



# Work Smart Rather Than Hard

By Dr. Linda Hancock

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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So many times, I hear individuals tell me that they wished they had done something but didn't, forgot an event or just feel overwhelmed with life!

There is good news! With a little effort, you can turn your calendar into a tool that relieves stress and makes you feel organized all year round. Here are some techniques that I use to save time and keep me on track.

1. Enter the name of all birthdays along with their year of birth of the individual. That way you never need to remember how old a person is that year. Just do a little math and you will be up to date.
2. Book appointments in advance. For example, I have my twice monthly massages set up a year ahead. It is far easier to cancel with twenty-four hours' notice than to wait until you are hurting and then find out that there aren't any openings. Set your next hair, dental and other self-care sessions before you leave the building instead of waiting until you are desperate for services.
3. Add payments that you need to make a few days before they are due. If they are on the calendar you will remember to pay without facing extra interest or late payment fees.
4. Make sure that you enter all renewals and their due dates. These include such things as your car registration and driver's license, passport and newspaper subscription.
5. Use the 'recurring appointment' option without entering an end date on your iPhone or Android so that your entries show up year after year.
6. Schedule breaks in your work week and honour them. For years I have not seen clients on Wednesdays. Having this practice is not only good self-care but also allows me to handle crises once in a while without adding hours on my regular day.
7. Incorporate alarms that will keep you on track. I often set my alarm for a time that I need to leave home for an event or for a program that I want to watch. Most phones also allow you to set reminders that alert you several minutes before a set event.
8. Book regular self-care time. Try scheduling an hour a day, for example, when you might choose to read or rest or go for a walk.
9. Plan time when you want to be out of town far in advance. A change is better than a rest! And guard these times ferociously.
10. Set up a shared calendar for family members so that everyone can enter and view it. Each person can choose a colour for their individual entries. This will save double-booking or feeling like there are too many "I forgot to tell you" moments.

We live in a very busy world! Using a calendar for the above can be a wonderful way to simplify things! But you need to even schedule time to set up the initial system. Don't just say you are going to doing it because that won't help. Get as much as possible entered this week and then you will just have to maintain it with a little self-discipline!