



JUGGLE *without the* STRUGGLE

How do I find work/life balance?

Does the pursuit of a healthy work/life balance seem like an impossible goal? If so, you're not alone. With the blurring of lines between career and lack of "down time", many of us feel torn between juggling long work days, relationships, caring for our parents and children, and fitting in exercise or hobbies. According to a recent Gallup poll, 80% of Americans said they experience stress in their daily lives, and they report that children and work are their biggest stressors.

Stress Effects

Stress can:

- Diminish our concentration
- Make us irritable
- Cause depression
- Affect our relationships
- Deplete our energy
- Impact our sleep

Over time, stress can also contribute to health issues, including:

- High blood pressure
- Asthma
- Ulcers
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Headaches
- Back pain

While we all require some stress to help us perform at our best, the secret to managing stress is to achieve a healthy work-life balance. Here are a few tips to ease stress and gain balance in our lives.

In the Workplace

Set achievable goals each day. Being able to check things off our “to do” list helps us feel in control, and gives us a sense of accomplishment. Be sure to ask for help when necessary.

Make the best use of your time. Evaluate when and if it is necessary for you to spend time doing “busy work”. The less time you spend doing unnecessary work, the more time you can spend productively with your family.

Request flexibility. Flex time and telecommuting are becoming necessities in today’s business world, and many companies now incorporate flexible schedules and encourage telecommuting to maximize productivity.

Give yourself a break. Taking small breaks clears your head and improves your ability to deal with stress.

Speak up. If you are overwhelmed, be honest with your boss and coworkers and ask for help. Offer solutions and be open to ideas on how to achieve a solution.

3 WAYS TO GET MORE FAMILY TIME

- 1 **Prioritize your to-do list, eliminating anything that’s not a “must”.**
- 2 **Set aside a few minutes of “me time” every day to re-energize yourself.**
- 3 **Exercise and eat a healthy diet to keep up your energy level.**

At Home

Unplug. Make yourself available to your employer, especially if you’ve earned the right to flextime, but realize the need for personal time.

Set family time as a goal. Setting aside a specific amount of focused together time can ease the stress you may feel when you don’t allocate your off-work time well. Fun outings like an easy hike through a local park can be time-efficient bonding, better than hours spent disconnected from one another in front of the TV or in separate areas of the house.

Don’t over commit. If you’re overcommitted with activities, learn to say, “no.”

Divide and conquer. Make sure chores and responsibilities at home are clearly outlined and distributed so you aren’t shouldering the burden of home tasks alone.

Be active. Regular exercise reduces stress, depression and anxiety.

Stay healthy. Be sure to eat right, exercise, and get enough sleep. Be careful not to rely on drugs and alcohol. If you feel you are suffering from substance abuse, seek help.

Assign tasks to share the joy. Try incorporating family time into everyday tasks like meal preparation that have to be done anyway. Give everyone a job at dinner rather than trading off days, so you’re all in the kitchen together on family meal nights. It may not be the most efficient way to get things done, but you’ll all be in it together.



ACTION ITEMS

Don't let stress stand in the way of your health and happiness. If you are persistently stressed and have trouble achieving balance between home and work, talk to your healthcare provider about seeking help from a mental health professional.