5 Ways for Work-at-Home Moms to Take Control of Their Time

Time management is a skill, but like any other skill, it takes practice. However, in this case, practice may not always make perfect. Time management is something that work-at-home moms may never completely master because life is always changing. When you've finally got one big time waster in check, something else inevitably pops up.



01. Set a schedule.

- [ ] Time management starts with scheduling. If at all possible, set your work hours in advance, so both you and your family know when you'll be working. Then, make a list of jobs to be accomplished in a day.

- [ ] An age-old time management technique for work at home moms is setting work schedules around naptime. Working during naptime has its advantages but one of the things to keep in mind about naptime is that nap schedules change—sometimes day-to-day but always over time.

02. Multitask appropriately.

- [ ] Moms must multitask. It is just a fact of life that time management for moms means multitasking. However, multitasking can streamline your day or it can leave you with a half dozen half-done projects in a day. Knowing how to multitask and when to multitask is the key to achieving better harmony in your work and home life. And one important factor in how much a work at home mom must multitask is how much child care she employs.

03. Embrace routine but stay creative.

- [ ] For kids of all ages, routines smooth transitions. And transitions can be the tough for kids. Getting an effective school morning routine is an important step in starting everyone's day right. But routines help at other parts of the day too, i.e. naptime, bedtime, dinner, after school, homework, etc. And we moms can use routine as part of our own time management practices. Choosing to always check email, make phone calls or do other task at specific times ensures that these jobs get

done.

- [ ] However, both kids and adults can get too attached to routines. Be flexible. Routines change as kids grow. Naps go away; kids become more proficient at chores; child care schedules change. Be prepared to change your routines when necessary.

04. Know yourself (and your family).

- [ ] No time management tip works for everyone because we all have different styles and weaknesses when it comes to organizing our time. Some of us may have to learn to stop procrastinating while others need to carve out a distraction free workspace in order to get anything done.

- [ ] And so assessing whether yours is a good work-at-home personality is a first step in identifying and correcting your weaknesses. Develop a set of work-at-home ground rules that factor in the personality and ages of your children.

05. Use tools effectively.

- [ ] Tools such as the Internet, computers, email and the phone are what make working from home possible for most of us. But these tools can actually hinder our time management efforts if not used effectively.

- [ ] Email management is perhaps one of the most important skills we can acquire because email can become a full-time job in itself if we let it. Tracking our time can lead to more efficiency by revealing our biggest time wasters. It can also help us determine which tools--which could range from free online applications to a new netbook--will help us manage our time best.

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