are thinking about building are not going to appear overnight. Start small, setting, embracing and sticking to one set of limitations. Work until that boundary is well-established before moving on to another.

Decluttering Can Change Your Life... In a Good Way

Did you know the human brain is built for organization? Neurologists understand that your brain cries out for order and routine. It likes when your 5 senses tell it that you are surrounded with predictable experiences and objects. Every time you smell, see, feel, hear or taste one more thing, your brain has to go to work processing that action. Visually, whether you consciously focus your sight on something or not, your eyes are sending your brain information about every single thing that is within your line of vision.

In this way, having a cluttered workspace or home automatically and unconsciously forces your brain to process information. If your senses are constantly attacked with data from clutter, and your brain is forced to process that information without rest, stress hormones like cortisol are released. Feel-good chemicals are in short supply, and your stress level rises. Practice the following tips to get needless clutter out of your life, and you will find more fulfillment and less stress:



- Clear off your workspace. Remove everything that you will not be using, and place needless objects more than an arm's length away.
- In your home and office, remove objects that visually and audibly grab your attention, if they are distractions from what you need to be doing.
- Every time you walk somewhere, at home or at work, have something in your hands. There are dozens of opportunities every day to maximize your movement.
- Make 4 large boxes, labeled donate, relocate, trash and keep, and spend time every week adding items to those boxes from each room of your home.
- Fill one trash bag a day with unneeded clutter.
- Employ the clothes hanger trick. Hang all of your clean clothes in your closet with the hook of your hanger facing towards the back wall of the closet. After you wear something, put it in your closet with the hanger hook facing you. After a few months, you will realize what clothes you can get rid of.
- Perform the 12-12-12 decluttering trick. Find 12 items to donate to a worthy cause, 12 items to throw away and 12 items to return to their proper place.

Practicing Self-Care and Making Time for Yourself

Too often, we don't take time to take care of ourselves. We prioritize work commitments and the care of loved ones above our own mental, emotional and physical health. If you don't take care of yourself first, you are not as physically and emotionally strong enough to care for those people you love. When you let your physical health slip, every relationship in your life suffers, your mental energy lags, and you become less efficient and productive at just about everything.

Brush and floss your teeth every day. Get a haircut. If you are a man, shave every day. Dress-up, because studies show that people feel better about themselves when they are dressed "up" rather than "down". Adopt a neat, clean, simple hairstyle rather than sporting a messy mop of hair.

Exercise or enjoy significant physical activity every day. Stand up more than you sit. Limit the time investment you make on Facebook and social media, and stop watching brain-sapping reality shows that are anything but real. Don't feel guilty about prioritizing and scheduling "me time".

Read at least one new book every month. Build a compliments file and fill it regularly, reading it regularly as well. Spend 5 or 10 minutes every hour just being silly and goofing around. Every few hours, go outside and spend time in a natural environment. Do one healthy selfish thing every day. Make time for your favorite hobby. Donate something, perform an act of kindness for a stranger, play with your pet and have a good laugh.

Trade in the fast food drive-through window for a home-cooked meal with lots of unprocessed fruits and vegetables. After you groom yourself each morning, look in the mirror and tell yourself that you look and feel fabulous, and that you feel better each and every day.

Stop spending your time with emotional vampires that suck time, emotions and feelings from you. Begin spending more time with positive people that make you feel good, and less time with those friends and family members that you know offer very little or no positive rewards.



Establish a schedule which involves exercise, lots of rest, de-stressing activities like meditation and yoga, healthy eating practices and free time with the people that are important to you.

These are all simple ways to practice self-care so that you are as healthy as possible, and able to care for your loved ones.

Simple Ways to Simplify Your Life, Beat Stress, and Manage Your Time So You Are Not Always Running Behind

When you simplify your life, you have less to stress over. This naturally creates more time that you can assign to whatever activities you like. Here are a few basic ways to make your life simpler, less complex, and more rewarding.

- **Keep an activity log** – This practice reveals everything you do. It gives you a crystal-clear picture of how you regularly spend your time. You will almost instantly notice time-wasting behaviors that are simply fixed.
- **Remove excess** – This means excess time-wasting, cutting back on the amount of time you sit around and do nothing, removing excess distractions and getting rid of needless and excessive personal habits.
- **Cut the cord** – We are referring to the electrical cord that connects you to so many consumer electronics devices. This also means backing away from your smartphone and tablet from time to time, simplifying the number of applications, games and social media networks you spend time with, and enjoying a digital detox.
- **Talk less and say more** – Are you a chatterbox? Are you known for constantly talking about basically nothing? Verbal communication should mean quality and not quantity.
- **Simplify the clothes you wear most of the time** – Einstein was famous for wearing the same suit, socks and shoes over and over. He had several pairs of pants and shoes, multiple shirts and suit coats. Such a practice eliminates the need for a mental investment considering what to wear, and saves time as well.
- **Make work tasks simpler** – Plan your meals. Cook in large batches. Don't do what you don't need to be doing. Focus on one task at a time and perform it until it has been completed.
- **Get rid of that one big distraction** – The peace of mind and sense of accomplishment you receive when you remove the largest unhealthy distraction or behavior from your life is priceless.
- **Downsize** – Downsize your home if it is taking up all of your time. Owning a nice home may have been an important goal to you at one time. Nice doesn't necessarily mean big. A small home can be nice too.
- **Establish routines** – You might be amazed at how creating and sticking to standard operating procedures and routines can make you more time-efficient, and lead to less stress and more joy.

Delegating Life Tasks

If you can delegate effectively, you will have more free time and less stress. You can then use that free time to do whatever you like, spending time on the things and with the people that are important to you. Unfortunately, many people don't understand the most important part of delegation ... follow-up.

Make a list of the tasks and responsibilities you don't need to be doing. Cleaning dishes, doing laundry, shopping for groceries, walking the dog and cleaning your home are all activities that quietly rob you of valuable time. These and other menial tasks can be handled by just about anyone. Take some time to write down everything you do on a daily and weekly basis. Don't forget a single thing.

Now choose 3 of those activities that meet the following criteria – You don't enjoy doing them, and they can be handled by someone else in your family or workplace. These are custom-made tasks for delegation. While we all must do things we don't enjoy from time to time, there is no need to make that list of activities as long as possible. When you delegate tasks to others, you help them grow, you minimize the mental and physical energy you expend, and you de-stress.

Just remember that you need to follow up on delegated tasks. This means checking in regularly to be sure that a responsibility which was delegated is being handled.



Why Tech Causes Stress

Unplugging from time to time reduces stress and anxiety. Stress is the underlying cause for many chronic health problems. Chronic stress and anxiety can lead to depression. When you unplug and give yourself a break from technology, you improve the quality of your sleep, which promotes overall physical and mental health and well-being. Now let's look at some proven ways to benefit from taking a break from technology.

Simple Ways to Get a Digital Detox

1 - Enjoy a Tech-Free Tuesday... or Monday, or Friday, or...

This is a simple but powerful way to enjoy the multiple mental and physical Benefits of unplugging. Choose a day every week, preferably an off day from work, and ditch the digital devices. Get your friends to join you and this could turn into a day you look forward to each week because of its social rewards.

2 - Bar Cell Phones from the Bedroom

The fewer electronic devices in your bedroom the better. Research tells us that the more consumer-electronics and communication technologies you have in your bedroom, the better the odds that you are going to have unhealthy sleep habits.

3 - Take a No-Technology Vacation

These types of vacations and holidays are becoming more and more popular. There are destinations around the world which offer no-tech lodgings and activities. If you don't have access to such a facility, plan a vacation to the beach or the mountains, and leave all digital technology at home except an emergency communications device.

4 - Host a Phone-Free Dinner

There are restaurants which will not accept you unless you leave your smart phone, tablet and laptop at home. Phone-free restaurants are fortunately becoming more common, and you can always host a no-tech meal yourself.

5 - Put Techno Time Limits in Place

A staggering 90% of US residents who responded to one poll said they use digital devices for more than 2 hours every day. Add the amount of time spent watching television and you

6 – Exercise More

Physical health promotes mental well-being, and the opposite is true as well. You will find that the more time you spend exercising, the less time you feel like planting yourself behind a monitor or smart phone display.

7 – Read a Book, Newspaper or Magazine

A wonderful trend was spotted developing in 2016. That was the first year in several years that saw an increase in the number of hardback and paperback books published, and a corresponding decrease in e-books sold. This means more people are turning to physical reading material, a simple way to detox from the digital world.

8 – Take a Walk

Why not enjoy a walk, making sure to leave your smart phone at home? This can increase your exposure to the people in your neighborhood or surrounding area, which improves your interpersonal and socialization skills while you benefit from some simple exercise.

9 – Bet Someone You Hate Losing to That You Can Unplug for "X" Hours or Days

Are you a competitive person? If so, a great way to motivate yourself to ditch the digital devices is to make a bet with someone that you can. Talk to a friend just as competitive as you, and place a financial wager on going tech-free for a specific period of time.

10 – Go to a Concert or Get a Hobby

Attend Shakespeare in the Park. Go to a live music festival held outdoors. Join a weekly painting class, or pick up some other type of hobby that doesn't depend on being connected digitally.

11 – Shut off Your Smart Phone

This is probably the most effective way to curb a significant portion of your digital exposure. If turning off your phone is not doable for whatever reason, most smart phones these days have a "Do Not Disturb" feature. Your phone stays powered on and usable for emergency situations, but incoming texts, phone calls and notifications will not disturb you.

Becoming a Minimalist

You have probably noticed that the focus of this guide is about limiting the number of things you have to deal with, mentally, emotionally and physically. That's why we have talked about simplification, delegating and decluttering. When you take unnecessary things out of your life, you enjoy less stress, anxiety and worry.

This is a practice which is at the cornerstone of minimalism.

A great website to turn to for help in cutting back on the number of possessions and things that you are responsible for is BecomingMinimalist.com. The creator of that helpful website is named Joshua Becker. One day years ago he was cleaning, or more to the point attempting to clean, and organize his garage. At one point, he was talking with his neighbor about how frustrated he was getting because he didn't know where to put everything. A life-changing moment came when his neighbor looked in his garage and said...

"Maybe you don't need to own all this stuff."

The proverbial lightbulb went off, and as he realized his day was being wasted unsuccessfully dealing with unneeded belongings and possessions instead of playing with his son in his backyard, he knew something had to change. Here are a few of Mr. Becker's recommendations on what to minimize in your life.

- The number of your commitments that take up your time – Time management was talked about earlier. One way to manage your time is to get more of it. There are only so many hours in the day, so if you minimize the number of commitments that eat up valuable time, you have more time for the things that truly matter in life.
- The number of "things" you have – You don't own possessions, they own you. For every "thing" you own, you have to be responsible for its upkeep and care. Quite simply, when you own fewer possessions, you stress out less, and enjoy more peace and calm.
- Personal and business goals – It could be that you are trying to achieve too many things. That may sound like a slacker's attitude, but it isn't. Look at the goals you have made for yourself. Chances are, there are one or more goals you have set for yourself that you don't need to be wasting time or energy on achieving.
- Your debt – Mental stress can literally kill you. What is one of the number one things people say they stress about frequently? Money is often the biggest stressor in the lives of modern men and women. Cut down on your debt, pay it off, and watch your peace of mind and sense of freedom and fulfillment skyrocket.
- Processed foods – Limiting the amount of highly processed food you eat is smart for so many reasons. It automatically boosts your mental, physical and emotional health, because you are eating more naturally healthy fruits and vegetables, nuts, berries and seeds, as well as wild-caught fish and grass-fed beef.
- Technology time – Enjoying a digital detox on a regular basis will make you more productive, give you more free time to spend with the ones you love, and if you replace technology time with outdoor physical activities, you will live longer as well.

Making Space for What Really Matters

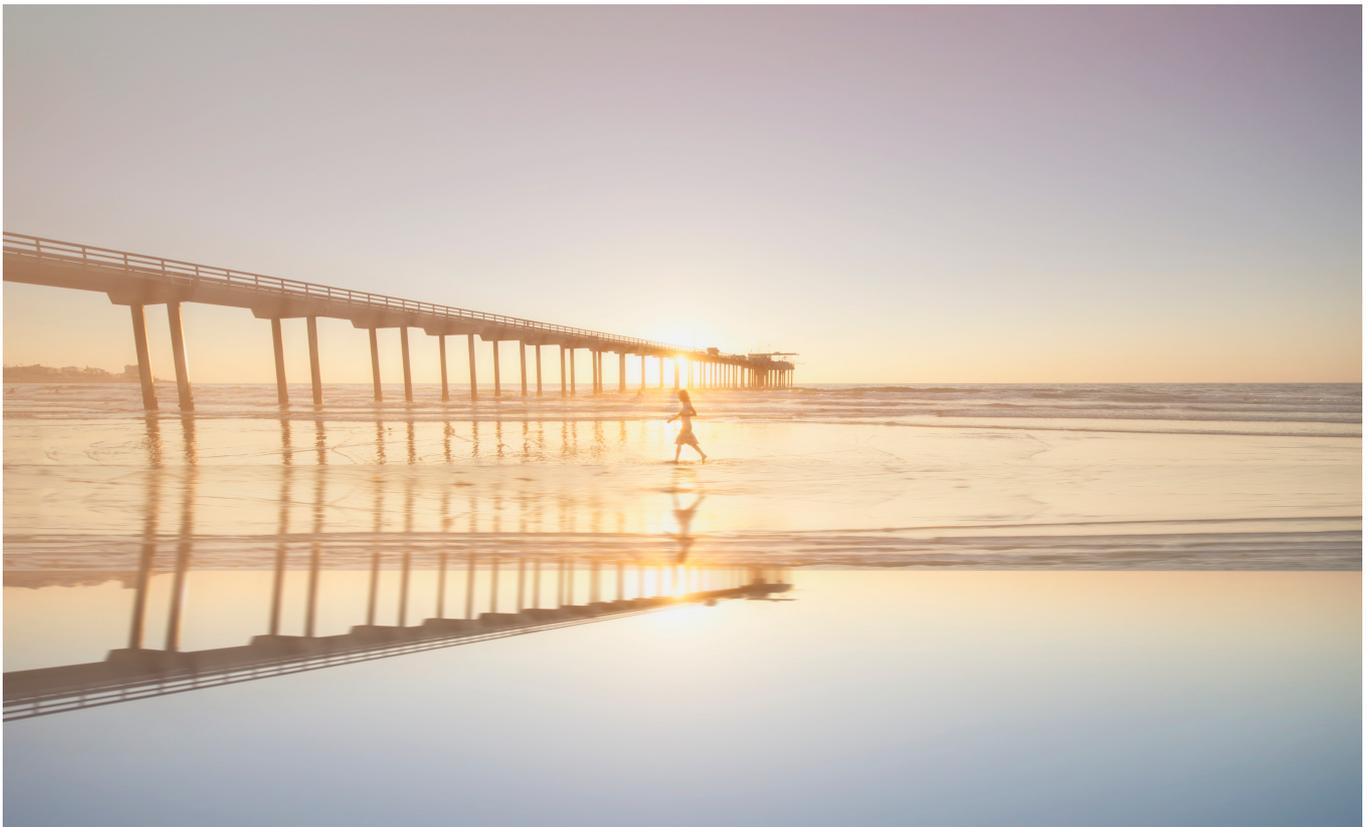
If this guide has taught you anything, hopefully it's that you don't need to take on as much as you have been. Life is complicated, but with a little effort it can be significantly less so.

However, it does take time to recognize what is causing you stress and burnout. It can sometimes even take courage to tackle those root causes, which means that you won't suddenly see perfection overnight.

So make these practices a part of your everyday routine, and work at simplifying your life over time. For example, one month you might implement just one new boundary at work, and that might have the knock-on effect of giving you the energy you need to declutter your home.

Decluttering can leave physical space for new things in your life, but the truth is that all of the techniques in this guide will give you the mental space you need to focus on what's important.

When you're less stressed by work and day to day chores, you have more time to focus on what matters: your big goals, your family, your travel plans, your health.



THANK YOU

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