



Juggling the Demands of Working at Home

As working from home has suddenly become the new norm for many employees across the globe, people everywhere have pivoted to define what work-life balance looks like in a time where stress is at an all-time high.

On the physical side, this stress can lead to headaches, back pain, muscle aches, and stomach trouble. Mentally, stress leads to low morale, poor sleep and concentration, and depression. It can also take a toll on our immune systems—at a time when we all need to be focused on strengthening our health and well-being.

It's important to find a balance between work and home responsibilities. Here are tips that can help:

Try to stay positive and relaxed

The more stress you feel, the worse your mood and the harder it will be to get things done. Focus your energy on completing one task at a time—whether it be work or family-related—rather than worrying about how to do all of them at once.

Prioritize your to-do's

Create a to-do list and a schedule of tasks you need to complete, with the most important ones at the top. Budget time for each of those items, and stick to your schedule as closely as you can.

Practice mindfulness

When you feel overwhelmed, take some time to relax. Try to breathe deeply with your eyes closed, concentrating on your breathing. Or do some yoga or gentle stretches. Relax your muscles by starting with your toes and slowly relaxing each muscle in your body as you work your way up to your head.

Set limits

When your to-do list is already full, say no to more projects at work and home if you can. Find out your boss' top priorities and work on those, but be careful not to promise more than you can deliver. Make it clear that if you work on project "X," you may have to push back the deadline on project "Y."

Share the load

Don't be afraid to ask your coworkers or family members for help. Have your spouse or older kids pitch in around the house and cook meals, do some cleaning, and take care of a few loads of laundry. Even younger kids may be old enough to dust or set the table. It's much less stressful if you're working as a team.

Leave perfection at the door

Don't try to be perfect. We're in a time when competing priorities means that perfection may not be attainable. If you have a less than clean house because you're also homeschooling your children or caring for an elderly family member, so be it. Allow yourself room for imperfections.

Do your best to stay healthy

To do your best at work and at home, you've got to take care of yourself. Eat regularly and stick to nutritious foods, and do your best not to "stress eat." The gym may be closed, but you can take walks and build in exercise breaks at home to manage stress and enjoy a little time for yourself. And be sure to get plenty of sleep each night—it's one of the best ways to give your immune system the support it needs.

Demonstrate compassion for coworkers

If you can help someone manage their competing priorities, offer to help. Can you record a meeting or take notes if they can't attend? Can you offer to take their place at a meeting? Can you offer them early morning or evening hours for calls while children are asleep? Have you simply asked them how they're doing?

Take time for yourself

A few quiet minutes to yourself each day can recharge your batteries and help with your resilience. You'll be a better employee and a better family member by doing this.

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