

TIMING

is everything



ISTOCK

You can make it to that
**yoga class, eat better,
get your beauty rest,
feel happier and more!**

It's just a matter of
picking the right moment
to make it happen.

by SYDNEY LONEY

THE WORST TIME TO FALL IN LOVE IS BETWEEN

11 a.m. and 2 p.m. (it's a hormone thing), and the best time to ask for a raise is on a Thursday or Friday afternoon. These are the findings of Dr. Michael Breus, whose new book, *The Power of When*, is based on the premise that there are good and bad times to do everything in your life.

Dr. Breus, a clinical psychologist who is board certified in clinical sleep disorders and based out of Manhattan Beach, CA, got the idea from a patient. One day, a woman came to his clinic and told him that she didn't have a hard time falling or staying asleep; her problem was that she slept at the wrong time. "Her sleep patterns reminded me of my kids' sleep patterns," says Dr. Breus. "Teenagers' bodies want them to stay up late and sleep late, and that seemed to be the patient's problem, too." He applied all his tried-and-true insomnia techniques, but none of them worked. By this time, his patient was about to get fired from her job.

"I decided to try an experiment," says Dr. Breus. "I called her boss to see if she could adjust her schedule to be at work two hours later and stay two hours longer." Her boss agreed, they gave it a shot and it worked. "The woman was more attentive and more productive in meetings, and her family even liked her more. I thought, 'OK, I really have to dig into this because who knows what other connections might be out there?'"

After studying circadian rhythms and chronotypes (your personal biological clock), Dr. Breus began to see patterns. He identified four core chronotypes that inform how people navigate their lives and assigned each one to a token animal. He describes himself as a "wolf" (a creative

risk taker who is most productive late in the morning or late at night) and says he can now spot a "dolphin" (a cautious introvert who strives for perfection and has productive spurts throughout the day) in a matter of minutes.

Animal assignments aside, Dr. Breus drew from more than 200 clinical studies that show that when it comes to our health, timing really is everything. And some timing truths apply to all of us. For instance, if you need to go for surgery, schedule it in the morning – a study from Duke University Medical Center found that you face more side effects from the anaesthesia if you're put under in the afternoon. Getting a vaccine? Again, morning is better. In 2014, scientists in Israel found that men were least sensitive to pain early in the day, so you may be less sensitive to a needle in the a.m. And consider timing a jog after the job – researchers at Iowa State University found that cardio helps spread the vaccine throughout your body, so you produce more antibodies, boosting the protective powers of the medicine.

Dr. Breus says that when it comes to day-to-day activities, it's often just a matter of being mindful of what works best for you. "I changed when I exercise," he says. "I used to do it early in the morning because I thought that was the only time I could fit it in, but I learned that I perform better at night, so now I exercise in the evening."

Timing things right takes planning, but even tweaking the little things can decrease stress, which means better health and wellness, says Dr. Susan MacDonald, a registered psychologist in Calgary. "And, like the saying goes, 'There's no time like the present.' We just need to take a more proactive approach to our health and well-being." Here's how to time it right so you can do just that.

PLAN YOUR DAY

STOP WASTING TIME

We'd have more time for the things we enjoy if we wasted less of it on things that don't make us happy, says Krista Roesler, a life coach and psychotherapist in Toronto. "Timing allows us to take the steering wheel and take control of our lives, but a lot of people are losing control when it comes to things like social media, emails and meetings," she says. "People check social media and emails obsessive-compulsively, and most people admit that it doesn't make them feel very good."

Roesler says that reading emails more than once and checking social media to avoid doing other tasks are two of the biggest ways that people waste time without realizing it. "I created a better sense of balance for myself by planning to read emails when I have the time and resources to respond right away," she says. She also suggests having a planned end time for when you go on social media and setting a timer to make it easier to stick to. Getting rid of excess TV, phone and Internet time leaves you more time for the things that truly fulfill you, she says. "Do the things that you tell yourself you're too busy to do: play the guitar, go for a run or start writing that novel."

WRITE IT DOWN – AND CROSS IT OFF

To keep your timing on track each day, jot down a daily plan the night before – and stick with it. Roesler recommends setting a time limit for each task and breaking big tasks into smaller, more manageable ones. Scheduling your day this way also allows you to say "no" to extra tasks because you now have a reason to, she says. "Planning prevents committing to too many things, which can lead to burnout and stress," she explains.

Even having a visual of how you spend your time can come in handy. Roesler says that creating a daily schedule shows you that what you're trying to jam into the day is unrealistic. It can also help you see where you might be wasting time that could be better spent. The next step is to organize your to-do list so that you only have three major things to do in one day. (Once you cross them off, you can always add more.) "Getting things done boosts confidence and mood while decreasing stress and anxiety," says Roesler. "It gives you a feeling of pride and accomplishment and eliminates the worry that there isn't enough time to get these things done."



REMEMBER WHAT'S IMPORTANT

"The best way to make things happen is to make them a priority," says Dr. MacDonald. "This starts with changing your mindset." No matter what your priorities are, make sure you make time for them. Rather than deciding that you don't have time to exercise, why not just hop on your bike for five minutes? "Once you're on your bike, the law of physics kicks in," she says. "A body in motion stays in motion."

Roesler agrees. If you have scheduled exercise into your day but are running late and only have 30 minutes to spend at the gym instead of 60, go anyway. "Even if it's reading one page of a book instead of a chapter, the cumulative effects of sticking to things is what matters," she says. "It's what helps you form healthy habits."

PLAN YOUR WEEK

PUT YOURSELF FIRST

Taking time to plan your priorities is the key to a healthy, balanced lifestyle, says Roesler. "You get better results in all areas of your life when you plan your health and self-care first and don't let anything else get in the way," she says. "When you're at your best, you're able to be more productive and efficient overall." Roesler's priorities are exercise and healthy eating, so she schedules workouts for three

mornings a week and cooking, planning and shopping time for one morning a week.

"Nothing gets in the way of these things," she says. "And I remind myself that 'health comes first' whenever I find myself wavering."

Dr. MacDonald adds that making time for exercise and healthy eating doesn't have to be hard. Even preparing a container of fresh-cut vegetables to take to work in small batches every day can make a big difference. "Rather than saying 'It takes too long to cut up vegetables,' just do it," she says, "because in reality, a whole batch for a week probably takes no more than 10 minutes."

BUILD IN BUFFER TIME

Everything almost always takes longer than you think it will, so Roesler suggests leaving a cushion when scheduling things. "Add a quarter of the time to everything you plan to do," she says. "This will eliminate any stress over running out of time." It's also helpful to book breaks or buffer time by giving yourself 10 to 15 minutes in between tasks to recharge.

ISTOCK



EVALUATE

You may find that your plan isn’t foolproof right away. Roesler recommends making time for a daily and weekly review of how the tasks you scheduled went and switching up the times to see if something else might work better. “If you planned to exercise every morning at 7 a.m., reflect on what worked and what didn’t,” she says. “Think about what got in the way if you didn’t do it and what the ideal time to work out might be – or what you could do to have a more enjoyable workout altogether.”

PLAN YOUR LIFE

ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

Time your goals the same way you would your weekly or daily tasks by putting your priorities first. “We all have a million things to do, and if we don’t do the most important

things first, then we usually never end up doing them,” says Roesler. “All the other busywork takes over and you can go for years without ever putting any time into your goals.” For instance, she says, if you have a full-time job and a family but have always wanted to write a book, decide that you’re going to spend time writing every morning. “Write out a timeline for long-term projects, such as getting into med school, and base it on your short-term goals, such as taking one of the prerequisite courses,” says Roesler. It helps you set realistic timing goals when you know what deadlines you have to meet to reach your ultimate goal.

TIME YOUR TRAJECTORY

Many career goals can take 10-plus years to get you where you want to be, says Roesler, so start the planning process as soon as possible. “The longer you take to plan, the lon-

ISTOCK

“You don’t have to change
your whole life
at once; start small.”

ger you take to get there,” she says. Roesler had her daughter at a young age and says the only way she was able to get through both undergrad and master’s degrees so she could start her business was with careful timing, from daily to-do lists to long-term timelines. “I had to plan time for my daughter, time for me and time for all the other things – from my own self-care to scheduling classes – that I needed to do,” she says. “I had limited time, and it had to be planned and managed or things would never have gotten finished.”

IT’S NEVER TOO LATE

Even the most disorganized and procrastination-prone among us can improve on timing, even if we only tweak one thing. If you’re going to choose one thing to change, make it sleep, says Dr. Breus. “People think, ‘Oh my gosh, I have to get up at a certain time so I need to go to bed sooner,’ but if your chronotype isn’t ready for sleep, it’s not going to work.” He suggests figuring out what works for you and then sticking to it. “The key is consistency,” he says. “Keep your wake time the same every day. If you wake up later for one or two days in a row, it can shift your whole circadian rhythm.”

Decide what’s most important to you and what you want to change to be healthier and happier, adds Dr. MacDonald. “A messy basement or garage can always wait, but your children grow up fast, so go and have fun while they’re still young.”

And it’s never too late to make healthy changes, whether it’s adjusting your sleep schedule or starting an exercise program. “It’s not that you don’t have time to do it or that you can’t do it,” says Roesler. “It’s that you don’t believe you can do it, so you don’t take the time to schedule it in.” You don’t have to change your whole life all at once, she says. “Just start with small changes, because even small changes can lead to big results over time.” *DR*



RINSE WITH SPRY

IT TASTES GREAT AND IT COUNTS!

Using products from the Spry5 system make it easy to get the **dentist-recommended five daily exposures of xylitol**. Research has shown over and over that using xylitol products five times throughout the day is the best way to keep your teeth healthy.

The Spry5 System is simple to use, in fact you’re probably going through the motions, just not with products that work together. You already use mouthwash, switch to Spry and make it count.

Spry



Find your nearest Spry5 retailer at
Xlear.com

Available at fine retailers like:

