



5 ways to ensure a greater work-family balance



Individuals have to juggle different responsibilities on a daily basis. Those with full- or part-time jobs, children, spouses or partners, or aging family members that require assistance, will often find they are pulled in different directions. In many cases, work takes priority over family time because people rely on their jobs for the income that funds their lifestyles. Rather than jeopardizing that income, certain individuals will make time concessions that favor employment over personal relationships and family time.

Recent data indicates that many people are trapped in unhealthy work-life balances and can't find the time to unwind and enjoy themselves. The e-commerce company Groupon asked 2,000 Americans about stress at work and 60% indicated that pressures and responsibilities of the workplace and home life do not have boundaries. Learning to balance work and life better may come from following these tips.

1. Find more time. While there's no way to add extra hours to the day, you can add extra

hours to your schedule. One way to do so is to wake up earlier or stay up later than the household. Some people prefer the quiet time to get things done while others are asleep. If you can afford to shave an hour from your sleeping schedule (provided you already are getting enough), this approach can make a significant difference.

2. Limit distractions as much as possible. Distractions pull attention away from tasks and that can make it harder to complete jobs on time. Schedule tasks that require your utmost concentration when others are not around. Perhaps this means coming into the office during off-peak hours or waiting until a spouse or the kids go to their respective places of work or school before you start things that require greater concentration.

3. Figure out your home priorities. Schedule your home priorities just as you would work meetings and other responsibilities. While you may not be able to attend every sports practice or game, make it a point to get to as many events as possible. Put

it in the calendar or planner as a must-do.

4. Maximize your PTO. Chances are you are entitled to a certain number of days off. Do not squander the opportunity to use these days. It will not make you a hero if you give up on time off. Map out priorities for the next couple of months and see where your time away from work will be needed. Then utilize PTO for these events as well as vacations.

5. End work at a certain time. There is a saying that "work expands to fill the time allotted." It's easy to let work infiltrate home time especially for those who are remote workers. Set a distinct end time for the job and reinforce it by turning off your computer or other devices, or physically lock the door to your office. Schedule tasks directly after work that are important to you, so you won't be tempted to continue working.

Finding work-life balance can take time and require breaking established habits, but it is one way to reduce stress and feel more personally satisfied.

Why Labor Day is worth celebrating

Labor Day weekend is much-anticipated. Many people look forward to Labor Day weekend because it offers one last extended break to enjoy summer weather. Though summer does not officially end until September is nearly over, for many people Labor Day, which is celebrated annually on the first Monday in September, marks the unofficial end of summer.

But Labor Day is more than just one final chance to embrace the relaxed vibe of summer and soak up some rays. In fact, Labor Day boasts a unique history that's worth celebrating for a variety of reasons.

What is Labor Day?

The United States Department of Labor notes that Labor Day is a celebration of American workers that dates back to the 19th century. The day is meant to commemorate the contributions workers in the United States have made to the nation, helping to make it one of the strongest and most prosperous countries in the world.

Who came up with the idea of Labor Day?

Despite the fact that municipal legislation surrounding Labor Day was initially introduced in the 1880s, debate remains as to just who should be credited with proposing a day to honor American workers. Some records suggest that Peter J. McGuire, who served as general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and

Joiners and cofounded the American Federation of Labor, deserves the credit for Labor Day. However, the Department of Labor notes that many people believe a machinist named Matthew Maguire

(no relation to Peter) was the first to propose a holiday honoring workers in 1882. At that time Maguire was serving as secretary of New York's Central Labor Union, which later adopted a Labor Day proposal and appointed a committee to plan a demonstration and picnic. The first Labor Day was ultimately celebrated in New York City on Tuesday, Sept. 5, 1882, in accordance with the plans made by the Central Labor Union, which strongly suggests that Maguire does, in fact, deserve the credit for coming up with the holiday.

Why celebrate Labor Day?

Labor Day is worth celebrating because, without the contributions of millions of workers every year, the United States would not be the success story it is and has been for more than 200 years. In addition to the United States, many countries across the globe, including Canada and Australia, have their own versions of Labor Day.

Labor Day weekend might now be seen as the unofficial end of summer. But this Labor Day weekend, celebrants and workers should remember that Labor Day also should be a time to reflect on the value of hard work.



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Labor Day weekend travel tips



Labor Day is celebrated on the same day in the United States and Canada each year. An annual holiday to celebrate the achievements of workers, Labor Day (known as Labour Day in Canada), occurs on the first Monday of September each year.

Though its status as the end of summer is not technically accurate, Labor Day marks the unofficial end to the season of fun in the sun for millions of people across both the U.S. and Canada. That makes the weekend preceding Labor Day one of the most popular times to travel. Indeed, data from the Transportation Security Administration indicates that the Friday before Labor Day 2022 was the second busiest travel day at U.S. airports that summer. Travel was equally popular on Labour Day weekend 2022 in Canada, where the online booking platform Kayak reports searches for international flights had increased by 104% compared to the year prior.

Labor Day weekend travel fig-

ures to be just as popular this year, so travelers can keep these tips in mind as they plan one last summer getaway.

• **Book as early as possible.** With so many people interested in traveling on Labor Day weekend, it behooves all travelers to plan ahead. Competition for hotel rooms and other lodging might be steep, and individuals who plan to fly might have trouble finding seats on flights that leave during peak travel hours the longer they delay.

• **Consider traveling by car.** Air travel aficionados had some good news and bad news as the summer travel season began in 2023. Data from FlightAware indicated that flight cancellations were down in 2023 compared to 2022. However, FlightAware data also indicated there were an average of 7,000 to 9,000 flight delays per day in the U.S. in the first half of 2023. No one wants to send off the last weekend of summer with a lengthy flight delay, so travelers who want to spend as

much time as possible celebrating may want to drive rather than fly to their destinations.

• **Drive during off-peak hours.** Air travelers must cede some control over when to depart, but drivers can pick their own time to hit the road. Starting a trip during off-peak hours, such as early in the morning or even after rush hour on Thursday night, may enable drivers to avoid traffic.

• **Travel light.** Warm weather tends to linger into Labor Day weekend, so there's no need to pack heavy. That's especially noteworthy for air travelers. The lighter travelers can pack for a flight, the less likely they will need to check a bag. That decreases the likelihood bags will be lost if a flight is delayed or canceled, and it also allows travelers to deplane and leave the airport without having to wait around to claim their bags.

• **Extend the trip.** An extra day at the end of the trip can help travelers avoid the crowds on the way home. Parents may need to travel on Labor Day if school is already in session or starting on Tuesday. But travelers who have no reason to rush home can get an extra day of fun in the sun and travel home on a day that tends to be less hectic.

Labor Day weekend marks the unofficial end of summer. Travelers can keep various strategies in mind to get the most out of summer's swan song.

Did you know?

Projections from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate the need for agricultural and food scientists will grow by 9% between 2020 and 2030. Agricultural and food scientists can work in laboratories, offices and even in the field as they research ways to improve the efficiency

and safety of agricultural establishments and products. Projected job openings in the field could be as high as 4,400 opportunities per year, making a career as an agricultural and food scientist one of the more enticing professions in the agriculture industry.

The value of mulched leaves

Homeowners who don't look forward to dusting off their rakes each fall might be happy to learn that mulching fallen leaves with a mower may be a healthier and less labor intensive way to confront a yard covered in leaves. For 20 years, turfgrass specialists at Michigan State University studied how lawns reacted to having ground up leaves left on the lawn and the results were overwhelmingly positive. Researchers found that tiny pieces of mulched leaves eventually sifted down through the turf and provided the lawn with essential nutrients. Mulched leaves also served to control future weed growth by covering up bare spots between turf plants. Such spots typically provided openings for weed seeds to germinate and ultimately infect lawns. In fact, re-

searchers found that mulching leaves for just three years could produce a nearly 100% decrease in dandelion and crabgrass growth. Homeowners with mulching mowers that also have bags can even help their gardens by alternating using the mower with and without the bag on once leaves begin to fall. When mowing with the bag on, mulched leaves can then be used as mulch in landscape beds and vegetable gardens.



Secrets to cold weather entertaining

Outdoor entertaining in winter may be challenging, especially in regard to keeping everyone warm. The following are some solutions that can help people stay warm and have fun outside.

Invest in fire pits

Fire pits are an affordable way to heat a patio or another outdoor area. They can be great places for friends and family to gather around and enjoy special occasions. They're readily available from garden centers and home improvement retailers at a variety of price points.

Permanent fire pits can be built by a homeowner or professionally built by masonry experts.

Install an outdoor fireplace

A step up from a fire pit, outdoor fireplaces not only add warmth, but also improve the ambiance and value of an outdoor entertaining area. Set up outdoor furniture right next to an outdoor fireplace and you have a cozy alternative living room



where everyone can gather.

Explore outdoor heating systems

Few things are more effective at warming up outdoor entertaining areas than patio heaters and infrared heaters. These devices are far more effective than average fire pits or fireplaces. One or two heaters will be enough to keep a large entertain-

ing area warm.

Keep cozy options available

Guests should dress warmly, but having a basket of throw blankets, scarves and parkas available for extra warmth while mingling is helpful. Use outdoor rugs to insulate from the cold from the ground up.

Serve hearty foods and beverages

Stews, chilis, soups, and other hot foods can help guests warm themselves up from the inside out. Warmed cider, hot chocolate and mulled wines also can be served to help people stay warm.

Get moving

Incorporate activities that encourage guests to move around and stay warm. Beanbag tosses, dancing and even sports like flag football can keep guests' blood flowing.

Entertaining outdoors doesn't have to stop when the weather cools. Find ways to stay comfortable when entertaining outside in the cold.

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'Fall' in love with family-favorite autumn recipes

With temperatures cooling and cravings leaning toward comforting flavors, fall offers a perfect time for families to explore adventurous twists on favorite foods. As you and your loved ones rework the menu for autumn, turn to versatile ingredients that provide fresh tastes and new ways to enjoy classic recipes.

One star ingredient that can be used for appetizers, main courses, sides, snacks and desserts alike is watermelon. In fact, using the entire watermelon (rind included) means you've discovered a sustainable way to create nutritious meals without food waste.

Consider these simple, delicious ways to use the entire watermelon in your kitchen.

Watermelon: In the fall, whole watermelon is still available in many areas. You can also find mini watermelon in the fresh cut produce section at many local grocers. Serve on its own as a hydrating snack or as part of a recipe for tasty entrees.

Watermelon juice: Watermelon is 92% water, making it a sweet choice for staying hydrated. Even if your watermelon is overripe, don't throw it out - instead, juice or puree it to retain value and nutrition. Use it to sweeten this Watermelon Bourbon Glaze then drizzle over a perfectly grilled flank steak and serve with mashed potatoes and grilled vegetables for an ideal fall meal.

Watermelon rind: The rind is often thrown out - many people

don't realize you can eat it, too. The rind absorbs flavors added to it and adds an unexpected texture to this Watermelon Wal-

nut Currant Chutney recipe. Try serving over brie with crackers or simply dip with naan or baguettes.

Find more flavorful fall solutions to avoid food waste at Watermelon.org.



Watermelon Walnut Currant Chutney

- Servings: 16**
- 4 cups watermelon, juiced
 - 2 cups watermelon rind (white part), diced small
 - 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
 - 1 1/2 cups packed brown sugar
 - 1/2 medium white onion, sliced
 - 1 tablespoon minced garlic
 - 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
 - 1/4 teaspoon cloves, ground
 - 1 teaspoon lemon zest
 - 1 lemon, juice only
 - 2 tablespoons currants
 - 2 tablespoons roasted walnuts

- 1 wheel brie cheese, for serving
- crackers, for serving

In saucepan over medium heat, reduce watermelon juice to 2 cups. Combine with watermelon rind, apple cider vinegar, brown sugar, white onion, garlic, nutmeg, cloves, lemon zest, lemon juice, currants and walnuts; simmer until almost dry.

Chill and serve over brie with crackers.

#16764; Source: National Watermelon Promotion Board

Watermelon Bourbon Glaze with Grilled Flank Steak

Servings: 6

- 1 1/2 cups watermelon juice (approximately 2 1/2 cups chopped watermelon, blended)
- 2 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoon hot sauce
- 1/4-1/2 cup bourbon
- 2 pounds flank steak or London broil
- 1/4 teaspoon cornstarch



In medium saucepan over medium-high heat, reduce watermelon juice to 2/3 cup. Toward end of reduction, add garlic. Remove from heat, cool 10 minutes then add soy sauce, brown sugar, hot sauce and bourbon. Mix well.

Place watermelon-bourbon glaze in large zip-top bag. Add steak and massage to cover meat. Close bag and refrigerate 3-4 hours.

Heat grill to high heat. Remove steak from plastic bag and gently shake to remove excess glaze.

Grill steak 4-6 minutes; turn, grill 4-6 minutes, depending on thickness of steak. Remove from heat. Steak should be pink in center.

Allow steak to rest on platter or cutting board 10 minutes.

Mix small amount of watermelon-bourbon glaze with cornstarch. In small saucepan over medium-

high heat, add cornstarch mixture to remaining glaze and simmer 3-5 minutes. Reduce to medium heat until mixture thickens. Remove from heat. Cut flank steak on bias into thin strips. Drizzle watermelon-bourbon glaze over top.

Did you know?

The demand for qualified, talented nurses figures to grow in the years to come. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), more than half a million nurses were expected to retire by 2022. Couple that with an existing nursing shortage, and the BLS projects a need for 1.1 million registered nurses in the near future. A shortage also figures to affect Canada, where the Canadian Nurses Association recently estimated that the country would be forced to confront a nursing shortage of roughly 60,000 nurses by 2022. Various factors are contributing to the nursing shortage in both countries, including an increasingly large aging population that will require more and more nurses to meet its healthcare



needs. In the United States, the Affordable Care Act, which was passed in 2010, increased access to health care for millions of people across the country, thereby creating a greater need for nurses and other healthcare professionals. In addition, a greater emphasis on preventive care in many countries across the globe figures to compel more people to visit their physicians even when they're otherwise feeling healthy. As more people prioritize preventive care, the need for more nurses will likely increase.

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