
JANUARY 2023

Achieving Balance

MENTAL HEALTH SERIES



Take Control of Your Life this New Year

Importance of Balance

Balance is crucial to keeping our stressors at bay and ensuring successful goal-keeping, thus improving our well-being. What does balance really mean though? The definition of balance is “an even distribution of weight enabling someone or something to remain upright and steady”. This weight can be work tasks, family duties, hobbies, physical and mental wellness, and more. Regardless of what we are balancing, finding that balance is essential to our mental and emotional stability. As balance is achieved, we will find ourselves upright and stable; ready to face the New Year and the challenges it may bring.

For each person, their range of things they need to balance may change. For example, a single college-aged girl will have different tasks on her plate than that of a middle-aged father of two. Be sure to recognize and embrace these differences. As you do so, you will see that everyone can find balance if they make it a priority and reflect on what they need to balance.

Finding balance may seem overrated, however, according to the National Alliance on Mental Health, “maintaining balance throughout our lives is a cornerstone of overall well-being. Balance prevents stress, and we all know stress causes adverse health effects and leads to 75-90% of all physician visits.” Planning out ways to maintain balance may seem overwhelming and one might think that they have no time to find ways to achieve balance. Luckily, you are in charge of how and where you spend your time. If balance is a priority in your life, you happily find a way to make it happen in order to prevent these adverse health effects.

Prioritize and Schedule

There are certain things in our lives that are more important than others. Those things guide and motivate us to become better, more fulfilled, people. Scheduling can help you achieve your goals and help you not waste time.

In each week there are 168 hours. You spend roughly 112 of those hours awake, so how are you going to use that time? What takes precedence in your life? Make sure to take the time each week to list out each of your priorities. How are you going to spend more time on them? Plan for work, social activities, and “me time” and write them down. Evaluate the things in your life that you need to remove or spend less time on. Continually make adjustments until you find that balance.

Learning to Say No

An important skill is learning how to say no to things that are not aligned with your priorities. Although challenging, when practiced, balance is maintained in your life.

For example: Your friends ask you to go out when you have an important meeting at work early the next day. You want to have fun with your friends, but you need to practice your presentation and get a good night’s rest. You could respond with, “Thank you for the invite, however I have a huge meeting tomorrow at work. Could we go out tomorrow night instead?” This allows you to get your work done, while showing your friends they are still a priority in your life.



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8 Steps to Achieving Balance

1 - Acknowledge Your Needs

Be honest with yourself and put your needs first. Only you can fully see what areas you are neglecting and what improvements you need to make. If you don't take care of yourself, no one else will.

2 - Determine Your Values

Identify what truly energizes and motivates you. Developing a strong sense of values will guide your life and help you maintain a clear perspective. Continually monitor these values and use them to align your goals and dreams accordingly.

3 - Prioritize Your Growth and Development

Instead of just allowing life to happen, design it. Who do you want to be physically, emotionally, and mentally? It is extremely important to keep challenging yourself and building your skills.

4 - Practice Mindfulness

Practicing mindfulness each day will put you on the path to balance. It helps you to not get caught up in over analyzing or negative thoughts. This will allow you to shift toward being more engaged with life in a positive manner. ParentGuidance.org has courses that can help you learn how to better practice mindfulness.

5 - Connect with Others

Connection enriches our lives and has various mental health protective factors. Your relationships matter and they need to be nurtured and prioritized.

6 - Establish Boundaries

Whether it's work, personal, or social circumstances, boundaries need to be set in order to achieve a healthy balance of activities. This will help you conserve your emotional energy and keep you in a better mental state.

7 - Try New Things

Having a balanced life means focusing on your values and interests and allowing them to guide you to new learning opportunities and experiences. Be curious and open to exploring the world around you while allowing your goals and values to keep you grounded and mindful.

8 - Laugh

Life was meant to bring you joy. The point of finding balance is to have a joyful, content, and meaningful life. Don't let the stress of all that you have to do overshadow the daily happy moments. Enjoy the process of becoming a better you.

Courses to Guide You Toward a Balanced Life

Parent Guidance offers many courses to help you become balanced. The following courses are just some of many geared towards **helping you become the best version of you.**

- Everyday Happiness, *Brett Williams LMFT*
- Coping, Healing, and Finding Peace Through Mindfulness, *Thomas McConkie*
- Finding Yourself When You're Feeling Lost, *Paul Parkin Ph. D*
- Feeling Overwhelmed? Take this Guided Meditation, *Jenna Riemersma*

Explore more at [ParentGuidance.org](https://parentguidance.org)



"BALANCE IS NOT
SOMETHING YOU FIND,
IT'S SOMETHING YOU
CREATE."

- JANA KINGSFORD

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