

{AF} Time management is needed to maintain the work from home opportunity. Management is needed in completing work projects as well as keeping the home in order. Management of time can also include family appointments as well as taking some time away from work. Each area of the work from home life should contain balance to ensure well-being and limit stress. Here are a few things to think about.

Management of Work

Planning available times to work is pretty straightforward if you are working set hours. In this case, all other areas can be scheduled around work hours. For example, if a mother works four days a week from 8 am to 2 pm, they can schedule all other activities at any other time.

If working in a flexible home job, then planning the time to work can be easy for some and harder for others. As a mom, you can decide to work at any given time during the work week. Work projects may be based on completion of the project, or by working a certain number of hours each week. Use a weekly schedule to plan, writing in pencil, so that changes can be made if needed.

Management of Equipment

While working from home, keeping your computer equipment up to date is important. Many times, in the home this is forgotten or laid aside. Backing up documents will save a lot of time as well, in the event of loss. Backing up items can be done on small storage components, compact discs or even an external hard drive.

Some software packages can be a real time saver for working from home. Choose only those items that you will need to do your online work. One example of a real time saver is Dragon Naturally Speaking software. If you spend a lot of time typing, this can be a wonderful addition. It types information into some applications for you, when given basic commands. It is much faster than human typing. Consider choices carefully, because you do not want to overdo it on expenses, but look for ways to increase efficiency.

Management of Home

Managing the home includes adding any activities to your calendar for the week. Also, pre-planning meals for the week is a great plus. Have quick meal items on hand for those times which are very tight, due to last minute work needs. For example, if you have children at home that like meals with hamburger, cook up extra hamburger meat. The cooked meat can be frozen and pulled out to add to a recipe. Defrosting in the microwave only takes a few minutes. Dinner can be done in 30 minutes or less.

Enlist the help of your family to keep chores done on a regular basis. It is important to have "team members" when working from home. As much as we would like to be SUPER MOMS, it is time consuming and energy expending. If you are able to, hire someone part time to help with the children or chores. There are many possibilities in looking for time and stress savers when managing the home.

Distractions & Errands

Doing your best to eliminate distractions will also help you to use time more productively. Distractions can come from family, friends and constant sales calls. Using time more efficiently will allow you to get more things taken care of. Use the answering machine when possible. Also, you don't have to answer the door every time someone knocks, especially if you are working.

Running errands together can also help with less time spent during the week. Keep lists of needed items. If possible, run the errands together that are in the same neighborhood or area. Think of how you can decrease the amount of time running from one place to another.

Analyze and Change

Analyze your day or week and determine if there is anything that can be done differently. Taking a few minutes time can save you an hour next week, or more. Be willing to change things to find the best solutions in time management. Take time to review additional time management tips that are available. Put groups of similar activities together. Determine your time wasters and be willing to improve quality in personal time management skills. It is up to **YOU!** {/AF}