11 Quick Time-Management Tips for Crunched Working Moms

What to do when motherhood eats your minutes? Use these hacks to take the fine art of doing more with less time to the next level.



1. Spend enough time sleeping.

- [ ] If you do nothing else, prioritize your sleep needs so you can thrive. You'll drag all day and ultimately waste time if you're under-rested. Schedule sleep like any other activity and go to bed at bedtime so you can function the next day. (And enforce your kids' bedtimes too. It's good for them and for you.)

2. Establish sane work hours.

- [ ] Before you commit to taking a new role, validate alignment of expectations for your work hours with your potential employer. Life commitments and job projects will ebb and flow, so be sure to check in periodically to make sure that expectations have not changed. That way, if your boss typically calls or emails after hours, you can decide whether you're available or not. Many working mothers reserve nights and weekends exclusively for family.

3. Embrace the power of "No."

- [ ] You don't have to attend every PTA meeting, chaperone all field trips or take on additional work projects. Saying no can be tough, but it is a skill that frees up time you wouldn't otherwise have access to. Further, watching you enforce limits teaches your kids the value of setting boundaries.

4. Set attainable daily goals.

- [ ] A to-do list is useless if it's too ambitious. What's the point of writing down unachievable tasks? We're not superheroes and

shouldn't try to be. Make your daily goals realistic enough to complete. Remember, you can always do more if you have the time.

5. Don't even try to multitask.

- [ ] People perform better when they give focused attention to the task at hand. When you're at work, stop worrying about dinner; when you're helping your son with algebra don't also be texting your husband a grocery list.

6. Let go of perfection.

- [ ] It doesn't exist, therefore you can't achieve it. Instead of obsessively cleaning an already clean-enough house, or toiling toward intangible ideals (like being the "perfect" mom or having the "perfect" figure), figure out a more practical use for your time.

7. Step away from the Internet.

- [ ] Surfing the web is a huge time waster for parents and children. An innocent little break can turn into hours of wasted time you can't get back. Establish limits on how much screen time you and your kids get, and then unplug once you've reached that limit.

8. Have some fun along the way.

- [ ] Stressed-out people aren't all that productive. You need relaxation to avoid burnout at home and at work. Make time for vacations, long weekends, and family fun to keep you grounded and joyful.

9. Get present so you can be productive.

- [ ] Mindfulness allows you to tune into the task at hand. Practices like yoga or meditation can help you focus, and focus drives productivity. Embrace the method that speaks to you, and tune back in when you catch yourself drifting.

10. Stop owning other people's stuff.

- [ ] How often do you hear yourself saying, "Never mind, I'll do it myself"? Probably more than you'd like. We all tend to take on more than our share of responsibility and it's a real time waster. The solution? Let others manage their responsibilities themselves. This includes your children, spouse and colleagues.

11. Let go and delegate.

- [ ] Learn to know when to let someone else handle a task. Relinquishing control is tough, but it's also necessary to allow others to pitch in. Delegating is not admitting defeat. Rather, it's about maximizing the potential of your effective network.

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