



WellTips

Kids are great, but let's be honest: Managing both a job and a family can be a challenge for many working parents. From meeting deadlines at work to rushing the kids to after-school activities to keeping up with the housework, it can feel like there is never enough time in the day to accomplish everything, let alone take care of you and your needs. The below tips can get you started down a path towards better work/life balance (and hopefully a lot less stress!).

Set priorities and avoid comparisons. It is impossible to do everything well all the time. Do not set yourself up for disappointment by trying to be Employee of the Month, serving as classroom parent, and having a house worthy of showing on HGTV, all at the same time. Instead, work with your partner and family to determine what is the most important, right now, and focus on that. And once you do, avoid comparing yourself or your accomplishments to those of your colleagues or other parents.

Plan ahead. Taking a half hour or so each night to prepare you and your kids for the following day can help save time and stress in the rush to get out the door. You can also use this approach to prep meals for the week on Sunday. By completing some of the time-consuming work, such as chopping vegetables and measuring ingredients, you can speed up meal prep on busy weeknights.

Outsource tasks. Enlist your partner or older children to take on some extra tasks around the house. If it works well for your family, hire someone to help with housecleaning, yard maintenance, dog walking or other similar services. Do as many things as possible online to save time, such as managing finances, ordering groceries and household items, and planning trips. Delegating your to-do list can take things off your plate and free up time for more important priorities.

Create a family calendar. Keeping everyone's schedules posted together in one place can help avoid miscommunications and double-booking, a major source of stress.

Schedule time for you. When things get busy, personal time is often the first thing to fall off the schedule. But in order for you to be a productive and happy employee and parent, it's important to make "me" time a regular part of your week or month. Whether it's date night with your partner, a class at the gym, time spent with friends, or time spent by yourself doing something you love (like pursuing a hobby or even just reading a good book), it can help refresh and rejuvenate you, helping you feel more in control and able to conquer what needs to be done.

Taking time to create more balance in your life is an investment in you and your family. Remember to focus on what's important, and don't worry about the rest.

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