

Work and Family: Today's Juggling Act

Working families are under stress as they try to balance demands of job, children and spouse. Strategies are needed to prevent stress overload and burnout.

As individuals attempt to juggle two jobs and a family, they often try to become "superpersons," wanting it all, having it all, and doing it all. Balancing work and family is both a female and male issue. The consequences of not being able to achieve a balance between the worlds of work and family are serious. Families need to adopt some strategies to help them manage their juggling act so they don't "drop too many balls."

Strategy 1. Adapt to change. Adapting to any demand for change is a necessary task, whether it be new employment or a new family member. Responsibilities of household chores need to be shared by everyone.

Strategy 2. Adjust your expectations. Adjusting expectations about your family life and household tasks is a must. Determine the things that are really necessary, and those that are optional in work and family life.

Strategy 3. Be a good employee. Job demands for time and energy are great. For most individuals, job fulfillment and satisfaction are important in managing stress.

Strategy 4. Get your family's support. Women are more likely to be satisfied if their spouses are supportive of their work outside the home. Extended family support is also helpful.

Strategy 5. Take time for yourself. Taking time for ourselves can be a critical source of renewal. *Me* time is very necessary and legitimate and can provide bottom-line benefits for everyone.

Strategy 6. Take time for your spouse. Studies show the demands of work can seriously undermine the marital bond. People are too tired and worn out to be good partners. Take time for your partner.

Strategy 7. Take time for your children. Children need guidance, love, nurturing and discipline. It is important for parents to attend school and other activities, listen to and talk with their children, work together and play together and teach the values and ideals they deem important, because if they don't, children will adopt someone else's.

Strategy 8. Use high quality child care. Researchers have found that the parents experience less guilt and stress at work if high quality child care is used.

Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, NebGuide, Work and Family: Today's Juggling Act, Herbert G. Lindgren, Family Life Specialist.

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