



Balancing Work & Family

March 2015

Washington State Employee Assistance Program

Feel like you're juggling too much and all the to-do "balls" are going to come crashing down around you? If so, you're not alone. All of us must allocate 24 hours a day to the activities of life. How well we balance responsibilities with doing things we truly enjoy directly affects our quality of life. It also helps manage stress. Are you satisfied with your balance of time between work and family?

If you answered "no," you are not alone. Achieving balance with work and family is an ongoing process of juggling responsibilities at work and the needs of family members. These needs change over time. The key to success is stepping back and periodically analyzing how things are going. You can then decide if changes are needed. The result will be enjoying your life more and being in harmony with the things you value most.



10 Steps Toward Balance with Work and Family

1. Work and Family 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 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 sometimes finds relief naturally through work place 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. What the EAP Can Do. Despite these suggestions, improving balance of work and family may be a lot easier said than done. If these tips don't work for you, or if you think you need something more, phone the EAP. You may need additional help to resolve personal problems or issues that are the source of stress in your life. The EAP 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."