

Time-Saving Services

Well-needed help for the working gal ...

By *Martha Li*



On paper, your job may be 9-to-5, but in today's fast-paced working world, you probably put in a lot more than 40 hours a week on a fairly regular basis. We've compiled a list of services that every busy working gal should be aware of. You'll save loads of time from doing errands and chores so you'll be able to work hard and play harder.

Professional house cleaning

Admit it—when you only have a few precious hours for leisure time, the last way you want to spend them is doing household chores. While you may not be adverse to performing domestic duties, there's nothing wrong with hiring some help for a couple hours each week to vacuum and dust your home while you're at work. Or perhaps have a cleaner come in to help you for a full day to do a major cleaning. It's easy and affordable too as some cleaners charge as low as \$15 per hour.

Personal chef or meal assembly kitchen

Here are two ultra-convenient options for the busy gal who wants to come home to a fast, healthy and hearty dinner each night:

Hire a personal chef to prepare your meals, whether at your home or off-site, according to your dietary and nutritional requirements. Expect to pay a minimum of \$45 per hour for personal chef services, however, rates vary greatly as a personal chef tends to factor into their pricing the time spent on menu-planning, travelling, shopping for groceries and even how high-end your ingredient selection is.

If you'd rather make your own meals because you've got a passion for cooking, imagine being able to do so but without having to do the grocery shopping, prepping ingredients or any of the clean-up afterwards. Enter the meal assembly kitchen. A meal assembly kitchen is designed for time-crunched career gals like yourself so you can prepare a freezer-full of healthy, tasty meals in just a couple of hours. Meal assembly kitchens have food stations set up like salad bars. At your station will be all of the ingredients you need to put together a main dish already chopped, sliced, and cut. You'll assemble the ingredients into freezer-ready bags and go home with a week's worth or even a month's worth of meals that you simply thaw and cook at home. Prices are as low as \$5 per single-serve entrée and many companies will offer very reasonably priced packages that provide you with a week's worth of single-serve or family-size entrées.

Personal concierge service

A personal concierge will take care of just about any errand you need them to such as grocery shopping, prescription pick-ups, gift basket preparation or bringing your car to the auto shop for repairs. Andrea Yampolsky started Montréal-based [My Concierge+](#) two years ago and, as a result of people's lives getting busier, her services are constantly in demand. "It's a false impression that using a personal concierge service makes you a lazy person," says Yampolsky. "If anything, it makes you smart because you've gained more leisure time by letting someone else take care of the mundane things you can't always personally attend to."

Rates typically range between \$30 to \$50 per hour. Visit [The Canadian Concierge Directory](#), [Conservus](#) or do an internet search to find a personal concierge in your area. Be sure to shop around for the best rate as well as a company with a reputable and loyal clientele, so you know you're paying for a reliable and efficient service.

Personal trainer

Hitting the gym is not always easy for the busy working gal. If staying late at the office has you missing fitness classes, a personal trainer is the way to go. Having a personal trainer can be very motivating because their attention is 100% focused on getting you in shape. Plus, the fact that their hourly wage is coming out of your pocket should also help in the way of self-motivation. Check with your local gym to see if they have personal trainers who take on off-site clients, or do your research online.

Online grocery shopping

You're on the computer most of the day anyway, so why not stock your fridge and kitchen pantry the online way? Shopping for groceries on the Net might cost a little extra but you'll save gas money and the hassle of lugging bags full of groceries home on public transit. And did we mention the annoyance of grocery shopping amongst the weekend masses? Check out IGA or ask around for an online grocer in your area.

Professional dog walker

You love your pooch dearly but sometimes you don't have enough time to take it for a walk. If you want your canine friend to get the fresh air and daily exercise they need, consider hiring a dog walker. You'll have a much more playful, active dog who'll be happy to see you walk through the door each evening. Check out [craigslist](#), [Kijiji](#) or your local paper's classifieds for professional dog walking and grooming services.