

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Enjoy a Full & Balanced Life!

Friends. Family. Co-workers. Social events. Professional organizations. The list of demands on our time can seem endless. Many of us today are struggling to balance full-time jobs with full-time responsibilities at home. Meeting the demands of an increasingly complex world means developing strategies for maintaining balance in our lives.

In this issue of *Your Source*, we will take a look at balancing your home and work responsibilities—how to tell if you're striking a good balance, the consequences of an out-of-balance lifestyle and practical tips for getting the most out of time spent at work and at home.

Is Your Life Out of Balance?

If your life is out of balance, you may find yourself having a hard time concentrating or feeling less creative than you could be. You may feel overwhelmed and experience a range of emotions including anger, sadness, guilt, fear, frustration, resentment, hurt and loneliness.

In addition, you may find yourself feeling powerless, and suffer from low self-esteem or self-confidence.

What is a Good Balance for You?

Achieving balance means that you are dedicating the most time and energy possible to the aspects of your life that are important to you. There is no set formula for living a balanced life. For example, some people find a 60-hour work week fulfilling, while others want to spend less time at work and more time with family or friends.

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Log on to your program's website to access *Work-Life Balance* and other helpful resources in the *Spotlight* section. Log on now and register with your program's toll-free number.

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Answer: B. No one is a superman or superwoman. Sharing tasks at work fosters creativity and teamwork; at home it builds togetherness.



Know How to Balance—Which of the following is not a way to balance your life?

- A. Set goals and prioritize
- B. Do everything yourself
- C. Think positively

Check your answer on the bottom.

Now That's an Idea!

Your priorities may vary based on what phase of life you're in. It's important to stand back and assess your situation before determining whether you need or even want to change the balance in your life.

Start by asking yourself these questions:

- Is my life right now the way I want it to be?
- If not, what is wrong with it?
- Is my current situation temporary?
- What can I change to make my life more fulfilling and enjoyable?
- Are the rewards of making these changes worth the sacrifices?

The most important thing to do is realize when your priorities have shifted too far in one direction or another, and then to do something about it.

Balancing and Transitioning

As life continues to get more hectic, you may be wondering if it's possible to successfully balance your work and home life. We are constantly charged with getting everything done and getting it done fast.

The good news is you have the power to reach a healthy work-life balance. In fact, the more balanced you are, the more productive and happy you will become.

While at Work

- Ask for help
- Set realistic goals
- Be efficient
- Take breaks
- Do your best

Back at Home

- Shut off technology
- Don't overbook your calendar
- Ask for help
- Lean on your friends and family
- Take care of yourself

Achieving a more balanced life is a constant process. From day to day, your focus may shift, but give yourself the freedom to be flexible. The end result of balancing work and home means allowing yourself to have a more fulfilling life.

Making an appropriate transition from work to home and vice versa can help you enjoy all aspects of your life more fully. Too often, we begin our day at work thinking about tasks waiting for us at home, or bring work issues home with us at night.

From Home to Work

- Plan ahead so you can leave home issues at home
- Establish goodbye rituals, especially with children
- Arrive at work early so you don't start off the day rushed

From Work to Home

- Leave work issues "at the office"
- Use the commute time to de-stress and refresh
- Arrive home ready to enjoy home

As you accomplish these tips to transition from home to work and vice versa, your balanced life will be more enjoyable and you will have more time to do as you wish, whether it is at home or at work.

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Get Back in Balance

The following guidelines can help you get on the right track if you have determined that you need to make some changes in the balance of your life.

Set Realistic Expectations.

You may not be able to have everything you want, at least not all at one time. Establish realistic expectations and ease up on yourself when possible.

Prioritize. Determine what tasks you need to accomplish and rank them according to importance.

Set Realistic Goals. Be flexible and realistic in planning your schedule. Focus on things you know you can accomplish. At the same time, learn to expect the unexpected.

Modify Responsibilities. Sharing responsibilities is a good strategy. Determine what tasks need to be accomplished and then distribute tasks fairly.

Be Efficient. Develop ways to work smart at home and at work. Combining and consolidating tasks may be more effective than trying to squeeze as many tasks as possible into the least amount of time.

Think Positively. Try to recognize that changes in your routine may be difficult at first. Stay upbeat through the bumps in the road.

