

## Tips to Help Balance Career and Family

Whether you are male or female, a mom or a dad, balancing career and family can be really difficult. When you're a woman, though, the choices you have to make seem especially difficult and the responsibilities all the more great. For some reason, women are guilt-ridden with their career decisions and the choices they make about working while trying to raise their children, providing nutritious meals for their family, keeping a respectable house and keeping their husbands happy. Last on the list, of course, is finding some time for themselves. So how does a woman find time to actually feel happy with her daily activities while keeping up with all of the responsibility?

First, take time to smell the roses! Literally, you can take time to smell the roses but you can actually do this with no flowers in sight. Every day, try to look around and appreciate what you have, taking in the sounds of your child's laughter, the wag of your dog's tail, the special glance of your husband as you tell a funny joke. Sometimes, the knowledge of what you have on your plate for the day will feel overwhelming, but a little perspective goes a long way. It may be a cliché and a very tired phrase, but it truly does work. People tend to get lost in the mundane, day-to-day "functioning" instead of really living their lives. For example, next time you are worried about fitting in your exercise with your child's play date at Little Gym, forego the Little Gym and head out with your son or daughter for a run. Strap the little one in the jog stroller or if he or she is old enough, ask them to put on the running shoes with Mommy and head outside! Once outside, you can literally stop to smell the roses. Just a few minutes of gratitude a day will work wonders for your soul and automatically make your life feel more balanced.

Along these same lines, try and give yourself some "me" time once a week. Once a week may not seem like much, but if you really allow yourself to soak it in and enjoy the time spent, it will make the stress of all of the rest of the hectic days melt away. Take a good block of time on a Saturday or Sunday - 2 hours, maybe - and mark this time in your calendar in pen, not pencil. Keep a standing appointment with yourself, and honor it as you would any other. Think you are too busy on a weekend to do this? You will feel much more productive the rest of the weekend allowing yourself this little 'refresher', rather than trying to cram some time in on a random Tuesday or other weeknight. For this special time, you can book a massage or a facial at your favorite spa. Take a couple of hours to go window shopping at your favorites stores, by yourself or with a friend. Take in a matinee with a couple of girlfriends. If your husband is willing to fly solo on a Saturday night, you can even book a girls' night out once in a while and truly let loose! Even if your budget doesn't allow for these activities once a week, you can lock yourself in the bathroom with a good book, a bubble bath and a nice glass of wine and feel good about your time alone - you deserve some!

Probably the most obvious way to balance career and family is to incorporate your family into what would otherwise be "work time". If you have a short commute to work, for example, perhaps you can drive your kids to school each morning instead of having them take the bus. In the alternative, you could have your morning cup of coffee at the bus stop with them and spend a few minutes chatting about their day and what they plan to learn in school as you sip your cup of Joe and breathe in the morning air to mentally prepare for your own day ahead. If you normally exercise in the morning and leave the house very early, switch your workout time to lunch and leave the office to go to the gym, eating at your desk when you get back. You will have more time with your family each day and get a healthy break from your pile of papers to boot.

You may need to get a little creative with your schedule, but there are definitely ways to help balance career and family. Sometimes an extra few minutes each day or a once-weekly good block of time can go a long way in helping restore your peace of mind and help you feel less harried.

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### About the Author

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