



Ten Ways Physicians Can Enjoy More of their Free Time

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Many physicians have limited time away from work and their patients. Don't let that precious time get eaten up by errands.

Here are 10 small ways to more efficiently complete your to-do list:

1. Use Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday evening after work to handle errands and avoid the IDIOTWE (I'll do it on the weekend) syndrome. That way you'll avoid the weekend rush; and you'll feel like the weekend is really a time for rest and relaxation.
2. If you are starting on your errands from home, prepare for multiple stops in a circular route. List your stops in order on a Post-it note and affix it to your car dashboard or radio.
3. If you are heading to the city, stockpile plenty of quarters and dimes.
4. Keep a file folder, envelope, or pouch in a briefcase for the various receipts, tickets, and sales slips that you will need or will be collecting. That way you won't spend time searching for them later.

5. Give yourself mental credit for the smallest of tasks, such as dropping off an item for dry cleaning, depositing a check, returning a video, and so forth. Consider using retained help (e.g. a high school or college student) to take care of these items instead of doing them yourself.

6. Shop by mail or Web. For example, there's no need to pick up stamps at the post office when you can order them by mail and have them delivered to you.

7. Handle tasks such as getting your hair trimmed, filling your gas tank, going to the car wash, or replenishing grocery items when they're not crucial. You'll feel less stressed and you will enjoy the activity much more.

8. Buy in multiples when possible so you don't have to return as often. Also, find and patronize vendors who can deliver groceries and household goods.

9. Cease and desist if you run into undue delays, traffic backups, or long lines. When you handle errands at a different time, there could be fewer delays.

10. Use errand time to contemplate decisions, listen to books or your favorite songs, and maintain control of your environment.