

# SLAY THE overwhelm

A packed to-do list, no time to exercise and nothing to wear? Aargh! Stay calm – we've got your back

## SOME DAYS IT'S NOT JUST THE WARDROBE THAT NEEDS A MASSIVE DECLUTTER – IT'S LIFE!

We've all experienced those times when we're under the pump to get too much stuff done in too few hours. The result? One over-stressed, burned-out bunny.

Slay that feeling of overwhelm with these simple ideas from experts. They'll help you get back on track with fitness, crack on with your paperwork, and even sort out that overflowing wardrobe...

## YOUR TO-DO LIST IS SCARY LONG

A list helps to declutter your mind by dumping everything onto paper. But when your tasks run to three pages, it can make your mind boggle even harder. So, where to begin?

**SLAY IT:** Cut to the chase of what you really need to get done with this 100-year-old productivity tip from the late Ivy Lee, a US public relations pioneer. Designed for business, it'll work on your out-of-control personal to-do list too, by slashing it to six key items. Here's how:

1. At the end of the day, write down the six most essential tasks that you need to tick off the following day.
2. Next up, prioritise your six items in order of importance.
3. Tomorrow, concentrate only on the first task on your list and finish that before moving on to the next chore.
4. Approach the rest of your list in the same way. At the end of the day, move any unfinished jobs to a new list of six tasks for the following day.
5. Give yourself a big pat on the back for getting stuff done, and repeat!

With this solution, you can still brain dump everything that you need to get done onto paper, but keep your daily to-do list to just six items to avoid getting completely overwhelmed.

## YOU'VE SKIPPED A FEW TOO MANY GYM SESSIONS

Who hasn't fallen off this wagon before? One minute you've skipped a few mornings, the next, it's been six weeks between Body Barre classes. "When life feels overwhelming and exercise feels like the last thing you want to do, that's probably when you need it most!" says WFPT Libby Babet. Dammit, she's right.

**SLAY IT:** Nudge yourself back into action by switching things up a bit, starting with swapping the word "exercise" for "movement", says Babet. Take a 30-minute walk in the morning and evening, and tick! You've been on the move for an hour.

Or, you could bump it up to the '100 reps a day' challenge. This means knocking out 100 reps of any one exercise each day (not necessarily all at once), such as 100 squats, 100 push-ups, 100 crunches, 100 high-knees, 100 skips, 100 star jumps or 100 prone rows. Pick anything that's easy to do at home, then choose another move the next day, and keep going!

Exercising with friends is more inspiring than going it alone, so find a squad, such as a bootcamp or an online community, to keep movement fun, suggests Babet. And it's always a good idea to try something you've never done before. Give yoga a go, sign up for The Jungle Body or try hip hop dance. "Anything that blasts stress and gets you smiling at the same time," says Babet.

## YOUR WARDROBE IS FULL, BUT THERE'S NOTHING TO WEAR

You've got a dozen black skirts, but you can't find the right one and you need it RIGHT NOW! There is a way to start your day with less stress, but be prepared for some tough love on the wardrobe front.

**SLAY IT:** Say hello to the slimmed-down 10-item wardrobe. Yep, you read that right, having just 10 key pieces is the secret to a less-stressed, better-dressed you, promises Jennifer L Scott, author of *Lessons from Madame Chic: 20 Stylish Secrets I Learned While Living in Paris* (HarperCollins, \$24.99).

"It may seem counterintuitive, but the 10-item wardrobe easily solves the 'I have nothing to wear' problem," says Scott. "More choice provides more confusion, but a well-curated capsule wardrobe leaves very little choice, making it easier to get dressed every morning."

Start by going through every item in your wardrobe, deciding to keep it or donate it. "Store away the out-of-season clothes, then choose 10 core items from what's left," she says. The 10 core items will include dresses, skirts, tops and pants but you can keep some 'extras' to bring it all together (phew). Think T-shirts,

jumpers, coats, special occasion dresses, shoes and accessories.

"Just jump right in and begin. It will feel awkward at first, but most people who do the 10-item wardrobe say that they could never go back to their old way of dressing, shopping and storing clothes," Scott says.

## YOUR PAPERWORK IS A MESS AND NOW IT'S PILING UP

Some like to procrastinate, others scroll Insta. But there are lots of better ways to get around nasty jobs like your brimming in-tray or email inbox.

**SLAY IT:** Try the five-second rule, the answer to procrastination devised and written about by CNN reporter Mel Robbins. When faced with something you don't want to do (but need to) the idea is to act within five seconds.

"If you have an impulse to act on a goal, you must physically move within five seconds or your brain will kill the idea," she says on her website, melrobbins.com.

By acting immediately, you tap into the prefrontal cortex, or that part of your brain that makes instinctive decisions, before you can come up with a multitude of reasons not to do your paperwork.

Another approach is to give yourself a set amount of time to tackle an annoying task, says psychologist Carly Leverington. Motivation to do your tax return isn't going to arrive all by itself, she says. "It can be helpful to give yourself a set period of time to do something, such as 'I'll give myself 30 minutes to clean out my wardrobe, and then I'll stop'," she tips. "It's often not until we start doing something that motivation shows up." Hopefully, once you start you'll be on a roll, and you won't want to stop when time's up. Mission accomplished! 🎉

## Take a moment (or five!)

When overwhelm strikes, try these tips from psychologist Carly Leverington

- Acknowledge your emotions, letting yourself know it's understandable to feel like this.
- Write it all down. What seems enormous in our minds can appear less threatening when written down.
- Prioritise what needs to be done first. Sometimes it's best to start with a task you find easy, to build momentum.
- Ask for help and try not to assume others know you're feeling overwhelmed and stressed.

