

TIPS FOR PARENTS

How to Make the Most of Your Time



Do you feel like the day flies by? Do you find yourself thinking you need more time? Laundry is piling up, grocery shopping needs to be done, that work deadline is coming up, daily chores are falling behind, the ball game is tonight and the birthday party tomorrow; the list goes on and on. These are all common and good things that we deal with daily, yet at times they can bring us a lot of stress! The good news is that there are ways to structure our time and use it efficiently. We only have 24 hours in a day, but we can manage those 24 hours to use that time well.



What Is Time Management and Why Is It Important?

Time management is structuring your time in a useful way to achieve goals and accomplish tasks. Whether you are a stay-at-home parent, work a typical 8–5 job, or work on different shifts, time-management skills can be helpful to everyone.

Time management is about using your time well to accomplish ordinary tasks, as well as working toward

achieving short- and long-term goals. Structuring your day and planning to accomplish specific tasks at certain times of the day will help you stay on track. Developing time-management skills helps decrease daily stress because you are completing important tasks and staying organized while working toward your goals.

For example, you may want to spend more time with your children in the evening, but you are overwhelmed with the work it takes to manage your home. So you look at your daily schedule and find ways to break down the housework into small, manageable tasks that can be plugged in throughout the day rather than tackling all of it at once in the evening.

For example, your typical morning starts at 6 a.m. and you must leave by 7:30. The daily routine is cook breakfast, eat, get dressed, quickly clean up breakfast, and get yourself and the children out the door. See the chart at the top of the next page. On the left is an example of a typical day; the right side shows what you can add to help get things done and maximize your time.

The schedule on the left gives you 20 minutes to clean up before you leave the house; the schedule on the right shows that you have cleaned up the kitchen and completed a load of laundry because you used the entire hour and 50 minutes rather than giving yourself only 20 minutes at the end.

By structuring your time, you can find ways to get important housework completed while also freeing more time for yourself, your friends, and your family.

6:00 a.m. Cook breakfast	6:00 a.m. Cook breakfast (While breakfast is cooking, start a load of laundry.)
6:30 a.m. Eat	6:30 a.m. Eat (Start the dishwasher or rinse dishes used to prepare breakfast.)
6:45 a.m. Shower/get dressed	6:45 a.m. Shower/get dressed (Swap the clothes over to the dryer before you get in the shower or start getting dressed.)
7:30 a.m. Quick clean-up	7:30 a.m. Quick clean-up (Wash the dishes you pre-rinsed or fold the clothes that are dried. Or use this time to get everything ready for the day.)
7:50 a.m. Leave house	7:50 a.m. Leave house



Why Do People Focus on Time-Management Skills?

Here are a few reasons people want to develop or strengthen their time-management skills:

- To decrease how often you forget to do things.
- To increase how much you can get done.
- To have more time to spend on things that bring you joy.
- To have a sense of control and organization, which in turn decreases feelings of stress and anxiety.
- To help you create a better work-life balance.

These are just a few examples of how time-management skills can help you in your daily life.



How Can I Start Managing My Time Better?

It's easy to start working on your time-management skills! Below are some things you can start doing today.

Plan ahead. Do small tasks ahead of time when you can!

- Think about the times of the day you feel the most rushed.
 - What are the goals you meet at that time?
 - Are there things you can do ahead of time to make you feel less rushed?
- For example, lay out your clothes for the next day before you go to bed, or pack lunches and back-

packs after dinner. These small steps will help you in the morning rush.

Structure your day. There are only 24 hours in a day, and seeing how you spend that time could be useful.

- Set aside certain times of the day to accomplish specific tasks.
 - Write down times of the day that you typically do chores, pay bills, play with your children, work on schoolwork, practice self-care, and eat meals.
- Try grouping tasks together.
 - You can group things together based on the type of tasks (chores), what they need to be completed for (school, work), or how long the tasks will take (complete small, quick tasks first).
- Remember that, while structure can help you stay organized, you also must be flexible because not every day will go as planned.

Use the instructions and 24-piece pie chart on the next page to visualize your day.

Make a to-do list. When you make a list of what needs to be done, you can focus on those items and organize them based on when they need to be completed.

- Grab a piece of paper and a pen or open a notes page on your phone.
 - List the things you need to do today, tomorrow, or this week.
 - Look at your list to determine what needs to be completed first.

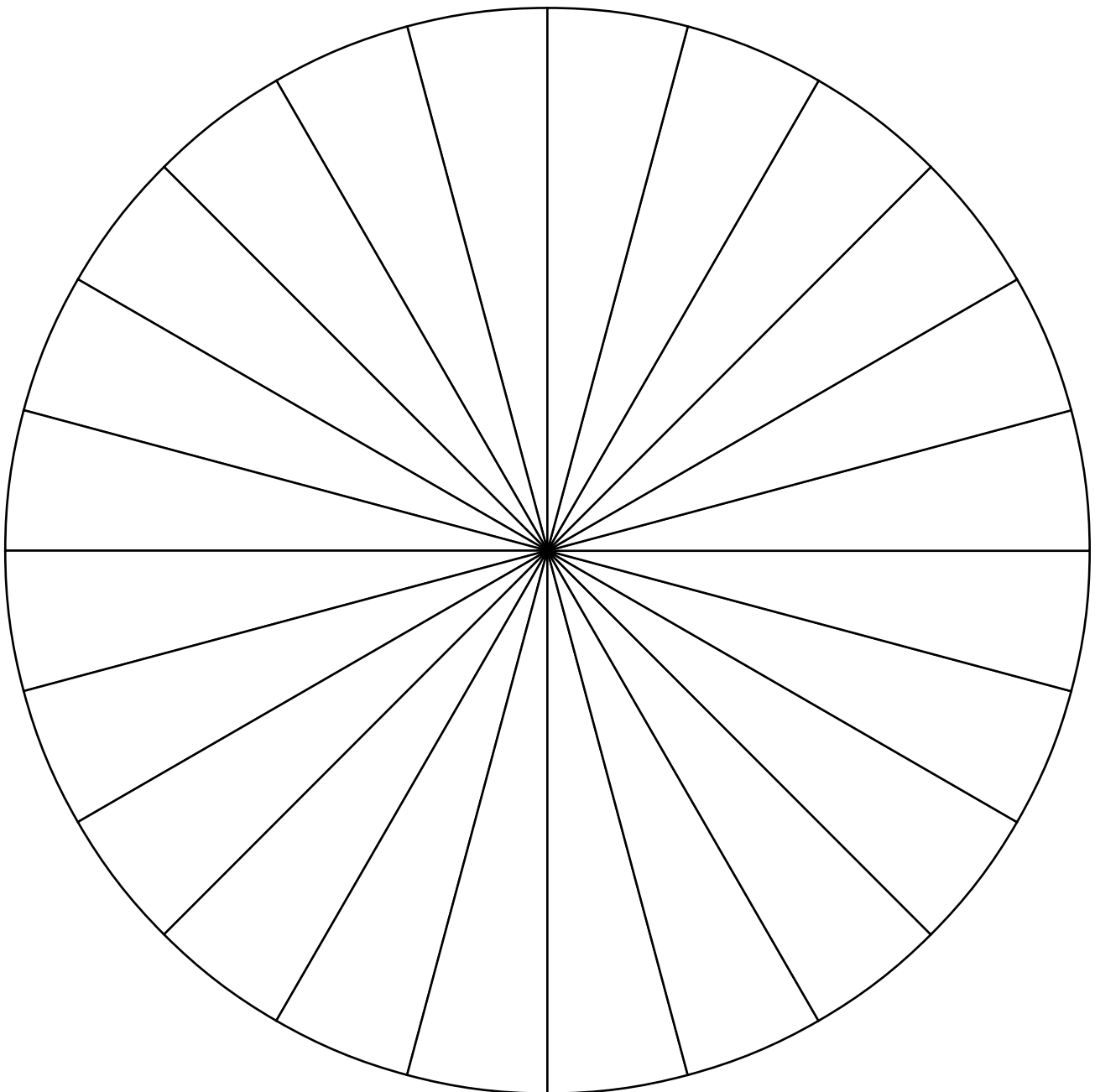
Use these tools as a guide. Writing things down and taking time to think about your day will help keep you on track as you learn to become an expert of your time.

“My Time” Pie Chart Activity

To use the “My Time” Pie Chart, simply follow these steps!

- Each piece of the pie chart represents 1 hour of the day, and there are 24 pieces in total.
- Use different colors to fill in the pieces to show how much time you spend on each daily task.
- If you have tasks that take less than an hour, you can divide time into smaller chunks.
- Don't forget to include time for important things like meals, sleep, exercise, and self-care.

When finished, you'll have a visual example of how you spend your time each day. You can save this chart, or make copies to use in the future or to make adjustments to your daily routines.



Reference

Claessens, B. J. C., Van Eerde, W., & Rutte, C. G. (2007). A review of the time management literature. *Personnel Review*, 36(2), 255–276. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480710726136>

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