

# Juggling Multiple Goals Made Easy

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You probably think life would be so much simpler if you could just concentrate on helping your kids with their homework or running a faster mile. ***The reality is that we all have to juggle a wide variety of goals.***

A number of studies suggest that breaking goals down into specific action steps works when applied to a single goal. However, that approach tends to backfire when we have more going on. It seems we become more aware of the potential obstacles in our way.

So what do you do if you need to make progress on multiple fronts without getting overwhelmed? Consider these strategies.

## Evaluate Your Current List of Goals

- 1. Select three priorities.** *If you feel like you're being pulled in all directions, take time to reflect on what matters most to you.* You may decide that preparing simpler meals is an acceptable tradeoff for having more time to spend with your family.
- 2. Be realistic about time limits.** We often underestimate how long it will take to complete routine tasks. Ensure you know how much time you really have to work with in a typical week.
- 3. Decline requests tactfully.** *Learning to say no graciously will spare you from taking on excessive obligations.* It's okay if you want to skip a baby shower for a

former coworker you lost touch with years ago.

4. **Stay up to date.** Our objectives shift at different stages in our lives. Go ahead and scale down your career ambitions if you've found greater meaning in your spiritual practices.

### **Juggle the Goals You Want to Keep**

1. **Select role models.** *Interestingly, researchers have found that we're more optimistic about handling multiple goals if we think the people around us are busier than we are.* Get inspired by a neighbor who's training for the Olympics and finishing law school.
2. **Define your success.** Figure out how to grade yourself. Maybe you want to excel at parenting, but you're satisfied with getting your car washed once a month.
3. **Merge projects into one.** Just spotting the connections between one concern and another may make your life easier. Focus on being healthy rather than counting every calorie.
4. **Resist rushing.** Slow down. Chronic stress undermines your performance across the board.
5. **Segment your time.** Break your day up into broad time slots. Budget an hour to spend on writing a report. Devote the next half hour to walking through the park. *Switching between activities will keep your mind fresh.*
6. **Master logistics.** Organization helps you get things done more quickly. Calculate the best route for completing all your errands in one trip instead of

making separate outings to pick up the dry cleaning and drop the dog off at the groomer.

7. **Work as a team.** Encourage a spirit of community and cooperation. Thank your kids for pitching in with age appropriate household tasks. Take turns cleaning the office refrigerator.

8. **Seek expert help.** Shorten your learning curve by consulting those who already know the ropes. *Financial planning is one key area where professionals can help you understand how to balance different needs.*

9. **Know your best time of day.** Schedule your most challenging demands for the times when you're at your peak. If you're an early bird, study foreign languages over breakfast. Night owls can review their finances after dinner.

10. **Stay fit.** Protect your ability to pull off everything you want to do in life. *Make sure your goals include staying in top physical and mental condition.*

Pare down your to do list and coordinate your efforts around the goals that are most important to you. You'll worry less and get more accomplished.