

THE MUM'S GUIDE TO FINDING TIME: Simple Strategies to Take Control of Your Day



*A guide to a balanced mum life
and how to show up as your best self*

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Hey! I'm Anu

Hi, I'm Anu, and I'm passionate about helping mums create balance in their lives—not by doing more, but by focusing on what truly matters. I know firsthand how overwhelming it can feel to juggle family, work, and personal time, all while trying to find a moment to breathe. But here's what I truly believe—time management isn't about perfection, it's about creating rhythms and routines that work for YOU.

This guide isn't about rigid schedules or packing more into your already full day. It's about prioritizing what's important, setting boundaries, and making time for the things that bring you joy. It's about finding ease in your day-to-day life so you can be fully present for yourself and your loved ones.

Motherhood is a journey, and so is learning to manage your time in a way that feels good. I'm here to help you navigate that journey with confidence, clarity, and calm. Let's get started!



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Introduction:

Reclaiming Your Day

If you're a mum, you likely have a to-do list as long as your arm. Every day seems like a circus act—juggling a thousand things at once while trying not to drop anything (or anyone!). There's a moment we've all faced, somewhere between the third load of laundry, the half-eaten peanut butter sandwich on the counter, and the blinking cursor on our phone's ever-growing list of notifications, where we ask ourselves:

“Will I ever have enough time to do it all?”

Short answer: probably not if “doing it all” means chasing an unrealistic picture of perfection. But here's the good news: you don't have to do everything to feel successful and happy. The real secret is identifying what truly matters, scheduling it effectively, and allowing yourself the freedom to not do the rest. This guide is about helping you find a little more space in your day—space for the tasks you must handle, the experiences you'd love to enjoy, and the moments for yourself that often get lost in the shuffle. Because guess what? You deserve it, Mum.

Throughout these chapters, we'll share strategies like time-blocking, delegating tasks, prioritising what's truly important, and sprinkling in daily routines that save time. Let's dive in and reclaim your schedule—without sacrificing your sanity or sense of humor.

01 Shifting Your Mindset Around Time

Time is Not the Enemy

First things first: time is not trying to torment you. Yes, it can feel like time is speeding up just as you're about to sit down with a warm cup of tea, but time itself isn't the culprit. What often hurts us is an overstuffed schedule filled with tasks we've accepted—sometimes unwillingly or unconsciously. Think of it this way: every “yes” you give to an unnecessary commitment is a “no” to something else (often something more important or more satisfying). By understanding that your time is a precious, non-renewable resource, you can start to guard it more carefully.



Defining Your Non-Negotiables

All mums have a few things they don't want to budge on—maybe it's a nightly bedtime story, a weekly yoga class, or having one cup of coffee in glorious, uninterrupted silence each morning. These become your “non-negotiables.” They anchor your week and keep you centered.

Take a moment to jot down one or two non-negotiables that truly light you up and keep your mental health in check. Protect these at all costs. Because trust me, nobody wants to face a mum who's been denied her sacred coffee ritual—nobody.

Letting Go of Mum Guilt

Ah, Mum Guilt. The not-so-silent companion that nags at us when we leave the kids for 30 minutes to squeeze in a workout or when we let them watch an extra cartoon so we can fold laundry in peace. Guilt doesn't help anyone; it just drains your mental energy.

To make peace with Mum Guilt, remind yourself of this simple fact: A burnt-out mum can't be the best mum. Taking breaks, delegating, and saying “no” to certain invitations or projects means you have the energy to be fully present for the people and tasks that truly matter. Let that guilt float away like a balloon you release into the sky (just ensure you're being eco-friendly in real life, of course!).



02

Identifying What Truly Matters

Urgent vs. Important

Sometimes, you'll have tasks that are both urgent and important—like dealing with a child's sudden fever. But many of our daily tasks fall into grey areas. For instance, responding to that chatty WhatsApp group can feel urgent (ding! ding!), but is it truly important right now?

The Quick Sort

1. Urgent and Important: Requires immediate attention (child safety, urgent work deadlines).
2. Important but Not Urgent: Long-term goals that need consistent effort (your personal health, career development).
3. Urgent but Not Important: Interruptions or quick tasks that someone else might be able to handle (a phone call you could decline or delegate).
4. Not Urgent, Not Important: Scrolling social media aimlessly—fun but not crucial.

Learning to sort your tasks into these categories helps ensure you're spending time in meaningful ways instead of racing from one "ping" to the next.



Aligning Tasks with Your Family Values

Sit down (possibly with your partner if applicable) and note down three to five values that matter most for your family. Maybe you value health, education, creativity, community involvement, etc. Once you identify these, try to align your daily and weekly tasks to reinforce them. If health is a biggie, schedule family walks or healthier meal planning. If community matters, set aside time to volunteer or attend local events.



Conducting a Time Audit

Just starting? Design a memorable masthead with an equally memorable name. This goes on the cover and sets up the branding for your entire magazine. A good masthead captures the essence of your magazine, so it needs to be flexible, meaningful, and consistent enough for future issues.





03

Time-Blocking Basics

What is Time-Blocking?

Time-blocking is like giving every hour of your day a specific job. Instead of keeping one massive to-do list that you tackle whenever you get a free moment, you schedule each task into a designated “block.” This reduces decision fatigue (the “what should I do first?” panic) and helps you focus on one thing at a time.

Building Your Ideal Week

Start with the big anchors that can't be moved easily—school drop-offs, your work hours, or weekly appointments. Next, slot in your personal non-negotiables (remember those?). From there, group similar tasks together: cooking and meal prep in one block, administrative tasks (bills, emails) in another. Colour-coding on a digital calendar or a paper planner can visually separate work blocks from family or personal blocks.

A sample time-block for a busy mum could look like this:

- 6:30–7:00 AM: Wake-up & coffee ritual (non-negotiable me-time)
- 7:00–8:00 AM: Kids' morning routine (breakfast, dressing, school prep)
- 8:00–9:00 AM: School drop-off / Commute
- 9:00–12:00 PM: Work block (meetings, focused tasks)
- 12:00–12:30 PM: Quick lunch & short walk
- 12:30–3:00 PM: Work block continued
- 3:00–4:00 PM: Collect kids, after-school run-around
- 4:00–5:00 PM: Homework & kids' activities (or delegated to partner)
- 5:00–6:00 PM: Prep dinner (possibly with a meal kit or slow cooker)
- 6:00–7:00 PM: Family dinner & cleanup
- 7:00–8:00 PM: Kids' bedtime routine
- 8:00–9:00 PM: Personal time / Partner time
- 9:00–9:30 PM: Wind down, read, or relax

Of course, real life might not look this neat every day, but having a framework reduces chaos.



Flexibility & Backup Plans

No matter how perfect your plan, kids (and life) can throw in wild cards—sudden ear infections, meltdown over the “wrong” colour cup, or extra traffic. Give yourself a buffer: 15-minute gaps between big tasks or a backup plan if you must shift a time-block. If kids skip a nap, maybe that writing task moves to the evening. Remind yourself it’s okay to adapt.

04 The Art of Delegation

Overcoming “I’ll Just Do It Myself” Syndrome

Raise your hand if you’ve ever thought: “It’s faster if I just do it myself!” Many mums fall into this trap, and while it might save time today, it eats up future time because no one else gets the chance to learn the ropes.

Think of delegation as training mini (or grown-up) assistants. Yes, it takes a bit of guidance at first, and it may not be perfectly done to your standards initially, but in the long run, it frees up huge chunks of your schedule—and builds independence in others.

Delegation at Home

- Partner Involvement: Sit down and list all household chores—laundry, shopping, cleaning, kid drop-offs—and divide or rotate them fairly.
- Kid-Friendly Tasks: Even young children can learn to put toys in a bin, feed a pet, or set the table with plasticware. Older kids can help pack their lunches, fold laundry, or water plants.
- Family & Friends: Sometimes, grandparents or close friends want to help but don’t know how. If they ask, be specific: “It would really help if you could watch the kids for an hour on Saturday afternoon.”

Professional Help

If your budget allows, outsourcing certain tasks can work wonders.

Whether it's a once-a-month deep-cleaning service, a meal kit subscription, or even a neighborhood teenager to babysit for a couple of hours on the weekend, delegating to professionals or part-timers can free up time—and mental load—for you.



05

Everyday Efficiency Hacks

Micro-Routines

A micro-routine is a short, repeatable action that boosts productivity. Here are some quick examples:

- **10-Minute Tidy-Ups:** Set a timer for 10 minutes, pick a room (or just the living area), and do a fast, high-impact tidy. You'll be amazed at the difference.
- **Meal Prep Sunday (or Your Best Day):** Chop veggies, batch-cook proteins, or pre-assemble lunches for a few days. Label and store in containers so you can grab and go on busy mornings.
- **Nightly Reset:** Before bed, do a quick once-over in the kitchen—wipe counters, load the dishwasher, and put random items back where they belong. Waking up to a tidy kitchen is priceless.

Maximizing “Hidden” Time

We often waste time in small intervals: waiting in the car line, at the doctor’s office, or during a child’s sports practice. Use these mini-windows to respond to emails, read a book, listen to a podcast, or plan grocery lists. You’ll feel more productive, and those random waiting periods become less of a drag.

Technology & Tools

- Calendar & Reminder Apps: Use Google Calendar or another app to sync with your partner or family members.
- To-Do Lists: A simple notes app can help you track tasks.
- Online Shopping: Grocery delivery or pickup might cost a small fee, but it can save hours of wandering the aisles with a cranky toddler in tow.





06 Building Resilience When Plans Go Awry

Managing the Unexpected

Murphy's Law states: If something can go wrong, it probably will—especially when you're a mum. Kids get sick, school closes suddenly, or the car battery dies when you're already running late. While you can't prevent these events, you can prepare mentally and practically:

1. Create a Flexible Plan B: If your child is home sick, can you shuffle work calls or lean on a friend or grandparent for coverage?
2. Emergency Activity Kit: Keep a small bag of coloring books, snacks, and quiet activities in the car or near the front door to handle unexpected wait times.



Coping with Stress & Overwhelm

Take a moment—even if it's 60 seconds in the bathroom—to do a quick reset:

- Deep Breaths: Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 2, exhale for 6.
- Positive Self-Talk: Instead of “I’m failing at everything,” try: “I’m doing my best, and that’s enough.”
- Micro-Breaks: Step outside for a quick breath of fresh air, do a short stretch, or put on a favorite song and dance it out with the kids.

Supporting Children with Additional Needs

If you have a child with additional needs, time management can feel extra tricky. Specific therapies, appointments, and routines need careful planning. Here’s where delegation and support become vital. If your extended family or local community offers help—even small things like picking up groceries—take it. Setting up recurring “check-ins” with teachers or therapists can also streamline communication, avoiding last-minute confusion.

07

Strengthening Your Mindset & Motivation

Battling Procrastination

Procrastination often stems from feeling overwhelmed or unsure where to start. Break tasks into smaller, actionable steps. If you're dreading reorganising the playroom, for instance, focus on just the toy bins first. Celebrate small wins—progress is still progress.

Self-Care as Fuel

Repeat after me: Self-care is not selfish. You can't pour from an empty cup, so schedule those moments that refuel you—whether it's a yoga session, a hobby class, or 20 minutes locked in the bathroom with a good book (no judgment!).

Staying Inspired & Tracking Progress

Set aside five minutes each week to evaluate how well your current schedule is working. Did you manage to fit in your exercise block? Did you feel calmer overall, or did you end the week frazzled? Identifying what works (and celebrating it) is just as important as seeing what doesn't.



08

Fostering Healthy Relationships

Quality vs. Quantity of Time with Family

- Blocking out purposeful family moments—even if short
- Active listening and undivided attention strategies

Communication & Boundary Setting

- Saying “no” to excessive obligations
- Negotiating with your spouse or partner for shared tasks and mutual goals

Connecting with Other Mums

- Finding or forming local support groups
- Time-saving tips from peers, plus emotional support

09

Sustaining Your New Time Management Lifestyle

Maintaining Momentum

- Adjusting your system with life changes (new job, new baby, evolving kids' schedules)
- Regularly updating your “time audit” and goals

Future-Proofing Your Habits

- Building in adaptation—recognising that no schedule is set in stone
- Recognising burnout signs early and recalibrating as needed

Growth Mindset for Lifelong Balance

- Viewing challenges as opportunities to refine your time management strategies
- Encouraging your family to grow with you

Conclusion: Embrace the Journey



Reflecting on Your Progress

- How far you've come in taking control of your day
- Reaffirming the value of personal well-being and strong relationships

Looking Ahead

- Continuously optimise schedule
- Final reminders that flexibility, compassion for yourself, and consistency are key

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide—I hope it has given you insight, inspiration, and practical steps for enhancing time management.

Remember, you're not alone on this journey. We're building a supportive community for mums—a space where we can connect, uplift, and grow together. If you ever have questions, want to share your experiences, or simply need encouragement, I'd love to hear from you.

Feel free to get in touch and be part of this growing community. You're always welcome here.

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LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH



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