

vitaMin

Vital health information in a minute!

Juggling your life: the search for balance

Work-life balance doesn't mean an equal balance in time - that's an unrealistic goal. It means finding the right balance for YOU. The right work-life balance is different for each of us because we all have different priorities and different lives. Instead, look for a balance between what you achieve and what you enjoy, in work, life, friends and self.

Think about this: when was the last time you achieved AND enjoyed something at work, or with your family or friends? And how recently have you achieved AND enjoyed something just for you?

Every person who goes to work has a constant challenge to juggle the demands of career and personal life. These ideas might help you find the right work-life balance for you.

Getting started

Track your time. Track everything you do for one week, including work-related and personal activities. Decide what's necessary and what satisfies you most. Can you cut or delegate activities you don't enjoy or can't handle?

Find out about options at work. Does your employer offer flexible hours, job sharing or telecommuting? The more control you have over your hours, the less stressed you're likely to be.

It's okay to say no. Were you just asked to help out with something extra? A project at your kid's school or an "off-the-desk" project at work? It's okay to respectfully say no. If you stop taking on tasks out of guilt or a false sense of obligation, you'll make room in your life for the activities that are meaningful to you.

Keep work and home separate. It may be necessary to create a boundary between work and home, and make a conscious decision to separate your work and personal time. When you're with your family, turn off your cell phone and put away your laptop. Don't be a slave to your Blackberry or iPhone.

Look for ways to organize your time better. Can you run errands in batches or do a load of laundry every day, rather than saving it all for your day off? Keep a weekly family calendar to track events and daily to-dos. Decide what really needs to be done and let the rest go.

Create a support system. Look for coworkers who can cover for you and vice versa when family conflicts arise. At home, enlist trusted friends and loved ones to help with child care or household duties in an emergency.

Take care of yourself. Eat healthy foods, include physical activity in your daily routine and get enough sleep. Make some time each day for an activity you enjoy, such as yoga or reading. Look for some activities you can do with people you care about - go for a bike ride or a walk after dinner, take a cooking class or learn to salsa dance.

Through all the changes of life, in family and at work, maintaining balance is an ongoing process. Set aside some time to examine your priorities - and make changes, if necessary - to make sure you're staying on track.

Know when to seek professional help



If your life feels chaotic and you're lying awake worrying about it, talk with a counselor or other mental health professional. If your employer offers an employee assistance program (EAP), take advantage of available services. They're completely confidential and an initial consultation is often free of charge.

Source: Mayo Clinic



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