



THINKSTOCK

Keep it together

How to stay organized in a chaotic world.

BY PAUL S. INSELMAN, DC

FACE IT: THE DAILY DEMANDS ON A PRACTICING CHIROPRACTOR ARE difficult at best. Treating patients while finding opportunities to market, complete paperwork, and create quality family time can be tough to balance in this era of healthcare reform and advanced recordkeeping.

The rules seem to continually change, which puts further demands on your already-stressed schedule. Therefore, organization is one of the major components of success. Typically, when starting to get organized, the first task is to put out fires. Emergency situations arise when you are not proactive. If you are disorganized, it is impossible to be proactive because you are constantly squashing fires — and so the cycle continues.

But if you follow the steps below, you will become proactive and prevent most (if not all) of the time drains that plague you and your practice every day. Follow *all* of the rules, not just the ones you prefer. It will take about four to six weeks before your new system is working smoothly. Stay the course and then enjoy the rewards of heightened profits and more free time.

Rule 1: Choose your calendar method. Consider an electronic version like Google Calendar. It is free and syncs with an Android phone and PC perfectly. And it will work with an iPhone, too, or you can use an Apple-based calendar. Whatever you use, make sure it syncs with your smartphone and computer or laptop.

Rule 2: Use your calendar as a check sheet for completed action steps.

Rule 3: Set your entries to alert you 15 minutes in advance of upcoming tasks. When a task pops up, you have three choices:

1. Perform the task and check off as completed
2. Move the task to a later time that day
3. Move the task to a later day

Do not dismiss a task as completed unless it is. By keeping the item in your calendar, the rules will force you to accomplish it.

Rule 4: Don't move a task more than three times. On the third time, you make one of three choices:

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August-Bebel Str. 68, 14482 Potsdam
t. +49 (0)331 74 00 88-0
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PRACTICECENTRAL

1. Perform the task and check it off as complete
2. Move the task to a later time — on the same day
3. Dismiss the task and remove it from your calendar.

Rule 5: Don't go to sleep until everything on your calendar for the day is completed. This will act as a backstop even if you have moved tasks three times. It forces you to either perform the task or take it off your plate. This rule is designed to ensure you stick to your agenda. Successful practices are built on the execution of meaningful steps. Being held accountable is a recipe for success.

The rules described above can work infallibly. If you dismiss alerts for uncompleted tasks, chances are you will forget to attend to them. If you move things more than three times, you probably won't accomplish them. If you fail to complete your list before bed, you will be guaranteed poor outcomes.

This system takes about four to six weeks to master as you experiment with the proper number of tasks for your schedule. During the first month, give yourself some extra leeway until you know the right amount of work to put on your calendar.

You deserve to be happy, respected, and living the life you desire. Disorganization is a detriment to happiness, respect and wealth. Systematize everything and then *work the system*. Your reward will be more steps completed, a better feeling of self-worth, a larger practice, and ultimately more money and time to spend with your family. ☺



PAUL S. INSELMAN, DC, is president of Inselman Coaching and an expert at teaching chiropractors how to build practices based on sound business principles. He can be reached at 888-201-0567 or inselmancoaching@gmail.com.