



Take Time to Be Together

It's easy to feel like you don't have enough time in a busy week to spend relaxing with your partner and children. But the most important relationships in your life deserve your time and attention. If work and other responsibilities are slicing into the time you spend with your family, it's time to re-evaluate your priorities and put more balance into your life.

You can reclaim "lost" bits of time by re-examining your values, prioritizing work obligations and using time management techniques for work and household chores. Make a point of using the time you've "saved" to strengthen your bonds with your spouse and kids.

Time has a funny way of expanding when you're with someone you care about. The clock seems to stop because you're so involved in the moment. Small blocks of time together can make a big difference in the quality of your relationships. So, even if you have to schedule your time together in tiny parcels, make the most of it.



Time With Your Spouse

You'd be surprised how a little private time together in a new environment can enrich your relationship and give you both a new perspective on your busy lives. Get out your calendar and make a date with your spouse for the first free evening you can find. Plan to do something you haven't done in a long time. Make dates each month so you have something special to look forward to.

Add a bit of spontaneity by surprising your partner with reservations at a favorite restaurant. And the next time you hire a baby sitter for a school conference, ask the sitter to stay a bit longer while you and your spouse go out for a walk or for dessert and coffee.

Time With Your Kids

No matter how busy you are, your kids need your undivided time and attention on a regular basis. Spend your first 15 minutes at home listening to your children. Mark on the calendar part of each

weekend for some private time with each child. Do something you both enjoy. Take each child to breakfast or lunch once a month to allow for solid one-to-one communication.

Although you may feel too tired to toss a football around the backyard at the end of the day, you can connect with your kids by playing quiet games or asking them to tell you about their day. Enjoy the intimacy of your kids' nighttime rituals. Use bedtime to cuddle up and share a favorite book.

Enrich Family Routines

You can make family errands more fun by bringing along the kids and topping off your expeditions with a stop for ice cream. Older children can help cut shopping time by taking part of the shopping list and meeting you at the cash register.

Make meal times more pleasurable by turning off the television and focusing on conversation. Use the time to catch up on the day's events and reconnect with each family member.