

Tips for Coping and Balancing Work/Home Life

A colleague from the NY Times shared these tips about coping and balancing work/life and children during this period. You may find some of these tips helpful.

- 1. Stressors can trigger anxiety.** Multiple stressors at the same time can ratchet up anxiety.
2. Loss of a sense of control is a **major contributing factor** in anxiety.
- 3. Taking back control**, where possible, can significantly help your mental well-being.
4. By **dwelling on anxiety-provoking factors** you cannot control, you use emotional energy that could be applied in a more positive/productive way and potentially exhaust yourself.
- 5. Stamina and endurance are especially important now.** This becomes even more important when the stress is prolonged (and of uncertain duration), as with COVID-19.
- 6. Make a list of factors that you can and cannot control** (see below, as a starting point). Structure, routine and planning all enhance control, so take a few minutes and write down your list. Share this approach with family, colleagues, and friends.

Things you can't control:	Things you can control:
Virus (news, spread, statistics)	Sleep - this is pivotal to how you feel and function and will help to ensure that you have the resources necessary to deal with current demands. Make it a habit to go to sleep at the same time every night and avoid caffeine and electronics before bed.
Other people's behavior	Your own behavior

Economy/Stock Market	Work schedule - take short breaks during your workday, where possible.
Unemployment rate	Non-work activities - don't break patterns or forego activities that have been helpful or enjoyable in the past (meditation, music, exercise, reading for pleasure, etc.). Incorporate these activities back into your routine if they have fallen off over the past several weeks.
Rumors	Nutrition - don't overdo caffeine, alcohol, sugar. Focus on healthy eating wherever possible.

7. **Unplug from the negative side of social media.** Limit email, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc., where possible. Avoid the 24-hour news cycle (from a consumption standpoint) and don't listen incessantly to the news. Take a step back and retain perspective.

8. **Stay in contact with people** — call them, reach out through email, maintain your social network. Designate a time for specific non-work related calls you need to fit within your daily schedule (e.g. calls to elderly parents) and keep these within a circumscribed time frame to stay in control of your schedule.

9. **For those with family members at home**, structure time to spend together (e.g., walks, dinner, etc). See the positives in this period of distance working, along with the challenges. For those who live alone, pay particular attention to #8, above.

10. **Avoid catastrophic thinking** in which you stack one negative thought on top of another. Catch yourself doing this, interrupt it with a positive distractor and stay focused in the moment.

11. **Remember that there may be a variety of stressors** in your life other than COVID-19. You need to have the bandwidth to deal with them — don't put all of your emotional resources into this single stressor.

12. Don't feel ashamed or shy about asking for help or support when you need it.