

ROCK A ROUTINE THIS FALL • SHOULD YOU WORK FROM HOME FOR HEALTH?

**10**  
RECIPES FOR  
SOUP AND  
STEW

# Diabetes<sup>®</sup>

## SELF-MANAGEMENT

GET YOUR  
**BEST  
SLEEP  
EVER**

**FINDING  
MENTAL  
FITNESS**  
WITH DIABETES



**COOK AROUND THE**  
**World**  
**WITH 6 SIZZLING CHEFS**

**10 TIPS**  
TO MANAGE  
YOUR TIME

OCTOBER 2019

\$6.99US \$7.99CAN



10>

NETFLIX STAR  
**GAVIN  
LEWIS**

# IT'S ABOUT TIME

## 10 tips and tools to help you manage your time

By Susan Weiner, MS, RDN, CDE, CDN and Leslie Josel

**W**e all complain about it. We never have enough of it. We lose control of it. And we never get it back once it is gone. So much has been written about the time it takes to manage diabetes that it is hard to know where to begin. We've got you covered! Here are 10 surefire tips to help you stay on time, on task and on track.



### 1. You need to SEE your time in order to MANAGE it.

Just as there is no way to know your blood glucose level without monitoring, there's no magic elixir when it comes to time management. It starts with you being able to see what it is you need to do and when you have time to do it. Being able to sync your "to-do" list with your appointments and daily diabetes-related tasks is the essence of creating a time sense and time planning.

Do you feel overwhelmed as you think about "when" you could set aside time to organize your diabetes supplies and food for the day or week ahead? If you have ever been distracted and skipped this important task, you may have experienced a less-than-optimal health outcome. It's essential to set aside time to put together "checklists" for blood glucose checking supplies, food shopping lists, medications, health-care provider appointments and travel essentials, just to name a few! How do you figure out your schedule to get it all done?

Start with a planner or electronic calendar that is organized for weekly and monthly views. We get asked all the time whether paper or electronic is best. We're paper planner girls, as their setup allows you to see the big picture and the sum of all the moving parts. We simply don't find that with electronic versions. It's also worth noting that when we write information down, it helps us to commit it to memory. You don't get the same effect with an electronic device.



### 2. Define and assign.

Make your tasks achievable and specific. You're more likely to stay focused on accomplishing your health-care and behavioral goals if they are broken down into smaller parts. For example, it is much easier to take your medications as prescribed if you use a daily pill

organizer that you fill once a week on the same day. Work backward to figure out how much time you'll need to accomplish each necessary task. Assign deadlines and schedule them as regular "appointments" so you know when to work on them. This step is critical: After the pill organizer is filled, the next step is to set an alarm on your watch or smartphone as a reminder of when to take your medications or supplements. Giving our tasks and to-dos the same importance as your appointments is key to time-management success.



### 3. Hang analog clocks.

Having trouble managing your time in the morning to fit in all the diabetes self-care tasks you need to do? Morning minutes are precious when you are trying to balance life with diabetes: check your blood glucose or continuous glucose monitor, take your medications or insulin, eat breakfast, take care of children and pets, and the list goes on! Replace your digital clock with an "old school" analog one. Hang a clock in your office and in every room of your home that you spend time in—including the bathroom. Why an analog? A digital clock only allows us to see ONE time—the present! The hands of an analog allow you to "see" time move. You can see present time, elapsed time and even future time. SEEING elapsed and future time better helps you understand how long it takes you to complete various tasks and how much time you have left before a deadline arrives. Don't forget to wear an analog watch as well so you can see time while on the go!



### 4. Use a timer.

This is one of the simplest yet most powerful tools we can use to keep us on track. Setting aside a predetermined amount of

time to work can help you stay on task during that time period. If you only have an hour to do what normally takes two, you are more likely to get in gear and stay there. Also, working time over task allows us to see the finish line, therefore making it easier to get started and stay focused. For example, try setting aside a predetermined amount of time to pre-portion carbohydrate- and calorie-counted snacks for the week ahead. Bonus? If you choose to "baggie" your own portioned snacks from a larger bag or container, you will create more space for a greater assortment of healthy snacks. We recommend using the product Time Timer to help "SEE" time pass. As time elapses, the bright red disk quietly disappears, showing you how much time is left. No ticking! No numbers! Just a clear, intuitive visual to help you see time move.



### 5. Work in bursts.

We all struggle to maintain attention when doing activities that aren't fun or increase anxiety. If you have experienced diabetes burnout or are feeling very stressed out, you may not be keeping up with your daily self-care. While you never get a break from your diabetes, you can take a break from certain daily tasks, even the ones that don't have anything to do with your diabetes per se (but may contribute to burnout). Try working intensively for a short period of time and then taking a break.

Our favorite app to use is Magic Work Cycle. It's a simple-to-use productivity technique. You set the timer for a certain amount of time to work (for example, set it for 30 minutes to organize your diabetes supplies for the week ahead) and a certain amount of time for a break before your next task. Most find knowing when they can take a break hugely helpful to stay focused. Extra bonus? It is completely customizable, so you can adjust the lengths of break and work.



## 6. Create your happy place.

We believe that everyone needs to create positive energy around their tasks to get them done and, to that point, your environment is key. Preparing healthy meals requires spending time in the “hub” of the home, also known as the kitchen. Make your kitchen fun and inviting for YOU. Love flowers? Enjoy music? Keep a floral arrangement in your kitchen and play some of your favorite tunes while you are chopping up some low-carb veggies as part of a nutritious meal or snack. Keep your favorite mug on hand so you can sip a delicious cup of herbal tea when it’s time to get down to business. Hang pictures with motivational sayings such as “you can do it” or “if there’s a whisk, there’s a way” in your kitchen or workspace. Set up a new environment that will provide you with motivating enthusiasm. We like to think of it as a natural caffeine boost!



**7. Set it to music.** There is an endless debate between researchers and scientists on whether listening to music while working or concentrating on an important task is beneficial. Countless research studies have demonstrated the benefits of music to help the brain activate. They say that music bolsters attention and focus, which then helps us stay on task and time manage. Music can help us plan what to do next, anticipate and react, as well as soothe and regulate the brain.

So, if you find listening to music beneficial, we suggest creating a 30-minute playlist of music you love. The key is to play the same playlist every time you want to complete a diabetes self-care behavior. Start your playlist when you wake up in the morning, and check your blood glucose and continu-

ous glucose monitor before the first song ends! This sets a positive tone for blood glucose monitoring and eliminates the distraction of changing songs on your desktop or portable device. Second, since you will listen to the same music over and over, eventually the music will become background noise, and you’ll focus on it less. Third, the playlist can become a behavioral psychology tool—when you hear the music on your playlist, it’s time to get into work mode. And lastly, the music will act as a time marker. You will know that when you hear The Beatles, you are 15 minutes in; when you hear Dawes, you know you’re in the homestretch.



## 8. Shut down the social.

Come on, you know you’re guilty! We all are. In fact, 62% of all adults are afraid of missing something important if they don’t keep an eye on their social media networks at all times. And it doesn’t stop there. Emails, voicemails, text messages. Even how you handle interruptions! All of these distractions are time robbers. So, get clear on what is eating away at your time and put a plan in place. Perhaps you only check emails and return calls during specified times. Try installing a media distraction plug on your computer to shut down distracting websites while working on important projects. Or create a “do not disturb” hour when working in your office and place a sign on your door announcing when you will be “available” again.

As a person with diabetes, you may depend on technology to check blood glucose throughout the day and have your cell phone at the ready along with other life-saving devices. Try to keep this necessary task separate from checking messages or updates on social media. You can catch up with your family,

friends and peer-support online community during a specified time.



## 9. Try body doubling.

A “body double” functions as an anchor. The presence of another individual focuses a person and makes it possible for them to ignore distractions and keep them focused on their tasks. For example, if you are having a hard time getting started on organizing your medical paperwork, you might work in the same room as someone else or even close by.



## 10. Create your time profile.

Every person with diabetes is an individual with a different, and, therefore, personal, relationship to time. A time profile allows you to tap into your own preferences and personality. What do we mean by that? Ask yourself the following questions. Do you prefer to work and focus on your diabetes self-management independently or with a significant other? Do you work better in silence or with noise? Can you handle working on multiple tasks at once or just one at a time? What’s your energy level like? Morning or evening? Are you a paper person or a digital doer? Bottom line? Creating a time profile, which taps into our strengths and needs, provides us with the proper tools and resources to maximize our time-management muscle.

It is important to understand that just like any other muscle, strengthening your time management “muscle” takes consistent training. Learning effective time-management and diabetes self-management skills requires embracing new behaviors as well as utilizing your own unique strategies. We like to equate it to running a marathon. And as your “coaches,” we want to help you make it to the finish line! 