

Work-life balance for moms

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The thing about work-life balance for moms is that moms are people just like everyone else, and work-life balance is hard for ALL PEOPLE. If you're a mom, you most likely are trying to succeed at at least two full time jobs all of the time: mommydom and the job that pays you. So what are some of the biggest obstacles that get in your way? Is it feeling like you don't have enough time, your email is piling up, or it's hard to know which job needs your priority attention at what times. I am going to divide up some answers for you in 3 categories: time management, stress reduction, and Cultivating Balance/Finding Support, because as a mom you most likely have to juggle these three things to exponentially more than someone who is not a parent has to.

Time Management:

It surprises some people to know that we have 168 hours of time in our week. Even if you work 60 hours, and sleep 8 hours each night, that still leaves 52 hours to fill as you choose. So if we have so much free time, why do we feel so starved for time? It is important to make clear our priorities and stick to a time schedule for all of them. For instance, you may be surprised how much time you spend just getting distracted in the wild world of the web. If you are someone on their computer a lot, trying getting Hamster, or another program that logs your time and sets alerts for you throughout the day to keep track.

You can also check out some helpful articles and planners if time management is something you are working on:

- ["168 Hours the Blank Slate of Time"](#) by Vanderkam.
- ["Create Time for the Life you Want"](#) by Peggy Duncan.
- ["Manage Your Energy Not Your Time"](#) by Harvard Business Review.

Stress Reduction: "Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished." ~ Lao Tzu

Many of us feel that the quicker we can get something done and move on to the next thing, the better we are at our jobs. However, that doesn't address the issue that being stressed all of the time has been proven to yield the lowest results in performance, and overall makes us feel like a crazy person.

Tips for a Slower-Paced Life, adapted by blogger Leo Babauta, Zen Habits, <http://zenhabits.net/>

1. **Cut back on the "to-do" list. Do less.** Cut back on your projects, on your task list, on how much you try to do each day. Focus not on quantity but quality. Pick 2-3 important things — or even just one important thing — and work on those first. Meetings especially tend to eat up time, so don't schedule them or accept them unless it is an absolute priority. You may need to work with your boss on addressing the essentials of your job and get clear that your time is precious. This also can be applied to your kids and family, which are often over-booked with too many activities and civic commitments.
2. **Be clear about your priorities.** When you do the important things with focus, without rush, there will be things that get pushed back, that don't get done. And you need to ask yourself: how necessary are these things? What would happen if I stopped doing them? How can I eliminate them, delegate them, automate them?

3. **Practice disconnecting.** Have times when you turn off your devices and your email notifications and whatnot. Time with no phone calls, when you're just creating, or when you're just spending time with someone, or just reading a book, or just taking a walk, or just eating mindfully. Practice living in the present, rather than thinking so much about the future or the past.
4. **Give yourself time to get ready and get there.** If you're constantly rushing to appointments or other places you have to be, it's because you don't allot enough time in your schedule for preparing and for traveling. If you think it only takes you 10 minutes to get ready for work or a date, perhaps give yourself 30-45 minutes so you don't have to shave in a rush or put on makeup in the car. If you're early somewhere, practice being okay with sitting and doing nothing, soaking in your surroundings. It takes practice, but after awhile you'll do it with a smile.
5. **Realize that if it doesn't get done, that's OK.** There's always tomorrow. And yes, I know that's a frustrating attitude for some of you who don't like laziness or procrastination or living without firm deadlines, but it's also reality. The world likely won't end if you don't get that task done today. Your boss might get mad, but the company won't collapse and the life will inevitably go on. And the things that need to get done will.

Cultivating Balance/Finding Support

Moms more than anyone we work with tend to carry the weight of the world on their shoulders. They are the caregiver of their family, the nurturer, the breadwinner, and the person often with the least amount of alone time. It is crucial for the working mom to learn how to nurture HERSELF first and foremost, before she goes around taking care of others. Here are some tips on how to get there:

1. **Make a weekly date for yourself.** This may seem so hard, and at first, it will be. Try just an hour a week to start, and maybe move to more if you feel like you can. This hour is just for you, you have it set in your calendar as a standing weekly appointment, and you honor it like any other commitment. You can do whatever you want with this hour, but I recommend not turning on the TV or checking email. Without making time to access our true selves, we will never have enough energy to be there for others without our well drying up.
2. **Meet your support team.** Hopefully there is at least one person in your life you feel really happy to be around. You should feel full after you spend time with them, listened to, supported. If you can't think of who this person/s is, sit down right now and make a list of those that fulfill you and those that don't. Make sure that you are spending time at least once a week with those that truly love you, and slowly start to filter out of your life those that make you feel crummy. It is important that you have recharge time since you are most likely having to recharge your family and your colleagues at work as well.
3. **Be in the flow.** It is important to be compassionate with yourself as you juggle multiple important tasks and priorities at once. Some weeks you may not feel like you are doing the best at work, or conversely, the best at home. That's okay! Give yourself permission to be in the flow, meaning, recognize that there is an ebb and flow to life and sometimes the rainier weather needs to happen to make you appreciate the sunshine. If you feel months have gone by where you have not experienced sunshine in your life, or you feel very down, talk to someone like a therapist or a specialist about getting further help.