

USE THE LAST 15 MINUTES OF YOUR WORKDAY TO... ...plan for tomorrow

At the end of your nine-to-five day, you wind up frantically composing the e-mail you meant to send in the morning while simultaneously wondering what to make for dinner. Experts recommend this remedy: Spend the last 15 minutes preparing for tomorrow. It sounds simplistic, but writing down your plan for the next day gets things off your mind, says Marcia Ramsland, a professional organizer and the author of *Simplify Your Time* (W, \$15). You'll walk out the door (or away from the corner of the kitchen that passes for a home office) feeling collected, and walk back in the next day with purpose. Here's how to make a graceful exit.

- Composing a to-do list is a no-brainer, but instead of writing it on random Post-its, keep it in a notebook so you can refer to the list later, says Laura Stack, author of *Find More Time* (Broadway, \$13).
- List the e-mails you need to send the next day. Too often you get caught up in just responding to e-mail, so making your list will put you in a proactive mode, says Ramsland.
- File away as much as possible. Create a system that functions like a calendar, with 31 folders for each day of the month, and sort papers by the date you need to see them again. Now you'll be ready when the phone starts ringing and the e-mail starts ping-pong, says Stack.

