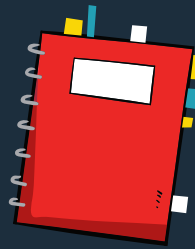


Laura's Little Book of LIFE HACKS



*113 ideas for winning
at work and at home*

LAURA VANDERKAM

I've been writing books about time management and productivity for the last ten years or so. No one grows up saying "I'd like to be a time management expert!" and so people often ask me how I came to this topic. I wish I had a good story. Scratch that. I'm actually glad I *don't* have a good story, because that would imply some sort of chaotic rock bottom moment. My life is not that interesting. I've just always been fascinated by how people live their lives and how they choose to live them better.

I'm honored that people choose to share their schedules and strategies with me. This little book shares some of the best tips that I've picked up over the years. A "hack" is any trick or shortcut that boosts productivity and efficiency. These life hacks help me manage life in a full (not "busy!") household with two working parents and four spirited children. Some save time; some aim to change your relationship with time. Not everything will work for everyone, but I hope you'll find at least one tip to try. If you do, please let me know! You can write to me at laura@lauravanderkam.com. Feel free to share your life hacks with me as well. I'm always looking for new ideas. Here's to making the most of our time!



1. Track your time for a week. I know I am as repetitive about this as one of those "Thank you for not smoking in the terminal" announcements that blast over the intercom at airports. But there's a reason: **Time-tracking is life-changing**. When you know where the time goes, you can make rational choices based on reality, rather than stories you tell yourself, or that the world tells you. Even if you work long hours, you are probably not working all 24 hours a day, every day. Even if you travel a lot, you are probably not gone 7 nights a week every single week. Even if you don't have as much free time as you want, you probably don't have zero. Try a spreadsheet, an app, a notebook. I use weekly spreadsheets with the days of the week across the top (Monday-Sunday) and half hour blocks (from 5:00 a.m. to 4:30 a.m.) down the left-hand side. The tool doesn't matter. What matters is that you *do it*. A few days could work (make sure you include at least one weekend day, because weekends are real days too!) A week is ideal. Check in 3-4 times per day and write down what you've done since the last check-in. Broad categories are OK (work, sleep, drive, make dinner, etc.). At the end, add up the major categories. Celebrate what you like. Commit to changing what you don't. In general in life, what gets measured gets managed. While not everything can be measured, time spent in the car most definitely can.

2. Speaking of time in the car, if you live somewhere cold, and your car has such a feature, **turn on the driver's side seat warmer**. Even traffic jams will feel much more toasty and tolerable.



3. Use real cream in your coffee. Life is too short to suffer through skim milk. Also, **use a travel mug, even if you have a home office**. I'm constantly putting down my coffee, and then picking it back up when it's lukewarm. A travel mug solves this problem.

4. Celebrate 5 p.m. on Thursday. Here's why: If the week starts Monday at 5:00 a.m. (which is when my time log starts) then **5:00 p.m. Thursday is the mid-way point of the week**. I know that this sounds suspiciously like the *end* of the week, but it isn't. It is the exact half-way mark. There is just as much time after as there is before. Life feels richer and much more balanced when you realize that whatever you are doing Monday through quitting time Thursday occupies only half your time. Raising a glass, or at least acknowledging the time at 5 p.m. on Thursday, will remind you that the second half of the week has only just begun.

5. Learn your sleep set point. Different people need different amounts of sleep. Time-tracking can reveal this number, which is almost universally going to be between 6.5-8.5 hours/day. People who think they sleep 6 hours a night often mean that they sleep this amount on Monday and Tuesday. They then spend the rest of the week crashing in front of the TV and hitting snooze multiple times. You may need to track for a longer period of time (like a month or two, definitely including weekends and holidays) so atypical nights don't have an outsized effect on the average. You should also include naps to get an accurate picture of sleep needs. But once you know how much sleep you need, you can start structuring your days to get something close to this number more nights than not. Thanks to almost four years of continuous time-tracking, I now know I need 7.3-7.4 hours/day. This is my set-point. Over any long period of time, this is the amount of sleep my body is aiming for. This knowledge has been helpful for nudging me into bed on time on nights when I need to be up early, but it's also been useful to know that I don't actually require 8 hours of sleep. If I wake up after 6.5 hours in bed, that's OK. I will likely sleep 8 hours on



some other night, and thus circle back to my average. You can't change your set-point, but once you figure it out, you can use it as a data point to help you manage your energy. **Orderly sleep is more rejuvenating than disorderly sleep.**



6. Going to bed early is how grown-ups sleep in. Viewing bedtime as a treat can help counter that little voice that insists that surfing the web for another two hours would be a great way to spend the evening. It isn't, and going to bed earlier means you can turn unproductive evening hours into productive morning hours. One obstacle: getting ready for bed takes energy, and if you're exhausted, you might keep putting this transition off. So **get into your pajamas, take out your contacts, and brush your teeth at least half an hour before you intend to go to bed.** Then you can relax and read or hang out with your partner until lights out time.



7. Pacing while brushing your teeth will help you log some extra steps and will nudge you to brush a little longer (most people don't hit the recommended 2 minutes).

8. Fight sleep woes. Light keeps people awake. The problem is that even if you're good about turning off your phone and the TV an hour before bed, it's hard to re-create, in modern life, the darkness that triggers melatonin production (melatonin being the hormone that tells your body it's time to go to sleep). Your house is not a cave lit solely by the embers of a dying campfire. Taking a melatonin supplement can help. After interviewing a sleep doctor for an article few years ago, and learning that he took melatonin regularly, I tried it. I'm definitely falling asleep faster, which some research finds is the usual result, though as with any supplement, results will vary (and checking with your own doctor is wise too). Some people find that yoga helps with reducing sleep onset time. In any case, here's a mindset hack: **if you find yourself lying awake, tell yourself that simply resting is also good for your body.** It might not be as good as sleeping, but sometimes the pressure to fall asleep can keep people awake.



9. Be honest about leisure time. Here's the hard truth: not all free time feels good. People will write comments in online discussion threads about having no leisure time whatsoever, even though posting angry comments isn't generally required for anyone's job. Realizing this can be a huge mental breakthrough. It can nudge you to recognize when you have some discretion over how



your time is spent, and how you might choose to spend this time in more enjoyable ways. One hack for figuring out where potential free time might be hiding? **Pick up a can't-put-it-down book (a Harry Potter book, *The Da Vinci Code*, something along those lines), or start watching a binge-worthy series.** You'll automatically devote the bulk of your discretionary time to this activity. Note when you're reading or watching. This is time that could be redeployed in the future from unhelpful leisure time to more rejuvenating activities.

10. Use your mornings. Mornings are a great time for getting things done. But despite the click-bait articles out there about people who wake up at 3:30 a.m. to do triathlons and 2-hour long meditation sessions, a good morning routine doesn't require waking up at the crack of dawn. You simply need to wake up before you absolutely have to, and use this time for something that is important to you that life has a way of crowding out. Taking 10 minutes to write in a journal, or just savoring that first cup of coffee before waking your kids totally counts. You don't have to run a marathon (though if you do need to squeeze a 20-mile run into your week, morning is probably the time to do it! Competitive athletes who have day jobs have told me about running from 5:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.) The point is to **start your day with something that sets a positive tone for the rest of the day.** If you have kids who wake up so early that you cannot wake up before them, don't sweat it. Choose something you can do while they're awake. At this stage of my life, most days I start my mornings by snuggling with my 3-year-old when he comes into my bedroom. Then I sit quietly with my first cup of coffee while he watches videos on YouTube.



11. Make morning exercise easy. If you do plan to exercise in the morning (which, for many people with jobs and families, is the easiest option) **lay out your workout clothes right next to your bed.** If you have long hair, put a pony-tail holder on the pile. It seems silly that you might skip a planned morning workout because it's taking too long to find a pony-tail holder, but when it's dark and cold, any excuse can seem reasonable.



12. Want to quit the snooze button? Don't rely on willpower. Rely on inertia. Put your alarm all the way across the room so you have to get out of bed to turn it off. Even better? **Buy an alarm clock that doesn't even have a snooze button.** If you want to sleep more, you'll need to reset the alarm. That's complicated enough that you probably won't bother. And, of course, go to bed on time. If you wake up before your alarm, the whole snooze button question becomes less relevant.



13. Limit the number of apps on your phone. People often ask me to recommend apps that will make them more productive. I'm sure there are some, but more apps make your phone more interesting. And the cause of time management is seldom advanced by spending more time on your phone. Indeed, my time diary studies have found that checking your phone less frequently is associated with feeling more relaxed. If you're around your family (and hence not worried about needing to be reached in an emergency) **put the phone in airplane mode.** Or just leaving it in a charging station. Don't allow apps to send you notifications.

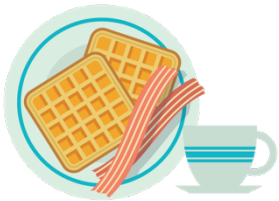


14. Speaking of charging phones, **buy an extra long cord**. Trying to type while sitting hunched over an outlet is not a fun way to spend time.

15. If you feel like you have no time to think, **try reflecting in the shower**. Most people's minds wander anyway. You can direct your thoughts to positive things: what you're grateful for, your life goals. Make a plan for the day, think about something meaningful you'd like to do after work. Each step in the shower can be a cue for a different sort of thought. Gratitude during shampooing, repeating a positive mantra while towel drying, etc.



16. I laugh when I read getting-ready stories with tips for speedier showers. What, exactly, are people going to do differently with their lives if they save 45 seconds cleaning themselves? Are they going to set their alarms 45 seconds later? I don't know! But a few years ago I did re-order my shower to allow for time to deep condition my hair. I pass this tip along for any other long-haired, daily hair-washers out there. Start your shower with shampooing your hair, then rinse it and put conditioner on the ends. Then leave the conditioner there while you wash your body, shave, or whatever you do. Then rinse your hair to complete the shower.



17. If family dinner is tough to pull off in your house, **have family breakfast**. You're not waiting for anyone to get home. Showing up in PJs is fine. Prep tends to be more relaxed; no one complains about having the same three or four meals every time, probably because breakfast foods are so awesome (waffles!) You can all enjoy each other's company before going about your day. Linger over your coffee. You'll be glad you did.

18. Some people enjoy packing their kids' lunches. If you don't, you might be happy to learn that a study published in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* found that school lunch is generally higher in protein and fiber, and lower in calories, fat, and sugar, than what parents pack for their children. In a cafeteria, hot and cold foods can be served at the right temperatures. My children know they are required to take a fruit or vegetable with their lunches, but beyond that I like the idea of them learning to make food choices. Plus, not packing lunches saves all kinds of time. I definitely recommend trying it a few days a week. If kids want to bring their lunches, they can learn to pack their own. Buying pre-cut fruit and veggies and snack sizes of common foods makes assembly much easier for little people. If you've got an office fridge and microwave and plan to bring your lunch, always make enough dinner to have leftovers. (Keep a handful of Lean Cuisine type frozen meals in your freezer for the days when you don't have leftovers). This solves the problem of what to have for lunch. Keep small plastic storage containers and their tops in one drawer; purge any non-matched sets (or at least take them out of the lunch-packing rotation).



19. Commuting time can be learning time. Think of it as “carschooling.” You can listen to audiobooks (check them out from the library!) You can listen to podcasts, such as Best of Both Worlds. You can listen to music with a purpose, such as all the works of Beethoven, or you could listen to performances of plays (e.g. all the works of Shakespeare). The key is to plan ahead, and **pack your drive-time listening material while packing your bags.** Just as you’d devise lesson plans if you were teaching someone else, come up with lesson plans for your carschooling sessions.



20. Carpool once a week as a way to spend time with someone: a friend, a spouse, a colleague, someone you’re mentoring. Aiming for daily probably isn’t worth the hassle but once a week can be a great way to find extra time for socializing (even if it means driving a little out of your way).

21. Offices can be distracting places. If you need to do focused work, yet you also need to be available to your colleagues, and you have some flexibility in your schedule, try starting the work day somewhere else. **Do 45 minutes of top priority activities in a coffee shop or a home office. Then go to work.** You might miss some of the traffic and you’ll feel relaxed about interruptions, because you’ve already accomplished something big. Everything else is extra.

22. One of the best energy- and mood-boosting strategies I’ve ever found is to do some physical activity in fresh air. Even just 10-15 minutes (which might be all you can muster on a sleet-filled January day) can help. **Take “smokeless” breaks at work.** Just like you’d step outside for 10 minutes a few times per day to have a cigarette, go outside to clear your brain. No excuses! Pretend you’re just as addicted as your cigarette-smoking colleagues. Bundle up if it’s cold. Bring an umbrella. You’ll feel better once you go inside. And you’ll be able to tackle whatever was vexing you before.



23. Some studies have found that plants make people more productive and reduce stress. The key is to **choose plants that give you more pleasure back than they take in effort.** Aloe, jade, and snake plants require little care, yet look intriguing in an office.

24. If you're trying to do more of something in your life, bundle it with an activity you're going to do anyway, or another activity you'd like to do more of. A book club provides an incentive to read and a reason to get together with friends (or colleagues, for a workplace-based club). A walking book club — in which you discuss the books while walking somewhere together — would add a third positive dimension! There are lots of options. Taking one child (if you've got many) on an errand gives you one-on-one time. Going with your spouse (while someone else watches the kids) turns grocery shopping into a date...in which your grocery shopping also gets done.



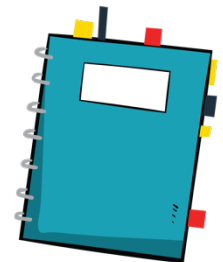
25. Fully focusing on someone is a gift. It's also hard to do if you know you need to go to something else (like your next meeting) at a certain time. So **set an alarm on your phone for 5 minutes before you need to go**. Then you can relax and fully immerse yourself in the conversation right up until that point. It's like having a handler who follows you around and tells you when it's time to go to the next thing, for those of us who have yet to achieve that status.



26. According to the American Time Use Survey, the average American watches 20 hours of TV per week as a primary activity. Even people with full-time jobs manage to log about 14 hours of TV watching. **Choosing to limit TV (to 7 hours per week, or 1 hour per day) opens up massive quantities of time for other leisure activities, like hobbies or reading.** The key is recognizing that once the TV goes on, it's hard to turn it off. So if you normally start watching TV at 9:00 p.m. and watch straight through to 11:00 p.m., do something else from 9:00 p.m. -10:00 p.m. Then watch TV. That way you have time for both activities.

27. Put the Kindle app on your phone (or Libby, to get ebooks from your library). It's easy to forget to stick a book in your purse, backpack, or briefcase, but the odds are good that you always have your phone with you. **An e-reading app means you can turn little bits of time into reading time.** You could read *War and Peace* in the next 6 weeks in time you might have wasted scrolling! (I'm serious; Tolstoy's chapters are short and fit well into those five-minute breaks while you're waiting for phone calls to start).

28. Doing deep work? **Put a notebook next to you to capture any fleeting thoughts** that might send you elsewhere. You can look up the name of that Greek restaurant you want to try when you're done; jotting down a note will keep you from forgetting (or getting distracted).



29. Do you remember what you were doing on today's date two years ago? Do you remember why you were annoyed, angry, frustrated? Probably not — which means that you can do yourself a favor and forget whatever is annoying you today two years ahead of schedule.

30. Before you schedule a meeting, ask what will change in the world as a result of your meeting. If nothing will change, ask if you really need to meet. If you need to share information with someone, walk to his or her desk or call this person and share it right now.



31. Borrow this tip from well-prepared teachers: Double plan your meetings. A good teacher not only plans what he will do during each minute of a class, he also plans what his students will do. For your next meeting agenda, **account for what everyone in the room should be doing with every minute he or she is there.** If you can't do this, the meeting is too long or has too many attendees.



32. Start meetings with a few minutes of (scheduled) chit chat. Giving chit chat a spot on the agenda does two things. First, it helps everyone relax and feel more trusting of each other, and (just as important!) it keeps the chit chat from going on too long, leading to someone grouching that “we don't have time for this!” Such unpleasantness can spoil the mood quickly.

33. End meetings with two things: a recap to make sure everyone knows who is going to do what by when, and then a 2-minute discussion of how your meeting can be more effective next time. Most things improve with feedback and practice. Given how much time people spend in meetings, efficiency improvements pay off fast.

34. To get out of work at a reasonable hour, **pause about an hour before quitting time to reflect on what absolutely has to happen before the day is done.** You can then either do it, or make a plan to do it at night after your kids go to bed (see the split shift tip later in this book). Move whatever has not happened — and doesn't have to happen immediately — to a specific time slot on an upcoming day. All activities take time, so if you're not willing to give something a time, that's pretty much admitting you won't do it. Which could be fine, but best to acknowledge it.



35. If you need to leave work at a certain time (say, to catch a train or make a daycare pick-up), **start leaving 15-20 minutes before you need to be out the door.** This allows for relaxed end-of-day conversations with co-workers who want to ask “just one thing” before you go. You could even initiate such a conversation, rather than feeling like you're always rushing out.

36. Work relationships are like any other relationships. People want to work with people they like and trust. As with other relationships, such fondness is built through spending relaxed time together. In other words, work socializing isn't a waste of time. It builds the close relationships that produce better, more efficient work. So if colleagues go out for drinks, or go out for lunch, go at least some of the time. Not every day — no one goes every day! — but doing so occasionally means people will still ask. And you might learn something useful enough to justify the extra hour of babysitting time, or calling in a favor from your spouse or a friend. If you stay involved, you can also try to nudge some socializing to times that work better for you (say, a group that meets for breakfast every few weeks).



37. You can give a speech without PowerPoint. First, explain to the audience why you care about this speech topic. Tell the audience the three main points you hope to make in support of your thesis. Then go through the points, illustrating each with a story. After these three stories, answer the main objections/criticisms of your approach to the topic. Then end with one main take-away you hope the audience will remember. That's it. Practice 3-4 times before you actually give the speech and you'll sound like a pro. (Practicing itself is the real pro tip; no one is a natural public speaker. **Polished public speakers practice.**)

38. Leave time to come back to it. All big projects benefit from a set of fresh eyes. You can become that set of fresh eyes by finishing an initial version of the project at least a week ahead of the deadline. Put the project away for a few days, then come back to it. All sorts of problems that you could not see before — and hopefully their solutions — will present themselves.

39. Plan your upcoming weeks on Friday afternoons. **Each Friday afternoon, make yourself a short, 3-category priority list: career, relationships, self.** Put 2-3 items in each. Put these in your schedule. **Front load the week, doing most of these items on Monday or Tuesday if possible.** Taking 15 minutes for this ritual each week massively increases the chances that you will make progress toward your long-term goals.



40. On Friday afternoon, also **take a few minutes to do a calendar triage.** Look at what is already on your schedule. Cancel what you need to cancel; doing so ahead of time is much kinder to all involved than waiting until the last minute. See what in-person meetings can be turned to virtual ones. See what 60-minute meetings can become 30-minute ones (or even 5-minute phone calls...which you can make right then and there). See what can be delegated, or what doesn't require your presence. A few minutes of triaging can buy you open hours.

41. If you need to remember something on a date in the future, **put it on your calendar for that date and, if needed, a few days before** (such as on the previous Friday when you will be doing your planning). My kids love having breakfast with Santa at Longwood Gardens every year. These tickets go on sale in October and sell out within the hour. So I put a note on the actual date they go on sale, and also put a note the Friday before that the date will be coming up. That way I can build ticket purchasing into my week's plan. This is how I get six tickets, seated together, right next to Santa, every year.



42. Be kind to your future self. If you're not a morning person, set up the coffee maker the night before (well, don't grind the beans yet, but you can fill the water and put in a new filter). Go to bed if you're tired. Refill the toilet paper if you notice it's out. Don't say "oh, I'll get to that later." Chances are you'll forget about the toilet paper until you're in a situation where it will not be convenient to go grab a new roll! Say no to that future commitment you're pretty sure you don't want to take on. And then, future self: be sure to thank your past self. No one likes to be taken for granted.



43. If you are co-parenting with someone, set up a regular calendar meeting in which you discuss who covers what, who drives where, who's traveling, etc. Then — the pro-tip — **plan in fun activities. Planning gets a bad reputation, but I think that's because people mostly schedule in things they don't want to do.** Few people find themselves saying "Darn, I wish I didn't have tickets to go see my favorite band in two weeks with the babysitter already booked." Not all commitments are burdens.

44. Here's the easiest way to stop being late to most things: **Leave 15 minutes before you think you need to.** If you get where you're going early, awesome. You can fiddle around on your phone or stare at the clouds. But chronically late people are often so far off in their time estimation skills that what they think will make them early will get them there just about on time.



45. Time yourself getting out the door. Some day, start a stopwatch as you are putting on your shoes, and hit stop just before you put the car in reverse to back out of the driveway. The time between these two activities is not zero, even if you don't have to race back in for anything. This is especially true if other people are getting in the car with you. Understanding that transitions take time can help a day feel more calm.

46. Stacking meetings back-to-back for an entire day is a good way to ensure that all the later ones wind up massively behind schedule. Build in a buffer: at least 1-2 half-hour breaks during the day to absorb the unexpected. If you schedule lots of hour-long appointments, **default to scheduling on the hour in the morning, and then on the half-hour in the afternoon.** This builds in at least a 30-minute break, though I'd suggest making it a 90-minute one. You can use that time to deal with other matters, or ponder how to make yourself so marketable that you can earn the same amount booking 6 appointments as you would have earned booking 7.



47. Plan for things to go wrong. Things will always go wrong. Anyone can make a plan for a perfect universe. True time management masters know what they'll do when things don't go according to plan. The most practical way to account for this reality is to **leave an open block of time later in the week where any spillover can go.** So if you suddenly have to go to Chicago on Wednesday, and Friday is open, things that would have happened on Wednesday can be rescheduled for Friday. If Friday is jam packed? Then you have a problem. Slack keeps things from falling apart.

48. When you absolutely need to remember something, and you don't think you'll look at your calendar before it comes up, **write it on your hand.**

49. One of my high school teachers had a pretty much foolproof way for getting back objects she lent to students (textbooks, scissors, calculators). She would ask to keep a shoe in return. People would walk out of the room with just about anything else she might have asked for as collateral (such as a student ID) but no one walked out into the hallway wearing one shoe. Likewise, if you need to remember something, you can take off one shoe. Chances are, when you get up to leave, you'll think "hey, why am I wearing one shoe?" and the thing you told yourself not to forget will pop into your brain.



50. If you receive a lot of requests to "pick your brain," **create a list of Frequently Asked Questions. Send these to people who ask for advice, and ask them to send you any follow up questions.** Most won't bother. But those who do are serious and well-prepared and are probably worth meeting and mentoring.

51. Travel hacks: **Don't check bags.** You can get to the departure airport later, and you can leave your destination airport earlier. You also force yourself to pack lighter, and this is seldom a bad thing. Some people are fans of roll-aboard luggage, but I find these often have to be gate checked on smaller planes. Nice duffel bags almost never do, saving time upon arrival. For the airplane itself, bring headphones and socks (that's advice for ladies who might not be automatically



wearing them). **Keep a packed Ziploc bag of toiletries with travel sized duplicates of everything you use, so this is always ready to go.** Definitely make sure you put hand sanitizer in there. If you live in the US, **sign up for TSA Pre-check** (or Global Entry) so you can go through the quick security line. Even if you fly just once a year, you'll probably come out ahead over the course of the five years this clearance lasts.

52. When you park at an airport, or any place with large parking facilities, **take a photo of your car's location and your level in the garage.** Also, when you arrive, take a photo of your hotel room number, so you won't forget. You might think you won't forget, but if you stay in a lot of hotels, you will.

53. If you live in a place where snow is a possibility, don't park on a garage roof deck.

54. If you're going to a conference, set up times in advance to meet the people you'd like to see. With large conferences, you probably won't bump into people at a time that's convenient to talk. Plus, if you know you've made time for people you'd like to see in person, you can relax about how the rest of the conference goes. Boring panel? No worries! You've got coffee with a former colleague you're dying to catch up with an hour later.



55. To really maximize opportunities at conferences run by professional networks or affinity groups within your company, **volunteer with the organizing committee.** You'll know exactly who's there, and you can recruit people you'd really like to see. You can arrange to meet people you'd like to meet by helping out with those sessions. You'll also strengthen your relationships with other people on the committee. This is all networking, but it feels a lot more meaningful than just handing out your business card at a cocktail party.

56. If you do find yourself at a networking event (or a party) requiring repeated small talk, challenge yourself to leave the event with three good book recommendations, and a future vacation possibility. This will make your conversations far less inane.

57. Don't take conference swag. Freebies stuffed in tote bags will eventually become clutter.



58. If you want to slow time down, schedule in at least one mini-adventure into your life each week. The phrase “Where did the time go?” really means that we don't remember where the time went. **Doing something memorable is not only fun (or at least character-building!) it makes us feel like we have more time.** Plan an evening playdate during the week. Or go see a movie with your family. Go to a sports event, or a walk in the park after dinner. Anything to bust the rut.

59. Here are two exercises to help you figure out your top priorities for the next 12 months. On the professional front, **write next year's performance review now.** Imagine you are giving yourself a performance review at the end of the next calendar year. It has been an absolutely amazing year for you professionally. What 3-5 things did you do to make it so amazing? You can do this for your personal life too; **picture what you would talk about at a holiday party at the end of the next calendar year.** Imagine yourself telling all your friends and family about the amazing things you've done over the previous 12 months. What 3-5 things made your year so incredible? Write these down. Now between the prospective performance review, and the holiday party chit-chat, you have a list of 6-10 goals that are truly your top priorities. Make this list and put it somewhere you can see frequently, like your bathroom mirror or your desk at work, because it should start informing your schedule.



60. If you'd like to outsource household tasks to save time, consider your needs carefully. **Track your time and see which chores consumes the most time or mental energy.** People often think to hire a cleaning service or a lawn service first, partly since there are so many services available, but you might see a bigger payoff from, say, outsourcing Monday-Thursday dinner prep. If you're spending money to save time, you want to be sure you're saving time!

61. **Get what you can delivered.** Some people like grocery shopping, but many other shopping experiences aren't so fun. Driving around to stores all weekend just kills time. When you shop in stores, it should be a relaxed experience where you're getting ideas, and seeing great design and curation. If it's just about getting a certain kind of light bulb that you know you need for your living room? Delivery is the way to go. For most larger families, Amazon Prime (with unlimited free 2-day shipping) will pay for itself in saved time within a few orders. This might be a good present to ask for if extended family members are stumped on what to give you!



62. Buying in bulk can save time and money but it can also lead to waste. When anyone in my family goes to Costco, **we make a “buy list” and a “do not buy” list.** This avoids the problem of suddenly having 288 frozen waffles, which don't all fit in our freezer.



63. Habits are things we do automatically. You can use this mindlessness to your advantage. So, for instance, if you are in charge of dinners in your household, you might decide on themes for each night so you don't have to think, and grocery shopping can go mostly on auto-pilot. Monday: Fish (with a sauce) + veggies. Tuesday: Taco night, with everyone making their own from standard fixings. Wednesday: try a new recipe, making enough to have leftovers on “throwback Thursday.” Friday is pizza night.

64. Breakfast can be a simple meal. **If mornings tend to be rushed, make (or buy) a big batch of hard-boiled eggs.** Add the pre-cut fruit you bought to make lunches easy. Voila: A portable breakfast. Add a cheese stick or a piece of toast if you'd like to be fancy.



65. You don't have to do things daily to make them a part of your life. However, if you're prone to making excuses, you might decide that “daily” is the way to go. When I decided to start running daily (7 days per week), this changed the conversation I had with myself about exercise. The question was no longer “Do I feel like running?” It was “When am I going to run today?” **Logistics are often a more straightforward matter than motivation.**

66. Always keep a few extra appealing-and-almost-universal gifts around the house to save yourself last minute trips. This might be a few bottles of nice wine (maybe one that has special significance to you), Christmas ornaments for seasonal host/hostess gifts, sturdy high-end coffee mugs, picture frames, or candlesticks. Almost anyone could use at least one of those items. If you've got kids, you can also keep a few items that are appropriate for children their ages for birthday parties you might have forgotten about (favorite children's books work nicely for this). **Save gift bags that are in good condition to re-use; one jumbo roll of wrapping paper in a color like silver can see you through most situations.** Store a pair of scissors and tape in the same location as your wrapping paper so you don't have to hunt them down every time you wrap something.





67. If you'd like to socialize with people who have young children, and you're not in that life stage yourself, **offer to pick up take-out and bring it over after their kids go to bed.** They'll get adult companionship (and food!) without the hassle of finding a babysitter. It's the extra step of getting a sitter (and the expense), plus worries about leaving the kids, that tends to limit new parents' social lives. If you'd like to keep the relationship going, this is a good way to do it.

68. Store stationery, envelopes, stamps, and return address labels in one drawer. Keep 2-3 pens in there for even more efficiency. More importantly: **Send handwritten notes.** Almost no one does, and doing so will automatically make your notes stand out. Holiday cards too. Order ones that have space to write a quick note and sign your name.



69. If you find yourself sending certain files frequently (a headshot, a bio, maybe a W9 if you're a freelancer), **save these files with a name that comes up first when you call up files for attaching.** So my headshot is saved as `_LauraVanderkam_highres.jpg`, with the underscore pushing it to the front of the alphabetical line. (It's also on my website so people can download it from there, as is my bio, but not everyone knows to look!)

70. Work hours and productivity are both related and not-related. Sometimes the relationship is straightforward: when a dental hygienist sees more patients, he can clean more teeth, up to the point of diminishing returns when fatigue sets in. Other work is not like this. If a major client is upset, and threatening to take her business elsewhere, and you have a 30-minute conversation that solves her problem, so that she continues to do business with you for the next five years, that was an incredibly productive 30 minutes. If you do nothing else that day, or possibly nothing else that month, you still come out ahead.



So does that mean you can work 4 hours a week? Nope. Getting to that point where a well-placed call accomplishes a lot also takes time. You need to do a great job on the core "stuff" of your work, and also practice your skills and build your career capital. From studying time logs, I'd say it is difficult to do all these things working fewer than 30 hours per week, averaged over longer periods of time. You don't have to work around the clock, but you do need to work enough hours to continuously expand your influence. Fortunately, it's quite possible to work a solid 40 hours per week and still have a personal life too. **There are 168 hours in a week. If you work 40 and sleep 8 per night (56 per week) that leaves 72 hours for other things.**

71. Want to exercise more, but work in an office from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday? There are lots of ways to fit exercise into your days. The key breakthrough is to change your definition of exercise. Many people think that if they're not doing vigorous activity in a gym for an hour it doesn't count. Not true! **A 15-minute walk break to answer questions for a younger colleague not only counts as exercise, it's a great way to fit mentoring into your schedule.** If you have 30 minutes for lunch, try to go for a 20 minute walk outside 2-3 times per week and then eat at your desk. Any one-on-one meeting could become a walking meeting. If you're giving tough feedback, the conversation might go better if you're walking side by side, rather than looking at each other over a conference table. If you've got an office, you could do some push-ups or sit-ups or kettle bell exercises in 5-minute spurts while waiting for phone calls. These tend not to leave you too sweaty.

If you do have access to a corporate gym, or shower facilities (say, at a gym next door) then there are more possibilities, particularly if you can take a 45-minute break during the day. In 45 minutes, you could take 5 minutes to change, exercise for 25, and then take the remaining 15 minutes to make yourself presentable. Take a quick rinse (with hair in a shower cap), then take a few minutes to re-apply make-up and maybe put your hair in a pony-tail or bun if it hasn't emerged



unscathed. You might not do this on the day you have a presentation to the CEO in the afternoon, but it might be OK to look a little less polished one or two days a week. It doesn't have to be daily. Once or twice a week can go a long way. You might even check with your boss about taking an hour-long lunch break twice a week (so you could exercise for 40 minutes) and then staying half an hour later on those days.



72. Since I work from home, I can be flexible about when I exercise. I keep coming back to mid-afternoon as my default. This tends to be when my energy is lowest. **I'm not getting anything else done in mid-afternoon, so I may as well take a break and do something that will boost my energy levels.** During the dark cold months of Pennsylvania winters, mid-afternoon is when it's warmest outside, and still light, and I would much rather run outside than on my treadmill. The exceptions? Days when I'm

traveling or have a lot of other activities, or summer days when it's 90 degrees outside. Then I run in the mornings. If you work from home and want to try mid-afternoon, aim to build at least a 45 minute window in between calls. If you can only manage a half-hour break, get dressed in your exercise clothes during another small chunk of time (say, 3 minutes in between calls) and then you can run right out the door as soon as your 30-minute break starts. You might also institute a no-video-calls-after-3:00-p.m. policy.



73. Try not to start your work day answering email. Yes, you need to glance at your inbox to see if your 10 a.m. meeting is canceled. But for most people, **morning is the best time for doing focused, intense work. Your inbox will still be there when you have limited energy in mid-afternoon.** But you probably won't be able to tackle the same stuff that you could after that first cup of coffee, when it felt like you could take on the world. I know this is

common productivity advice, and I know it is also really hard to do. Processing email feels productive. If you deal with 50 emails, it feels like you did 50 things. Writing up that difficult feedback about an employee feels like you got only one thing done, and maybe not even that if you find yourself revisiting this project frequently. But processing email is not, in and of itself, productive. It's not going to say on your tombstone that you were always at Inbox Zero (at least I hope it won't!).

74. If you need (or want!) to work longer hours, but you also want to see young kids who go to bed relatively early, try working a "split shift." **Leave work at a reasonable hour, even if all the work isn't done. Go home, hang out with your kids, then do more work at night after they go to bed.** Working from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and then from 8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. is the exact same number of hours as working from 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., but in one world you get to spend quite a bit of time with kids who go to bed at 8:00 p.m., and in the other world you don't. You trade off work time for TV time, instead of work time for family time. This is the trade off a lot of people would prefer to make.

75. Think 168 hours, not 24. To work longer hours while still having a personal life, take advantage of any flexibility you have to move work hours around. So, for instance, you might work two very long days, and three shorter days. Working from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. two days, and then from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on three days gives you more time with kids who go to bed at 7:30 p.m. than working from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every day would. If you have a hard stop on your work day because of a day care pick-up, working for 5 hours on the weekend (maybe when your partner who can't make that day care pick-up can cover) is the equivalent of leaving an hour later every work day. Maybe you stay later one day a week and take a morning off to volunteer at a child's school. There are lots of ways to work the hours professional jobs require yet still do personal things during what might be considered a normal work day.



76. Travel time can be me time. Yes, you're probably working longer hours if you're away from your family, but without any family responsibilities, you can probably work longer hours *and* fit in exercise, reading time, or even other things. **Scope out the area near your hotel on a map app.**

Adventures might be closer than you think. I once spent a lovely 30 minutes at the Chihuly Garden and Glass museum in Seattle when I realized that my hotel was across the street. A quick swing through Rutgers University's art museum (when I was speaking in New Brunswick, New Jersey) introduced me to several Soviet artists I would never have learned about otherwise. Anywhere scenic can be a great opportunity for a run or walk (or bike; your hotel might rent bikes, and it's hard to imagine a more energizing way to spend the hour between your last meeting and dinner).



77. Time spent at kid activities can be found time. I'm writing this tip while sitting outside my 9-year-old's wrestling practice. I have used swim practices for running and read books during gymnastic lessons. You probably want to watch your kid's actual events but there's often downtime. Think about what you can do with these hours. Or at least make friends with the other parents. A woman once told me that she and three other soccer team moms would pick up sushi and have a party in one of their cars during practices. A restaurant or bar nearby could serve this same purpose.



78. Extracurricular activities aren't just for kids. Having something beyond work and family commitments that you do, just for fun, can make life feel much more exciting. **Regular commitments also happen in a way that a general desire to do something just can't match.** I sing on Thursday nights because that's when my choir practices. Looking at my time logs, I'm sure I could have found an hour to sing on Thursday nights before I joined my choir...but I didn't.



79. In general, recurring events require much less thought and planning than one-off events. This is neither good nor bad, it's just something to know, so you can make smart choices. At work, recurring meetings don't need to earn a place in your calendar. Unfortunately, that means that they will continue to happen even if they *don't* deserve a place in your calendar. People tromp dutifully to that Tuesday morning staff meeting every week simply to report that, yep, they're still doing their jobs. This mindlessness can be a positive thing, however, when it comes to socializing. If a group of friends gets together every Monday night at a certain bar for a happy hour, no one needs to plan it. Everyone knows it's happening and you can come or not come, but if you come you know you're going to have a good time. Coordinating multiple people's schedules for a one-time event takes so much effort that it can feel like it's not worthwhile. **Remove the planning and you get the fun without the fuss.**

80. If you've got multiple family members and you're managing multiple activities over summer break, I highly recommend that you **create a summer spreadsheet**. You put family members' names along the top, and then the weeks of summer along the left.



Then you can fill in camps and vacations for the appropriate weeks. This also gives you a chance to ask pertinent questions, such as whether it's a smart idea to sign three children up for three different camps that all start at the same time, but require driving in three different directions.

81. If you wash in cold water, you don't need to separate by color.



82. Put a trash collection container in your car.

83. If you've got a two-story house, **put a basket or laundry hamper by the stairs to collect items that need to go back up**. If your washing machine is on the second floor, definitely put a laundry hamper on the first floor to cut down on the problem of socks (or sports jerseys and the like) being left all over the place.



84. Stacks of items tend to attract more items. But most people will pause before leaving an item on a clear horizontal surface. So one of the easiest ways to make a house look clean is to limit the piles to certain places.

85. I find it maddening to put a queen or king-sized fitted sheet on a bed, and inevitably turn it the wrong way first. This problem is easily solved by making a small mark with a Sharpie in the top right hand corner of fitted sheets.

86. If you wear an article of clothing constantly, rather than just be sad that the company no longer makes it, **look for any beloved item on the secondary market**: ThredUp, eBay, etc. I've managed to replace my favorite black cardigan and my favorite wedges this way, after the original items started falling apart. Even better, if you notice that you wear something over and over again, buy a second pair before the manufacturer stops making it.

THREDUP[®]

87. Over-buy items you use all the time. Since I want my kids to wear sunscreen, we buy multiple spray bottles and put them anywhere we might use them (by the door, in the car). The goal is that multiple children could be spraying themselves simultaneously. When kids need to wait, it's just that much harder to get everyone sprayed up. Likewise with goggles. My three older children swim on a year-round swim team. Goggles are easy to lose, but if we have lots of extra pairs stored in the mudroom, a kid can simply grab a different pair, and we can get out the door on time.



88. Keep a bag in your closet to put items you're thinking about donating. Add to it as the mood strikes you. If you don't fish an item out over the next few weeks, you'll probably never use it again. **Schedule a pick-up (e.g. with GreenDrop) every few months.** De-cluttering doesn't have to be a huge ordeal.



89. If you take family photos in October or November, you'll have a current photo to turn into your holiday card (and current photos of your kids to give as holiday gifts to relatives).

90. Neither my husband nor I need to track vacation days — which we are grateful for! — but both of us have work responsibilities that we would prefer not to neglect for too long. So we often **time vacations to “low opportunity cost” weeks.** These are weeks when very few people are working at full capacity, so we know we won't get many inquiries about projects or face many expectations for meetings. The week containing the July 4th holiday is one such week. The last week of August, leading up to Labor Day, is another. Christmas to New Year's is generally a freebie. Since these are also weeks the kids are out of school, they tend to work well.

91. If your business involves a lot of weekly check-ins with clients, you might strategically **schedule vacations for mid-day Wednesday through mid-day Wednesday.** That way, you get a week off without taking a calendar week off. Move things around by a day or two and people might not even notice. That said, I do believe that business owners can take real vacations. Even long ones! If you're a one-person show, plan ahead with clients. If you've got employees, train them to do what you do. You'd want your business to keep running if you got sick, so you might as well set it up to run while you're in the Bahamas.



92. People who do need to track vacation days can **maximize travel possibilities by tying vacation days to existing holidays.** If your office is closed on the Thursday and Friday of Thanksgiving week, you could leave Friday night the week before, take that weekend off, the next week, and then the next weekend, returning Sunday. That's a 9-day trip for the price of 3 vacation days. You might be able to pull off the same trick around the 4th of July if it falls on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday (since a number of offices close for 2 days for this holiday). Any 3-day weekend (Memorial Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day) can be turned into a 4- or 5-day vacation at the cost of one or two vacation days. Play your cards right (well, and budget for it) and you could travel somewhere interesting six or more times per year even if you only officially get 10-15 days off. The key is planning ahead to ask for these days. If you don't have kids, offer to work over your local school system's spring break, so parents can take some of these days off. They will then be willing to cover for you at other times.



93. You can consciously **create “artifacts” to help you remember events that you'd like to be able to call to mind in the future.** For instance, buy a special scented soap to use every day during a vacation. In the future, when you smell that soap, the vacation will waft into your brain. Same thing with a song. When I went back to my high school to give the commencement address in 2017, I kept playing Ed Sheeran's song “Castle on the Hill.” It's a naturally nostalgic song, so it was fitting, but now whenever I hear that song, I remember my trip down memory lane.

94. Try setting quarterly goals. I love setting New Year's resolutions, but I always want to try lots of things. **Quarterly goals help with pacing.** I can focus on a few things at a time while knowing there's still a designated time for other goals later in the year.

95. Have a go-to order for business lunches. It's awkward to spend time studying the menu when you've just sat down with someone you're trying to get to know and potentially work with. Knowing you'll always get the chicken Caesar salad (or something along those lines) frees up mental space for focusing on the conversation.



96. Almost everything is negotiable. The key is being willing to walk away. For most things in life, walking away is a definite possibility. Whatever the person on the other side of the negotiation claims, there will be other used cars. There will be other freelance projects. This is also a good reason to have other job prospects in mind while you're still employed, and to build up enough savings so you don't have to take the first thing that comes along. When people know that you don't have to say yes, they will generally offer more. Another good phrase: "Hmm....that seems a little low [or high]." Then **wait and let the other person fill in the silence with what they're willing to compromise on**. If you find negotiating in person (or over the phone) difficult, **ask if you can think about it and follow up with a number**. Sometimes emailing a requirement seems less fraught.



97. Sometimes life gets busy. **When work feels overwhelming, I find it's helpful to list personal non-negotiables. These are the things that make life feel doable.** Maybe it's sleeping at least 7 hours a night, exercising for 30 minutes most days, and having dinner with your family at least twice during the Monday-Friday workweek. Everything else can be dropped — an accountant once told me that she sent her dog to live with her sister during her busy season! — but make sure your non-negotiables happen. Then you can stop telling yourself catastrophic stories of having absolutely no time whatsoever.

98. If your work busy season always comes at a certain time of the year, you can prepare for it. **In the month before busy season starts, get your hair cut, buy presents for upcoming birthdays, and have lunch with anyone you'd like to see**, but probably won't see when you're working 60-plus hour weeks.

99. Pay in. When possible, put favors in the bank for people in your life. **If someone asks you to drive the carpool an extra day and it is in your power to do so, do it.** If a colleague needs someone to cover because of a problem she's having, and you can do so, then cover. You never know when you'll need help and the more people in the world who feel good about you, the better off you'll be when you suddenly need someone to pick up your kids at school when there's an early dismissal due to snow.



100. When you're about to buy something online, **search the name of the retailer and the phrase "coupon code."** If there's a 25 percent off coupon floating around out there you want to know about it. Using a coupon for something you were about to pay full price for is pretty much money in the bank. (Using a coupon for something you weren't going to buy, but are now buying because it's cheap, is a waste of money. But that's a different story.)



101. Organization saves time. It's not about alphabetizing your spice drawer with everything in matching canisters. That's just for people who want to post home photos on Instagram. **Organization doesn't mean neat and tidy. It means that objects you need repeatedly are always in places where you can find them.** My workout clothes are crammed in a cupboard. They are not folded or organized by color or any such thing, but my sports bras are in one spot of that cupboard and my workout pants are on a different shelf. This makes grabbing one of each simple. My kids always take off their shoes in the mudroom. The shoes are not neatly lined up or put in little canvas shoe holders with their names embroidered above the slots, but they are always there. So are coats, backpacks, and mittens. If papers or books come out of the backpacks for homework, they immediately go back in once homework is completed. This is how we never miss the bus. I take my house key and driver's license out of my purse to take them with me when I run, but as soon as I return to the house they go back in the purse. **Hunting for lost objects is a frustrating and pointless waste of time.** So do whatever you can to minimize this in your life, and to teach your kids to "close the loop" as well.

102. Weekends with little kids can be tiring. I find that time blocking helps. If the kids are little enough to nap or need quiet time, **a weekend has five main slots: Friday evening, Saturday morning, Saturday late afternoon, Sunday morning, and Sunday late afternoon.** Choosing an activity for each slot can help everyone pace themselves. So, for instance, you might do a Friday family movie night, a zoo trip on Saturday morning and then a playground trip after nap/quiet time, worship services on Sunday morning, and then a post-nap/quiet time trip to the local science museum (flipping some of these around if your worship services occur on Saturday morning or Saturday evening). Or maybe it's a Friday night football game, a Saturday morning hike on a trail an hour away, Saturday evening doing a potluck with a few other families, Sunday morning at a children's museum, and Sunday afternoon logging an hour at a local arcade. Sometimes birthday parties or sports commitments fill some of these slots. In any case, going into the weekend with a plan can ensure that people have fun and that everyone gets time to rest and relax too.



103. Unsure exactly what your weekend plans should be? Carve out an hour or two to **make a weekend activity list: anything that might be fun for some combination of family members, and requires traveling two hours or less from your house.** You can organize these by season (beach in summer; indoor pool in winter) and roughly how long the activities will take. Going to an amusement park 90 minutes away will take the entire day, so you need to slot that into a mostly open weekend. Hitting a local museum for an hour might take less than 2 hours, total, so that can fit into a different weekend landscape.

104. Whatever your family situation, **plan something fun for Sunday afternoon or early evening.** Even if you love your job, Sunday can bring a bit of trepidation as you think about the workload waiting for you on Monday morning. Planning something enjoyable for Sunday evening means you spend Sunday afternoon anticipating your fun, rather than going over your to-do list.



105. Working on weekends (or whatever your days off happen to be) isn't the end of the world, especially if it is freely chosen. Indeed, if you've got a side hustle, or are going to school in addition to working, it's inevitable. Still, there are ways to be smart about it. You can **take at least 24 hours off to get some downtime; these 24 hours don't need to correspond with a calendar day.** You could do 3-4 hours of work Saturday morning, then do more from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Sunday night. That gives you 5-6 solid work hours, while still preserving 30-plus consecutive open hours for family or personal pursuits.



106. If you've got little kids, use nap time for things that are fun for you. **Do not do chores during nap time.** Picking up the toys seems productive, but it's the fastest route to feeling frenzied and martyred. Also, those toys will come right back out as soon as nap time is over. So read a book, take a nap, or run or walk on a treadmill while watching your favorite show. If you've got older kids, they can use this slot as screen or reading time so you can still get some adult decompression.

107. Can't relax in a mess? **Clean one room, shut the door, and sit in there.** This takes much less time than picking up the whole house.

108. Two of my kids play the piano, and the teacher comes to our house for back-to-back lessons. This is so much more convenient than driving the kids to lessons and then entertaining the other kids during this time. Another option, if you have multiple kids, is to sign them up for lessons at a music school that is big enough that the kids can take lessons simultaneously. Then you can do something fun for you, or at least have fewer other siblings to manage than you would with back-to-back lessons (or lessons on completely different days of the week).



109. On weekends, my school-aged kids sometimes have lists of things they should probably do, but I don't feel like nagging them about (piano practice, checking homework folders for important papers, choosing gifts for friends' upcoming birthdays, etc.). So I will **make a list with names and tasks and boxes for people to check off**. They respond to this in different ways; one child enthusiastically works through the list, others do not. But the upside is more for me: it's all out of my brain. I can look at the list later in the day and even if I see that one child has done nothing, this allows me to focus my efforts on that kid, rather than trying to triage everyone's to-do list.

110. Make speedier decisions. It is true that some important, difficult decisions require strategic analysis. You want to think through what can go wrong, and solve that conundrum of how you think about potential pitfalls that would never occur to you (getting feedback from disinterested folks can help here). But few decisions rise to that level. Don't dither over restaurant choices; you will eat out again. Most vacation hotels are fine. **If you have friends who visited a destination last year and liked their hotel, just stay there.** Are you getting married? Congratulations! Choosing your spouse was the important decision. Everything else is, within your budget range, inconsequential. The happiness of your marriage does not depend on whether guests start the reception meal with salad or French onion soup. I know that choosing to limit rumination is easier said than done, but it can save massive amounts of time. **For small-stakes decisions, give yourself a deadline, and then go with the best option you've found when time is up.** Use the time you save to reward yourself. It's much more satisfying to spend 30 minutes booking your flight and hotel, and 2 hours reading a travel narrative about where you're going, vs. the other way around.

111. **Open space invites opportunity in a way a cluttered calendar can't.** If you look like you cannot possibly take on anything else, you won't be given anything else. But if you have the space to linger in good conversations, these might lead to new projects. When you have the space to meet new people, these people turn out to have exciting new ideas. Don't fear open time. Fallow fields are planted soon enough. **Every time you turn down something that you don't feel is the best use of your time, imagine giving yourself a little gold star.** Or give yourself a real gold star! Whatever works for you.



112. If you're using a new technology in a high-stakes situation, do a test run. If you're using old technology in a new location, do a test run. Have a back-up system ready. **Technology is amazing when it works, but think about what you'll do if it doesn't.** (Do you have your babysitter's number memorized? What would you do if you lost your phone?)



113. Sometimes **slowing down is the ultimate life hack. Much frenzy is self-imposed.** When I'm wondering whether I should be doing something else, I tell myself "I have all the time in the world." Whether it's true or not is irrelevant. What is true is that rushing, or flitting between activities, is not going to improve my experience of time. Better to stick with what I'm doing, and enjoy it as much as I can.