

TimeOut

The Little
Black Book
of London

CONCIERGE SERVICES

You don't need a six-figure salary to use a concierge service these days, thanks to a new breed of companies aimed at Londoners on less lavish budgets. Instead of demanding eye-wateringly expensive yearly membership, they charge by the hour – and the range of services is also broader than you might think. While they can sort out parties, holidays and other delicious frivolities, they can also step in to tackle more tedious everyday tasks, like waiting in for a delivery on your behalf, or organising your paperwork and bills.

Busy People

8981 8972/www.busy-people.co.uk. Busy People offers both hourly and fixed-fee rates. Waiting in for a delivery, for example, is charged at £40 for four hours (ex VAT), cat-sitting at £9.50 per visit and moving house cleans at £12 per hour, while party help can be had at £14 per hour, or a weekend nanny for £10 per hour. References are scrupulously checked.

Buy:time

0870 486 2624/www.buy-time.co.uk. Want to organise a surprise party, sort out your bills and long-neglected

admin or get the errands you never have time for done in one fell swoop? Buy:time promises to organise your life by the hour, by the day, or via a bespoke plan. There are no joining fees, just an hourly rate of £39, which is reduced if you buy blocks of time: 20 hours, for example, is charged at £29 per hour (ex VAT).

Cushion the Impact

7704 6922/www.cushiontheimpact.co.uk.

If it's legal, moral and feasible, Cushion the Impact will be happy to help. Whether it's organising unpaid bills and unfiled tax returns or tackling time-consuming chores, they'll take it off your hands. The hourly fee is £40, although the more hours you buy, the cheaper the rates then become.

Life's Too Short

0800 066 5373/www.lifes2short.co.uk. Lifestyle management comes in at just £29 an hour for regular users of Life's Too Short, or £40 for one-off projects, whether it be finding and booking tradesmen, researching a holiday, getting your filing up to date or helping you move house.

Electricians

See also **Home Jane** and **020 Handyman**, p160.

Electrical Contractors' Association

7313 4800/www.eca.co.uk.

This nationwide trade association can provide you with a list of contractors.

National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting

0870 013 0382/www.nicic.org.uk.

The NICEIC is a regulatory body issuing strict rules to its members; use the online Find an Electrician feature to locate your nearest registered electrician. It also offers an independent complaints procedure, if work doesn't meet its standards.

RJ Electrical

8599 2841/mobile 07836 677836.

Richard James is a general electrician who knows his stuff, returns your calls, and is warmly recommended by former clients. He does rewiring, call-outs and cooker repairs, and is based in north-east London.