

Balancing career and family is a juggling act many parents perform each week. Parents are expected to do it all – hold down demanding careers, maintain a household, coordinate children’s extracurricular activities, and more. We consulted several resources to compile this list of tips to keep your life in balance.

- **Establish priorities and set goals.** Focus on what is important and pursue it. Decide what's not important and demote its priority ranking.
- **Get organized.** Keep a “to do” list by order of importance. Get things ready for work and school the night before so you’re not scrambling in the morning.
- **Focus on your strengths.** Tackle those tasks that you are good at and hire or delegate to someone to do the rest.
- **Let technology work for you.** Check your e-mail from a PDA while waiting in line to renew your drivers license; check your phone messages while commuting (always putting safety first).
- **Don’t sweat the small stuff.** Give up what’s not essential. If family and work are your most important priorities, lower your standards on household responsibilities. Learn to let a few things slide and try not to take things too seriously.
- **Communicate with your family.** Make them aware of your job demands so they understand those times when work needs to come first.
- **Protect each role from interference by the others.** When you are at home, turn off your cell phone, laptop, beeper and e-mail, so that you can be fully “present” during this time. Similarly, try to limit personal life intrusions while at work. This will help you be more efficient and effective during your workday.
- **Take advantage of outside support networks.** Familiarize yourself with the family-friendly programs at work. Telecommuting, flex time and compressed work weeks are becoming more acceptable with employers.
- **Make time for yourself.** Pursue a hobby, have lunch with a friend, get some exercise, get enough sleep. A well-nourished mind and a well-rested body can absorb more neglect (when necessary) than one that is not cared for.
- **Reduce psychological conflicts.** Reduce guilt, pressure and anxiety by lowering the psychological importance of one or more of your roles.
- **Do what is right for you.** Make decisions based on what is right for you and your family, not what someone else suggests is right.
- **Simplify.** Many of us take on too many tasks and responsibilities. Get rid of the clutter and baggage in your house and your life.

These tips were compiled from a variety of sources, including www.unitedwaytwincities.org, www.womensmedia.com, www.bluesuitmom.com, www.careersnet.com, and www.family-institute.org.
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