

**J.L. Barkas**  
**You and Your  
Leisure Time**

If you're like most people, there are lots of activities you'd *like* to do in your leisure time, but you never seem to get around to them. The solution is to *plan*—not so much that you feel like you're "on the job," but not so little that you fail to accomplish whatever is important to you, whether that means learning French or going dancing. *Recommended:*

- *Plan* your leisure time by creating a "to do" list for your spare time just as you might for your workday. You probably don't want every hour accounted for, but you should at least list what you most want to do with each leisure evening or weekend.

- Allot some specific times on a regular basis when you will pursue the leisure activities that are most important to you. A scheduled time will help ensure the successful fulfillment of your plan. If it's culture you're after, consider getting at least one subscription series to eliminate some of the paperwork and phone calling that often accompany even leisure-time plans. (You will also avoid *wasting* time in line!) Similarly, set up regular social contacts, like monthly Saturday dinner with specific friends, so you spend less time coordinating your meetings and more time enjoying them.

- If you use too much of your recreation time for household chores, try delegating those tasks to professional help or family members. Or do it more efficiently and less frequently.

- If you often work in your leisure hours, consider that you may be *more* efficient if you plan, and carry out, pleasurable activities that energize you (and prevent work burnout).

- To keep your leisure-time plans active (not *reactive* to other people's demands on you), make appointments with yourself. You will be less inclined to give up your plans if someone else

J.L. Barkas, Ph.D., conducts time management and writing seminars and is the author of seven books. Her newest, *Creative Time Management*, will be published this fall by Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.

asks you to do something, since you have a previous commitment to yourself.

- Just as a "quiet hour" of uninterrupted time at the office increases your work efficiency, a "quiet" leisure hour enhances your nonwork time. On a fixed schedule, if possible, take some time each evening and weekend to meditate, listen to music, reflect or just plain old "unwind."

Making better use of your nonwork time, however, will not solve another major complaint—namely, "I just don't have *enough* time." How can you find more hours for recreation? By setting your alarm clock only half an hour earlier on weekends you'll gain four hours a month. Become more efficient at work, so you can leave earlier (and not have to take work home as often). To find the time to read that mystery novel, try switching from showers to baths, and read in the tub. ■

AUGUST 15, 1984

**Bottom Line**  
**PERSONAL**