

Prioritizing Your Life

Write down your top priorities or responsibilities in each area of your life. Then number the sub-categories in order of importance to you. Finally, prioritize the main categories in order of importance with number 1 being most important.

Household Responsibilities

Extended Family/Friendships

Children's Needs

Spouse/Relationship

Self-Care

Work Responsibilities/Time

Finding Balance: 9 Tips to Help You Regain Control of Your Life

1. De-stress. How do you react to the pressures in your life? It is impossible, and even undesirable, to eliminate all stress from our lives. Stress, when properly managed, can actually enrich and motivate us. But when it is not properly dealt with, stress can be very detrimental. What are your stressors? Begin to take notice of times that you are feeling overwhelmed. Can you eliminate these stress-producers from your life? If they can't be eliminated, it is possible to change your reaction to them.

2. Simplify. You don't need to be busy every minute of the day. Stay home with your family. Don't make a commitment unless it is important to you. Get in the habit of saying "no" to things you don't want to, or don't have time to do, and don't feel guilty about it. Consider hiring household help if that's an option for you. Don't be a slave to the phone—that's what answering machines are for. Remember your priorities.

3. Play. When we allow our leisure time to decrease, we may see that our relationships begin to suffer. Take time out to play. Read with your child, get down on the floor and cuddle with your baby, build with Legos, play tag, watch a favorite movie, or share a cup of tea and some good conversation with your teen. Really be there for that moment. Show your family with one-on-one time how important they are to you.

4. Share the load. Partners and children—even toddlers—can help out. Sit down, and decide as a family where the household cleaning priorities lie, and assign jobs. Do you really care if your blinds haven't been dusted in a month? Does anyone else in your family notice, or care? Giving your children age-appropriate duties helps them to develop self-reliance. Sharing the load will result in more time for everyone. Order adds to a calm, peaceful environment within your home.

5. Slow down! You are pulled in many directions. What do you do when you feel there just isn't enough of you to go around? Ask yourself, "What is most enjoyable and rewarding for me and my family?" Don't give another thought to wasting your precious time on activities that are meaningless to you. Instead, put the focus on what is really important in your life. Have realistic expectations

of yourself and others. Learn to be adaptable. Go with the flow. Let go of what you no longer need.

6. Nurture yourself. A body that is well taken care of is much more easily able to deal with the stresses of everyday life. Eat a nutritious and well-balanced diet, exercise regularly, and get the rest your body needs. It's the advice our mothers gave us, and it still works today.

7. Stop procrastinating. When something needs to be done, just do it. Avoidance takes more energy than actually doing. Even if you are feeling very reluctant to begin a project, once you're in motion you'll forget your initial concerns. It may help to start out with the simplest part, and ease into the most challenging.

8. Focus on the positive. Take a look around you. What do you have to be grateful for? Taking the time each day to write down at least five things you are thankful for, will serve as a powerful reminder of just how much is going right with your life!

9. Take charge! Keep a journal, tracking the time you spend on your daily rounds. Around 30 percent of our waking hours are spent in regular, day-to-day activities. Decide which of these routines are important, and which can go. Plan ahead. Watch for your energy peaks and yours slumps. Follow you body's rhythm, working with, and maximizing, your body's natural cycles. Before you go to bed, take just a few minutes to think about the day that has just passed, and to review the day ahead. This is also a great time to glance at your list of goals, helping you to stay focused. Get started!

Finding a balance in your life is an ongoing process. Life is in a constant state of change -- a work in progress. Allow yourself the time to regularly reassess the direction in which you are heading. Are you on track, or have you temporarily derailed? Patiently, but steadfastly, work toward your goals. Follow your dreams.