

STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

Balancing Work & Family Life

All of us have 24 hours a day which we can allocate to our daily activities. How well we are able to balance our responsibilities with doing things we truly enjoy directly affects our quality of life. It also helps manage stress.

If you are not satisfied with your balance of time between work and family, you are not alone. Achieving that balance is an ongoing process of juggling our work responsibilities and the

needs of our family members. These are needs that change over time.

It helps to periodically step back and analyze how things are going so you can decide if changes are needed. This will result in you enjoying your life more and being in harmony with the things you value most. To see if you could use some re-evaluation of work and family balance, ask yourself the following questions:

1. *Do you successfully allocate time to the things you want to do with your family?*
2. *Can you participate in meaningful activities without feeling anxious or talking about work?*
3. *Do you participate in family activities without the gnawing feeling of so much work being left undone?*

If you answered no to any question, you may benefit from the following steps.

10 Steps Toward Balancing Work & Family



1. Understand that balance is a conscious decision.

Work and family don't balance automatically. Achieving balance is an ongoing process. Understanding this can reduce frustration and help you act to gain control.



2. Write down family goals.

Family needs change over time. Opportunities to build a tree house for the kids or participate in a new family pastime don't last forever. Decide what is important and write it down. Assign a date, and make these goals "absolutely-will-happens."



3. Stick to your values.

Sometimes it can be tough to make a choice between a family activity and a work activity. Knowing where you stand on your values can make tough choices easier.

4. Recognize that imbalance is sometimes inevitable.

It is important to recognize that jobs and responsibilities are important and that they sometimes take priority.



■ **5. Revisit your schedule.**

When your work schedule changes, new opportunities may become available to participate in family activities. Claim the high ground!

■ **6. Recognize the benefits of balance.**

Balancing work and family has pay-offs for children, home relationships, and everyone's future happiness. Recognizing this can help you keep balance in mind.

■ **7. Manage distractions and procrastination.**

Working long hours causes stress that is often offset by finding relief naturally through workplace distractions and procrastination. If you are at the office for 12 hours, do you really work only 10? If you are searching for more family time, it might be found here.

■ **8. Discuss expectations and responsibilities.**

When one family member is taking on too many

responsibilities at home, resentments can build. Periodically discussing the perceptions of others can provide the awareness you need to consider opportunities and choices for work and family balance.

■ **9. Organize your work better.**

Improving your delegation and time-management skills can buy you time needed for family life. Learning how to put work down, say "no," and let go of workplace worries are skills that are learned through practice.

■ **10. Ask what the EACC can do.**

Despite these suggestions, improving balance of work and family may be a lot easier said than done. The UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center can help you find sources for defining priorities, acquiring assertiveness skills, making tough decisions, or even identifying family goals that you want to pursue so you can look back and say, "I did it."

— Adapted from *WorkExcel.com*