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An Intelligent Read For All Women

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# Achieving balance in your working life

I hear the comment from clients all the time: "There are never enough hours in the day to be a mum, wife, career woman, and to work out and relax!"

**W**hat is the best way to plan our lives so we can take care of all these elements and also allocate enough time for ourselves to look good, feel fantastic and be healthy and happy? What habits are holding us back?

Advances in technology like email, cell-phones, laptops and home PCs make it possible to work from just about anywhere. This leads a lot of women to start bringing work home, to be able to stay on top of the workload and also work through lunch and personal time. This eventually causes burn out and high stress levels which hold us back from ever creating the true health and wellbeing habits we require.

Continual stress and work can cause a myriad of physiological problems such as anxiety, headaches, insomnia and fatigue. These then end up robbing us of the time we could be spending on our health and wellbeing through exercise, eating well and relaxing. It becomes a catch-22 situation.

The fact remains that we are in control of how we choose to spend our time. We only get a limited number of hours each day so we need to choose wisely.

As women, we often put ourselves last as we rush around taking care of other people's needs. We get caught up in the busyness of our lives and we lose track of how we are spending our finite time.

## **Ask yourself these 3 questions:**

1. How many hours do you really spend working?
2. How many hours do you fritter away, like needlessly checking emails to avoid 'real' work?
3. How many hours do you have for yourself?

## **ACTION STEPS**

- 1 Identify these 'time robbers' and look at ways to realistically change them.
- 2 Check your emails less often. Do your most important work first and check emails once or twice a day at specific times.
- 3 Write out your priorities for the upcoming week. Include time to meditate, exercise or to go to the movies. Add work and business-related activities, but try to balance the two so there is 'you' time. It is harder to cancel on yourself when you have it scheduled in.
- 4 Work out on your way to work. If you can easily walk to work, then do it! If not, aim to go during your lunch break, and walk for 25 minutes at least before you eat lunch.



Your habits determine your future so if something has not worked for you in the past, stop doing it! At first you may experience resistance to this change, but persevere as it does get easier.

## ACTION TASKS

- 1 Define what bad habits are hindering your success
- 2 Identify success habits that will propel you to your desired results
- 3 Create an action plan to introduce these habits and changes

**Example: Bad habit** - Always putting off exercise, due to lack of time. **Success Habit** - Exercising 3 times a week with weights and cardio

## ACTION PLAN

- 1 Set the alarm for 6am and exercise on either weights or cardio
- 2 Lay out your workout gear the night before and, as soon as you get up, change into the gear
- 3 Buy new workout gear if you can, so you feel inspired to work out
- 4 Create a 'visualisation chart' that inspires you to push through any initial resistance to exercise and motivates you to work out


Each week, list down the top 5-10 priority tasks that are non-negotiable. Ask yourself what activities you can delegate or just let go of to create more time for you. Maybe, instead of sitting in traffic in silence, choose to spend that time listening to audio books to further your self-development. Or sing along to your favourite CDs and sing out loud for stress relief. It's a great start to the day!!

By having this list, you have something to focus on each week. When you take care of the important things first, it frees your energy to dedicate some time to yourself.

When I first started working with one client, she complained she couldn't possibly find the time to work out as she was too busy. We sat down and looked at how she spent her time. One major 'time robber' was that every afternoon she would spend at least 45 minutes clearing up her paper pile and organising her office. By planning and executing a system that eliminated this pile-up, she created an extra 45 minutes at 2.30pm to go for a walk or do a weights workout. Spare time is always there, we just need to identify it!

## CREATING HEALTHY HABITS

As women, our special skill is the ability to handle more than one task at a time, like answering the phone while cooking dinner and keeping an eye on the kids. This is to our detriment as it makes it harder for us to live in the present moment. The consequence is that whatever task(s) we are doing, we are probably not really enjoying and it is taking us longer to do!



Spend 10 minutes in meditation or yoga, and try to exercise every second day. Create opportunities to relax. If you don't normally enjoy your own company or make time to be by yourself, its time to train yourself to do so. In solitude, we get to explore who we really are and what we enjoy. Create opportunities to enjoy being by yourself. Slow down to the speed of life and really enjoy the moment.

Making the choice to lead, and have, a balanced life takes work and experimenting with what works best for you. Experiment until you find the right formula for creating the life you truly desire and deserve!

**By Nalisha Patel of HealthMastery. HealthMastery specialises in mobile personal training in home or office**

*They offer 12 week challenges for health & fitness, weight-loss and a healthy mindset using life-coaching style questions*

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