

# Quick Tips for Balancing Family, Work, and You



Balancing the demands of your family and work life and finding time for yourself can be challenging these days. But with a little thought, intention, practice, and a few good organizational tips, you can find ways to create a greater sense of balance and wellbeing.

Here are some tips:

**Decide what's important.** This is a must! Creating the time and space in your life for the things that matter most is a decision. Whether daily, weekly, or monthly, it is really important to do a “check in” on how you are spending your time and energy to see if it aligns with your stated priorities. When your priorities are clear, you can arrange your schedule to make time for what's truly important.

**Set goals and agreements with your partner.** If you are in a relationship, try to be in harmony and be very clear about what matters most to each of you. Communicating openly and honestly about what you want and need in the partnership can be tremendously helpful for planning your time together as well as apart. Whether it is regarding upcoming holiday plans or work demands, look to compromise and collaborate so that a clash of priorities doesn't upset the needs of your home and work life. If you are single, communicate to your family and friends your commitments, and make plans to spend time with the people you love, while balancing your free time and work responsibilities.

**Cut back on your commitments.** When things get too hectic, limit any non-essential activities you and your family are involved in. Don't be afraid to say “no” to things that are low on your list of priorities and are contributing to you and your family's energy drain.

**Create quality time with your family and friends.** Creating boundaries and learning to be present is an intentional decision and act. In a world where “multi-tasking” is common, it is also counterproductive towards nourishing and rejuvenating your relationships, your personal health, and your wellbeing. When you're with your family or friends, let your calls go to voicemail, turn off your devices, stop doing household chores, and really concentrate on each other.

**Get everybody in the family involved and share the load.** You and your spouse or partner could make a chore chart to help you identify the household and parenting responsibilities you need to take on, and who is best positioned to do them. Teach your children to help in ways that are age appropriate. Children love to help and be involved; even a young child can move clothing from the hamper to the washing machine or do other small household tasks. If children see their parents sharing responsibilities, they too will learn the importance of cooperation and contribution. If you live with friends, or a house share, split the household activities so you are not doing it all yourself. If you live alone, look into getting outside help if your budget allows. If not, aim to do one or two household chores a week.

**Be realistic.** Remember, creating balance is personal. What works for one may not be considered balance for another. Don't expect that you will always be able to find the perfect balance between work and life, or that it will be easy; aim for overall balance rather than perfection in each day.

**Build "YOU" time into your schedule.** Build in some time to focus on rejuvenating yourself. This can be hard to do as a working parent or caregiver; free time is scarce. However, your own mental health is incredibly important and just a few minutes a day of downtime—whether it's a walk in the park, coffee with a friend, or just taking a moment to breathe—can restore balance and re-energize you. Being intentional about arranging time for yourself will help you feel greater personal satisfaction and overall contentment.

*This article was written in collaboration with licensed mental health counselor and life coach Patti Yarranton.  
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