

Making Time for Yourself

Making time for yourself is probably the last thing on your list, and probably one that you rarely ever get to. There's always someone or something that needs your attention, and taking care of others is more important than taking care of yourself, right? You might feel like it's hard enough to get everything done as it is and that you'll never find the time. But there are some very compelling, and important, reasons to try.

Why should you make time for yourself?

With the nonstop demands of work and family, there's always something to do. Energy is expended on work projects, taking care of the home, maintaining relationships, managing child care arrangements, and playing with the kids. But where does that energy come from? How can you recharge your batteries, so to speak?

Spending time alone on a regular basis has been shown to reduce heart rate and blood pressure. It can also play an important role in reducing stress, which can in turn enhance the immune system. Not to mention the spiritual rejuvenation that a few moments alone can spark.

Aside from the health and spiritual benefits, another good reason to take care of yourself is your children. Chances are you spent a great deal of time and energy trying to find a quality child care provider for your little ones. Recognizing that quality care has a positive effect, you wanted to make sure that your kids are well cared for. But who's taking care of you, and how much can you give your children if your own energy banks are depleted? Making time to take care of yourself will help ensure you can provide your children with the quality care they deserve.

What does it take?

Taking care of yourself doesn't have to be a big production, but it might require a shift in your mind set. Many working parents feel guilty if they don't spend every free moment with their kids. The first step is to recognize that you deserve the attention, that it doesn't make you a bad person, and that ultimately, it will allow you to give back more to the people you love. Have some fun coming up with something that works for you—and then make sure you do it! To get you started, here are a couple of suggestions for how to create some self-care time:

- Take a bath. Adding candles and soft music can make a half hour seem like a luxurious getaway.
- Read a good book. When was the last time you read something just for fun?
- Go for a walk. Visit a favorite park, or just stroll around the block.
- Make a creative project. Do you have a pile of photos and a photo album that needs to be completed? How about planting that herb garden? There's probably a project you've "put on hold" for some day when you have time. Make the time.
- Get some exercise. Not only is exercise good for you, but it helps relieve stress. Plus, this feel-good activity is one that you can easily do by yourself.
- Make an appointment at a salon. Go ahead and pamper yourself!
- Combine time alone with an enjoyable task. Does cooking relax you? How about weeding or even mowing the lawn? You can always pick something that needs to be done and spend some time doing it alone.

By putting a little energy into caring for yourself, chances are you'll have more energy for everyone—and everything—else. That can only result in more quality time with your family.

Your Employee Assistance Program

800.413.8008 #2 or 314.729.4600 #2

mbh-eap.com/members

Sources: Workplace Options. (Reviewed 2019). Making time for yourself. Raleigh, NC: Author.