



Regain Important Family Time by Leaving Work at the Office

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On days when your spouse comes home from work irritable and grumpy from a bad day, try telling them jokingly, *Go back and come in again.*

In our high-stress society, sometimes it's hard to keep work and home separate. Work worries follow us home so we're never really free of them.

- ***Even though work is such an intertwined part of life for everyone, it's essential to leave your work problems at work so your home can be your sanctuary.***

Here are some effective tips to help you leave those work issues back at the office so you can enjoy your time at home:

1. **Schedule your day.** Plan ahead for how long you're going to be at work. When you're closed be closed, even if it means ignoring the phone or emails. The world won't stop spinning if you sit down to dinner with your family and let the machine get the phone.

You know that you'll pick things up the next day, so accept that the work can wait until you get back. Train yourself for this.

- ***If you have to initially schedule family time or alone time, do it.*** You'll soon begin to enjoy the rewards of scheduled time off.
- Turn off your cell phone, blackberry, or beeper when you walk in the door. Your messages will still be there in the morning when you start your workday again.

This idea might prove a little tricky for stay at home moms, but learn how to set boundaries for your children. After you put them to bed, tell them Mommy hours are over, and it's time for you to relax. Most children respect these parameters, and other people who need you will learn to respect your boundaries as well.

2. Change your clothes. Work attire has certain standards and, when you change into comfortable clothing at home, you give yourself a chance to relax.

- ***Whether you wear a uniform or business wear, changing your clothes is a mental indicator that work time is up.***

- Keep a cozy pair of slippers by the door so you can get comfortable immediately after you come into the door.

3. Give yourself time to de-stress. You can just sit in the chair, read a good book, or fix a drink. Whatever your method is to de-stress, make sure you've spelled out ahead of time that you aren't to be interrupted until you're ready.

- If you know you don't want to be pummeled by your kids the moment you walk in the door, arrange with your spouse or kids to allow a few minutes to de-stress.

- Use your commuting time to de-stress, especially if you use public transit. Listening to your iPod or just daydreaming out the window can make a world of difference in your mood once you get home.

- ***Don't stay in de-stress mode, however, for the entire evening! Still take part with the family once you've cleared your mind for a bit.***

4. Separate your work area. As more and more people begin working from home, it's harder to separate the two lives. In order to help you distance yourself from work once work hours are over, keep your work area physically separate from your family area.

- Establish your work area in a dedicated workroom, or separate your work area with a wall or a room divider so you're not pulled back to your work area when you're interacting with your family.

- If you work with a laptop, don't be tempted to bring your work into your family space. It's too easy to get distracted by work when your family needs you at the end of the day.

You'll find so much peace of mind once you realize that you're in control of your schedule! Don't let the boss run your world outside of work. You'll be happier, healthier and more productive when you take time for yourself and your family. Treat yourself with the respect you deserve!