

Work Life Balance – Top 10 Hints for Women at the U of M

Here are some steps to help you find the balance that's best for you:

1. **Assess your current status.** Keep a log everything you do for one week, including work-related and non-work-related activities. Figure out which activities are giving you the most satisfaction and where you are spending more time than you'd like.
2. **Set your priorities.** You probably can't do everything you'd like to. Think about what is important for you to accomplish at work and at home and focus your energies there. Practice saying no to lower priority activities.
3. **Protect time for what's important.** Schedule time for your top priorities at work and at home, and don't let lower-priority activities eat it up. Some people make "appointments" with themselves to focus on high-priority work projects or have quiet planning time. Others schedule "date nights" for spouse and/or family activities.
4. **Use your resources.** Ask friends and family members to help you cut back on lower priority activities. Talk to your supervisor and co-workers about work-related changes you'd like to make. If necessary, contact the University Employee Assistance Program for advice.
5. **Ask for help.** Remember, you don't have to do everything. Other people are capable of handling the tasks you often reserve for yourself. Be willing to delegate responsibilities and to accept other people's methods and standards for completing a chore.
6. **Build some cushion into your schedule.** Don't create stress for yourself by scheduling your meetings back-to-back or filling every evening and weekend hour with activities. Recognize that meetings run late and that it's OK to spend a Saturday at home.
7. **Reassess your career.** Will a change in your current work schedule make your life more manageable or should you seek a different job within the University? What about a career change? Simply put, some positions and careers require more time and energy than others. Weigh your stage in life and need for flexibility against the demands of your current job and profession.
8. **Create an action plan.** Identify small steps you can take toward your ideal balance. You won't be able to change everything at once, but you can begin to move in the right direction. Remember to reward yourself for positive accomplishments.
9. **Expect the unexpected.** Create contingency plans for handling events like your support person's absence, the school's snow day, or your car's dead battery before they occur.
10. **Accept that it will never be perfect.** Achieving work-life balance is an ongoing effort. Don't add to your stress by seeking perfection.

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