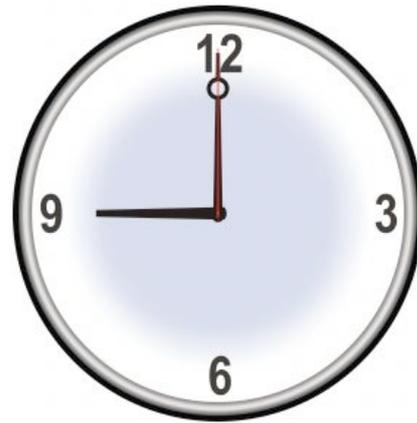


Time Management

Managing time well is an essential in today's business world. Good time management increases productivity while reducing stress. The beauty and holistic therapist is providing a service that is client centred, providing treatments that are strictly scheduled throughout the day. When everything goes smoothly and all the clients arrive on time, no problems occur with resources and the therapists work perfectly to time, the job is stress free. However as most of us know who have worked in the industry, you must always be prepared for the unexpected which may have an adverse effect on the plans you have for that day and this can increase stress levels to such a degree that other problems are then created.



It is important to build some contingency time into the day to allow for the unexpected. It is important therefore to spend more time planning and organising work that has to be done, a skill that takes time to acquire and perfect, but will eventually maximise the results achieved in any given time. Using time to think and plan is time well spent because 'if you fail to take time to plan, you are in effect planning to fail'. Other strategies to employ are:

Setting SMART targets

These are goals that are:

Specific - they have an objective or outcome e.g. to achieve a qualification, to pass a driving test, to save a certain amount of money, to buy premises for a business.

Measureable - the method used to show you have achieved them.

Attainable - objectives must not too ambitious

Relevant - relate directly to tasks in hand

Time related - having deadlines or a date for achieving the targets.

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Prioritise

Concentrate efforts on the most important jobs, those that will provide the greatest reward. The Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto established the 80 - 20 principle in relation to the distribution of wealth. This principle has been applied by many others since and can be applied to time management in that 80 percent of results come from 20 percent of effort. Pareto's principle should be considered daily and serve as a reminder to focus 80 percent of your time and energy on the 20 percent of your work that is really important.

Use a 'To Do' list which may be compiled first thing in the morning or the night before. This will provide you with a daily schedule containing everything you hope to achieve that day. Work through the list ticking off each item as it is dealt with. Alternatively you may wish to have an ongoing list that is continuously being updated.

Acknowledge prime time, the time of the day when you are at your best. People often categorise themselves as a 'night owl' or a 'morning person'. If you know when your best time of the day is make sure you use this time most effectively and arrange important jobs to be completed then.

Be adaptable Allow time for the unforeseen distractions and interruptions. If you expect interruptions schedule less important tasks for this time. Save larger blocks of time for more important issues that require close attention and ensure interruptions are by appointment only.

Delegate tasks, eliminate the trivial tasks or those that do not have long term consequences for you and concentrate on those jobs that only you can do.

Learn to say no be realistic about what you can achieve and focus on the main objectives

Reward yourself when you have completed set tasks or completed the whole job, it provides an incentive for you to work towards.

Focus and complete one task before going on to the next. Try not to start too many jobs and finish none. If you are interrupted mid task deal with the interruption but return immediately to the task in hand and don't be side tracked.

Avoid Procrastination, in other words do not put off jobs or tasks that you may not like doing. Instead break them into smaller tasks and work on a small part at a time until the work is completed.

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Scheduling

This is a useful process to help you plan the best way to make use of your time. Scheduling will help you to:

- See what you can realistically achieve with your time
- Plan to make the best use of the time available
- Leave sufficient time for things that are a priority
- Allow contingency time to handle the unexpected
- Minimise stress by avoiding over committing yourself

You may use one or more methods to record your schedule, a diary, a wall calendar, an electronic organiser, or computer software. Choose the method which suits you best, this may depend on your job, your personal preference or cost. Begin by identifying the time you want to make available for work, then record the essential jobs that must be completed by a certain date and tasks that cannot be delegated. The next

step is to block in contingency time to cope with the unforeseen demands on your time and the interruptions that will naturally occur, this provides a little flexibility in rearranging your schedule when required.

