

10 TIPS TO MAINTAIN WORK-LIFE BALANCE

By Lacy Wolff, ERS Health Promotion Administrator



Work-life balance is a concept that may seem elusive during a global pandemic that has us homeschooling our kids, socially distancing, cooking more at home, and managing relationships with people we can't see in person. Despite the many challenges in our current environment, there are things within our control that can help us to maintain a semblance of "normal" and to create balance between work and life.

Since September is "back-to-school" month, many families will be working through virtual learning or having a very different back-to-school experience than we have had in the past. To establish balance in our current environment, we need to practice patience and communicate our needs to our loved ones. This month, ERS is hosting several webinars on topics ranging from "Parenting during a pandemic" to "Emotional eating" to help support you during this challenging time.

There is no "one size fits all" when it comes to work-life balance, but here is some advice from real people who are working to maintain balance between work and life:

1. Sit down and write down your biggest priorities in your life. Work is important, but what else deserves your time, energy, and effort?
2. Take a few minutes to examine how your priorities line up with your current schedule.
3. If you want to establish new habits, establish firm cues to do those things. Shutting your computer for the day may be a cue to move onto family time.
4. Think about where your needs aren't being met (social, family ties, adventure, competition, etc.) and ways you can schedule those things into your day.
5. Prioritize your health in ways that are meaningful to you -- whether it is a 10-minute meditation, a walk outside, a Zoom fitness class, or going to bed early.
6. Schedule dedicated family time and ask good questions (best and worst moments of the day, favorite foods, concerts, movies, etc.) The [Family Dinner Project website](#) has resources to help you start good conversations, find family-approved recipes, and family activities.
7. Find ways to bring together your work and physical activity like walking meetings, setting reminders to stand up at least once an hour to stretch.
8. Eat breakfast and lunch together as a family when you are at home.
9. If possible, keep your work space in a separate room from where you relax, recreate, and sleep. If that isn't an option for you, designate a certain time when you close your computer and put it in a bag, drawer or somewhere out of sight.
10. Give yourself some grace. Things are challenging and ever-changing in our current environment. If you are overwhelmed, reach out to a friend, schedule an appointment to talk to a counselor through your EAP, or through your health plan and talk to your loved ones about your needs.

Learn more about the wellness resources available to you and your family through the [ERS Wellness Webpage](#) and share your tips for maintaining work-life balance with us at wellness@ers.texas.gov