In our culture, we expect to be able to do everything and to do it well. Both men and women feel pressure to not only be excellent-performing employees but to be the best friends, parents, partners and housekeepers possible. This crush of priorities can make many people feel as if they don't have time and energy to handle it all.

While the concept of a well-balanced life is widely accepted today, attaining it is as difficult, if not more so, than ever before. How do you take care of two children under the age of 5 and still find time for yourself, your job and your partner? When do you decide to exercise at noon rather than run errands? When should you consider neglecting sleep in favor of work? How can you leave work feeling rejuvenated, refreshed and ready to enjoy the rest of the day?

While we recognize the importance of self-care, caring for others, and investing in meaningful work, we are encouraged to equally attend to all aspects of our well-being. But how can we do all...
Putting yourself first

Physical health is important because it is a source of energy for the body, but other elements can also help people fully embrace life. Having a sense of purpose in life that extends beyond your daily work is one key aspect. We all have work that needs to be done on a daily basis, but having a sense that what you do is congruent with the overall purpose, design and flow of life as you experience it is helpful. Regular time in the outdoors, in nature, is another way to maintain connection to life energy and to feel rejuvenated. High energy is the sum of good physical and mental health, as well as passion and balance.

What gives your life zest, purpose and energy? Finding a way to be involved in pursuits that lead to those feelings is an important way to maintain energy on a regular basis. Long-term, quality energy and vitality can manifest in that way. Refueling and adding energy throughout the day is also beneficial. Eating varied, healthy foods is part of this process. Engaging in regular physical activity that focuses on strength and flexibility is important, too. Other ways to stay energized include:

- Engage in activities that are fun to do or find a way to have fun while doing the things you have to do.
- Laugh.
- Be as creative and innovative as possible.
- Rest when your body needs a break.
- Get enough sleep (adults need an average of seven to eight hours per night).
- Set goals and work to achieve them.
- Grow mentally and physically in varied pursuits.
- Freely experience your emotions.
- Smile often.
- Experience spirituality as you define it.
- Observe what gives you energy and what drains you of energy. Figure out how to block unnecessary energy loss. And focus on attaining a balanced perspective throughout the day.
Your workspace matters

Consider starting your day by visualizing how it can be the best possible day. The mind is receptive to your feelings and ideas upon waking. During the day, think about structuring your workspace for maximum productivity. This includes making sure that all of the work tools you use are placed appropriately for your individual needs. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has designed guidelines for a productive workstation setup. Additional ergonomic guidelines from Cornell University will also be useful in making your workspace as healthful as possible.

Re-energize at lunch

Use the lunch period that you have available as a positive, energy-building time. Think of topics to discuss at lunch so you do not get stuck listening to a long tale of someone else's woes (which is very energy-draining). Make healthy, energizing food choices (less sugar, salt, caffeine and more fruit, veggies, protein and whole grains). Throughout each day consider taking two to three mini breaks. Also, allow time to celebrate something that went well, such as a positive gesture from a coworker or a good deed that you performed. Take a stretch or walk break for a few minutes, or take a few deep breaths. These actions will help you to enhance your energy. Planning a restful, inspirational or educational activity to do on your way home and upon arrival would also be good to consider.

Find the balance

Balancing work and play is critical for life satisfaction. We spend most of our waking hours focused on both types of activities. Making sure that we are not overly emphasizing one over the other provides a good perspective and facilitates great days. Be gentle with yourself in the process, and know that experiencing positive, energy-filled days is possible with some effort and focus.

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