

The Magic of a Simple Kitchen Timer

The Pomodoro Technique is the latest time management method to make a debut.

Originally envisioned by Francesco Cirillo, the Pomodoro Technique is suitable for both teams and individuals. Implementation is deceptively simple.

Use a kitchen timer to allocate 25-minute periods of intense work followed by a short five-minute break then repeat. Take a long 20-minute break at the end of every four "pomodoros."

The result is a quick way to enhance focus and concentration while eliminating the anxiety that often surrounds time-sensitive activities.

The Pomodoro Technique is also highly versatile. It can be successfully applied to almost any situation or problem, ranging from mental planning to physical exercise. By breaking each item into small blocks of time it switches the attention away from the "big picture" and allows the user to concentrate on the here and now.

Visit www.pomodorotechnique.com for more information, testimonials, certification and training plus other helpful resources.

Want to Sell Your Home Quickly? Get My Free Guide



In a competitive real estate market, it pays to do as much as you can to help your house sell.

Discover how to make your home attractive to buyers by requesting my free guide, "**50 Essential Tips to Prepare Your Home for a Speedy, Top-Price Sale.**"

Call me at (604) 808-9661 or email robinmcinnis@shaw.ca and I'll send it right out to you.

Easy, Green Ways to Keep Your House Cool

The arrival of glorious summer makes it a challenge to be cool indoors. Here are six cost-effective ways to make your house greener and keep the heat out.

- **Block the sunlight.** Light colors, especially white, reflect light better than dark colors. Block the sunlight by covering windows with white blinds or shades. Install awnings over south-facing windows.

- **Circulate the air.** Ceiling fans and portable models gently move the air, making it seem several degrees cooler. They consume far less energy than air conditioners. Open north- and east-facing windows to create draft.

- **Maintain the air conditioner.** Change the air conditioner's filter once a month. Do a maintenance check to ensure that the unit runs efficiently. Provide shade for its compressor without blocking the air flow. Keep heat-producing lamps and electronics clear of its temperature gauge.

- **Generate less heat.** Substitute compact fluorescent bulbs for incandescent ones, as they are much cooler. Shut down idle electronic equipment by switching off the power bars to which they are connected. Air-dry dishes and laundry rather than running appliances.

- **Insulate.** Weather stripping, caulking and insulation keep summer heat out as handily as they keep winter heat in. Check your home for leaks, and plug them. Insulate areas, like the attic, that trap heat.

- **Create a cool landscape.** Bare asphalt, cement and rock magnify heat from the sun. Trees, shrubs, and grass are cooler. A few deciduous trees on the house's south and west sides will shade it in summer and let sunlight through in winter.

How to Work at Home and Avoid Tempting Distractions

There are so many advantages to working at home that its distractions are worth conquering. A few techniques consistently applied will increase your productivity

Have a purpose: Any job is made easier by an overriding sense of purpose. Visualize the successful completion of a task to blind yourself to tempting distractions. Create a vivid mental movie of the big moment when the job is done.

Follow an agenda: Place outstanding tasks in a priority sequence. Remember that urgent things are not always the most important. Follow the agenda as closely as possible, but stay flexible.

Box your time: Time-boxing is a useful technique popularized by software developers. Break long tasks into segments. Thirty-minute stretches work

well. Rather than going at each separate job until it's completed, revolve through the various activities in half-hour boxes.

Prepare the tools: Before beginning a task, gather everything you'll need. This saves jumping up and down for things that aren't at hand when required.

Take meaningful breaks: When you take a break, get away from the work entirely for at least ten minutes.

Drink water: Have a bottle of water handy at your desk, and sip continually. Good hydration has a powerful effect on focus and speed of work.

Use quiet times: When others are about and having fun, it's difficult not to join in. Make good use of the hours when family members are away or occupied in their own work.

Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Email robinmcinnis@shaw.ca or call (604) 808-9661 for the answer.

In which city were the "Chariots of Fire" Olympic Games held?

Why Not Pass Me to a Friend?

If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found its information useful, please pass it to a neighbour, friend or co-worker.

And if you have any comments about it, don't forget to give me a call or send me an email!

Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

How has the price of your home changed in today's market? How much are other homes in your neighbourhood selling for?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I'll be able to help.

Just give me a call for a no-fuss, professional evaluation.

I'll give you the most current market data about your home and its value.

Maybe I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Call me today at (604) 808-9661 to arrange an appointment.

Worth Quoting

"I plan to live forever. So far, so good."

-Steven Wright

In view of the fact that God limited the intelligence of man, it seems unfair that he did not also limit his stupidity.

-Konrad Adenauer

"They haven't caught on to me, and I hope they never do."

-Betty White, on being Entertainer of the Year

"There are few things in life harder to find and more important to keep than love. Well, love and a birth certificate."

-Barrack Obama

"Any fool can criticize, condemn and complain...and most fools do."

-Dale Carnegie

He who believes that the past cannot be changed has not yet written his memoirs.

-Torvald Gahlin

Investment Ideas to Help Children Save

Children are the luckiest investors because they have time. Time is sweet when building a financial portfolio, allowing ample opportunities to accrue benefits and adjust for losses. By teaching your children early about the ins and outs of wise investing, you'll help to make their futures secure.

Clarity Most of us have a complicated relationship with money, wanting it but not wanting to be seen wanting it, trying to gather it in but regarding it as scarce. Be clear about money for your children. Think of the dollars you'll accumulate as something more innocuous, like popcorn.

Interest Compound interest is a child's devoted handmaiden. Demonstrate the

miracle of compound interest with the eye-opening question, "Which would you rather have, a million dollars or a penny doubled every day for a month?"

Savings A young child's first savings account is a thrilling venture. Many financial institutions offer children's accounts with lower minimums, fees and taxes. Savings bonds are safe and are favorite gifts of grandparents.

Inform the extended family of the children's accounts, as they may choose to contribute at Christmas and on birthdays.

Stocks Playing the stock market is fun. Start your child off with virtual money. Track selected stocks in the newspaper

or online at free virtual investing sites.

If you're not already a successful investor, play along with your children, doubling everyone's fun. Celebrate increases, and laugh over losses while learning from them.

When the children are ready, switch to real money. Kids like to invest in things that they know, such as fast food, entertainment, athletic equipment and electronics.

Watch the portfolio grow. As the time nears for using the funds, say, at college entrance, switch the money to a stable repository like a cash account.

One Rule for Making Everyday Life at Home Less Stressful

How can you learn from top chefs to make cooking less stressful?

Something that most chefs learn is the importance of "working clean."

They are taught to clean up as they go – to wipe surfaces after they use them and to clean utensils and dishes right away.

Applying the same rules in your kitchen – and around the rest of your house – can make life much easier.

Instead of being confronted with a pile of dirty dishes or a countertop strewn with a mess, you always have a kitchen that is clean, tidy and ready to use.

Indeed, if you "work clean" in the rest of your house, you'll reduce the stress associated with piles of laundry or a floor covered with children's toys.

The fact is, it's a lot easier to clean up as you go than it is to leave everything for days until the task of cleaning seems insurmountable.

Are Those Healthy Snacks Really So Healthy?

Eating healthy isn't always easy. In fact, it now seems that many seemingly healthy snacks might actually do more harm than good. Following are three ways to clean up your snack habits:

Energy: Many products are designed to boost energy. Unfortunately, energy can come from a lot of different sources, including caffeine, saturated fats, sugars and vitamins. Select sources that are low in fats, carbohydrates or caffeine.

Juice: Juice can pack a lot of sugar. Opt for naturally sweetened options that don't add sugar. Better yet, go for the fresh fruit to increase fibre levels.

Granola and Grains: Granola and other grains might seem healthy, but high sugar levels combined with intolerance or allergies to gluten might actually do more harm than good. Try using millet or buckwheat instead.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

I'm having my first open house. What can I do to make it successful?

Your real estate agent likely has explained about de-cluttering and completing unfinished projects, but there are still some things you can do to prepare. For example:

Make the beds, do the dishes and tuck away the kid's toys. Put clean towels in the bathrooms and shine the fixtures.

Don't fire up the fireplace. Many people have wood-smoke allergies. Instead, light an arrangement of different-sized candles in the firebox.

Hide pet paraphernalia and pick up any evidence of Fido from the backyard.

Put flower arrangements everywhere.

Try cinnamon sticks simmering in a pot of water on the stove.

Tuck away family photos and valuables. You don't want your kids or your house to become targets of unscrupulous visitors.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

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6	2		4					
		3		5				7
8	1		9		2			6
	7	8						
3	4						7	8
						3	1	
1			2		9		8	3
2				3		1		
					8		5	2

Sudoku instructions: Complete the 9x9 grid so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

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Tandoori Chicken

2 cups plain yogurt
2 tbsp ground coriander
2 tbsp paprika
1 tbsp ground cumin
1 tbsp ground ginger
1 tbsp garlic powder
1 tsp ground pepper
½ tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground cardamom
¼ tsp ground cloves
6 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves

Whisk yogurt and all spices together. Add chicken and coat. Cover and refrigerate at least one hour or overnight.

Chutney

3 cups tomatoes ,chopped seeded
¾ cup red onion, chopped
½ fresh mint, chopped
3 tbsp ginger, peeled, minced
3 tbsp fresh lime juice

Heat BBQ to med-high. Add chicken and grill 'til cooked through – about 7 mins per side. Cut crosswise and cover with chutney.

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