

# Back to School, Back to Work, Back to Routines

September marks the beginning of a new season and for some of us a new “year”. Summer vacation can be hectic with children and vacations that allow us to relax and forget about our day to day schedule. There is no better time than September to think about creating a new routine. With so many things to juggle; school, work, sports, family and friends, and household chores, adults and children benefit from routines alike. Structured routines reduce stress and increase productivity. They create consistency which leads to a calmer and happier outlook.

Creating a routine is as easy as 1, 2, 3!

## STEP ONE:

- Start by listing everything that you would like to accomplish in a day, week, or month.
- Be sure to include work tasks as well as enjoyable tasks.
- Don't forget to include FREE time!

## STEP TWO

- Transfer your list to a schedule. Some things are easy to place because they must be completed at specific times. Set these items in the schedule first.
- Schedule flexible items around them. Keep in mind how you feel throughout the day. For example when placing your workout on the schedule, choose a time that you have the most energy.
- If an hourly schedule seems daunting, start simple with a Morning, Afternoon, and Evening Schedule.

## STEP THREE

- Use it! Keep it visible whether it is on the wall at home or office or on the go in your purse, cell phone, etc.
- Refer to the schedule often. After weeks of practice the schedule will become second nature.

Here are a few things to think about when working with your new routine.

- Schedule yourself some flexible time during each day to get regular (weekly, monthly) activities done. For example, cleaning tasks, grocery shopping etc needs to be done regularly, but not everyday.
- Don't account for every last minute...Surprises happen!
- Schedule time to relax so that you don't experience burnout and toss the schedule entirely.
- Your schedule is a work in progress...you may start a new job with new hours, etc. Be sure to update your schedule accordingly.
- Last but not least...interruptions can wreak havoc on a schedule. Turn off your cell phones, email alerts, and shut the door, when you need to stay focused on the task at hand.

Good Luck with your new routine! Until next month,

*Heidi Lilac*

