

Q. How do I deal with stress at home, not the office? There is so much to do when I get home, that I want to go back to the office. But when I get to the office, there is so much going on all I want to do is get home. And so it goes...

A. It sounds like you are experiencing overload – having more demands on your time at home than you are able to cope with. A key principle in stress management is time management which includes many facets. Here are a few concepts to consider:

Set Priorities.

Everyone has to set priorities. Most people have more to do than there is time to do it in, so you have to decide what is most important and do it first. Each morning, or the evening before, make a list of everything that needs doing. Then go back and prioritize your list.

- ✓ Put an **A** by everything that must be done.
- ✓ Put a **B** by those items that need doing but are not as pressing.
- ✓ Put a **C** by those things that need doing when you have more time.

Then start right out doing only the A items. It may be easier or more fun to do the B or C items, but stick to your priority list. When the A list is done, then start on the B list and finally the C list. If there is no time for Bs or Cs, it's okay. Some of them may become As on tomorrow's list.

Delegate.

Another key principle in time management is to get help by delegating certain chores around the house. Hire a maid to help with house chores once or twice a month. Ask your spouse, kids, or other family members to chip in and help with the meals, cleanup, and other house chores. Make a little list and put it on the fridge door. Assign the duties every morning and have them sign off on the items when they are completed. By organizing the family, everyone can help. It can even be fun – cooking together, cleaning up together,



et cetera. It helps them see they are an important part of the family. Give them rewards for doing their jobs on time. Rewards can be time for the family to do something special together, or it may be an allowance they earn.

Simplify your life.

Sometimes people simply attempt too much in life. Do you have to work full time? Would half-time or 3 days a week still meet the financial needs and allow more time for home duties? Do you have to have the nicest house on the block or would more time with the family due to less financial pressure be a better choice? See where you can simplify your life and decrease overhead. It could free up more time.

Don't be hard on yourself.

Keep in mind that we are all human. We all have limits and we have to live within these limits. Some things might not get done, but that's okay. You need to have some time to relax and enjoy your family too. It's also important to take good care of yourself: Get regular meals, get adequate sleep, and take a little time to exercise and to have fun. By keeping balance in your life, you will maintain high energy levels and not get overcome or discouraged by all the work that you "should" be doing.

In summary: Set priorities in your life. Do your best. Get help when needed. Keep life simple. Take some time for yourself. Then relax and enjoy your life, even if everything doesn't get done that you wish you could do.

Mental Health America. 2009.

Take the Stress Self-Test.
www.wellsource.info/wn/SelfTest-Stress.pdf

