



A BALANCING ACT:

Time Management for Working Students and Parents

Time Management Skills

- Routines
 - Routines are patterns of behavior that become automatic. Once something is automatic, it takes less energy to enact.
 - Simple routines for you and everyone in your household around necessary daily activities ultimately frees up energy for other tasks.
- Planning
 - Make a committed plan for at least the next day, and work towards planning your time farther in advance
 - Include everything in your plan- personal, family, household, work, school
- Accepting Help and Support
 - Think about who has offered to help or support you and consider reaching out
- Prioritize time with your children
 - They are only little once
 - Children will get the attention they need one way or another
 - Fill their attention needs bucket proactively, and often they will stop asking for constant attention or acting out to get that interaction
- Eliminate activities that do not bring you joy
 - Take a look at anything you spend time doing “mindlessly” and try to replace with activities you can enjoy “mindfully.”
 - How much time do you spend scrolling social media? Do some hard reflecting on whether it truly brings you joy and respite, or just serves as a distraction
- Create a list of joy-producing, revitalizing activities
 - Turn to this list when you begin to feel your energy waning and choose an activity

Practice Time

- Make your list of joyful activities
- Think of activities that are a source of energy and inspiration
- You can think back to times you felt energetic or inspired and look at what you were doing for ideas
- Try to include a few special activities that also include your children/family

To Do List Tips/Learning to Plan

- Your first task is to set aside a few minutes each evening to plan for your next day- maybe 15 minutes at night after your kids are asleep
 - Even after you get used to planning and are making plans further in advance, you will still need a few minutes at the end of each day to review what you did and did not accomplish and add to or re-prioritize your plan for the following day.
 - Each night review your list and move unfinished items to the next day's plan
- Identify tasks you need to accomplish in all areas and categorize them: work, school, family, personal, home, health, etc.
- Use highlighters or colored markers to indicate levels of priority: e.g. critical, preferable, non-urgent
 - Urgency vs. Importance
 - Urgency- requiring immediate action
 - Importance- of high value related to goals or values
- Be Realistic
 - A good plan does not leave tons of unaccomplished tasks every day-that is demotivating
 - Find your sweet spot so that you are generally able to check off all or most of your tasks
- Perfectionism = Burnout
 - Things do not always flow according to our plan; take a breath, and regroup for the next day
 - If leaving dirty dishes at times can save your peace of mind, so be it

Routine-building Skills

- Commit to 30 days
 - This is enough time to get through the initial conditioning phase and make a habit or routine automatic
- Make it daily
 - It is easier to establish a new daily routine and make it automatic than to get to that automatic state with something done intermittently
- Use a buddy/accountability partner
- Wedging
 - Start with a small amount of time even if it's not really enough just as a placeholder
 - Expand time for the activity as you are more established in the habit (example daily study time)
- Use Reminders
 - Consistency in that first month is especially critical, so use reminders to stay or get back on track
 - If you set alarms on your phone about a task, you can snooze the alarm, but never dismiss it until the task is done
 - Don't give up just because you missed some time, just focus on getting back on track
- Keep it consistent
 - Connect the new activity to something you already do and place reminders near that
 - When you do things at the same time of day and place, you begin to create associations

Practice Time

- Let's work on how to break down goals/tasks/assignments into manageable chunks for your plan.
- Identify a big assignment or paper from one of your syllabi
- Write down a plan for completing the assignment over the course of the semester

7 steps for Effective Time Management for Moms in College

How can I manage it all?



1

Write it all down

Buy a personal calendar and/or download an app like *Cozi on your phone or computer

Don't be a hero!

Only take as many classes as you think you can without compromising your grades as well as your family time.

3

Designate a "homework free" day

Take a day each week to enjoy your family and have some down time without the stress of school work

2

Keep your "eyes on the prize"

You are going to school for a reason: Keep your mind set on your goals & you will find that your motivation will outweigh your stress!

7

It's all about timing.

If possible, select classes that allow time to take your kids to/from school, as well as your own commute and meal times

6

5

**Practice good study habits

- Don't cram
- Ask for help
- Pay attention in class
- Study in a conducive environment
- Don't Procrastinate!

4

Prioritize Your Tasks

Regardless if it is home, school, kids or work you need to figure out what needs to be done the soonest

*visit www.cozi.com for the free version of their planner

**We will discuss good study habits in detail through several posts

Mistakes to Avoid

- Doing everything yourself
 - Accept help from supports or ask for it
 - Involve your kids in helping as much as they are age-appropriately able
- Sacrificing your interests/needs(sleep)
 - Self-care is not selfish
- Trying to manage your to do list only in your head
 - You are a human being, not a computer; write it down
- Excessive or unrealistic planning
 - You can't compare what you are able to do now to what you were able to accomplish before kids or before you started school
 - You will not be able to maintain every single thing from before these changes, and it is not fair to expect it of yourself
- Perfectionism
 - Getting upset when plans go awry or over small failures is unproductive
 - Focus on staying on track for the long range and accept imperfections
 - Remember it is a marathon, not a sprint

References

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