



Making Time for Yourself and Your Family

Because of the stress of a typical work week, finding time for some fun and relaxation is usually difficult. Furthermore, it may seem like making time to enjoy your life takes a lot of effort. However, finding time for yourself and your family is well worth it. The hobbies and activities we take part in together or alone often bring us great happiness and help to enrich our lives.

Why Leisure is Important

- Physical fun, such as taking an aerobics class or going on a walk with a friend, helps soothe tension and clear the mind.
- Even an hour of leisure time a day is great for the body, mind and spirit. It helps release stress and leads to a more balanced life.
- By taking time to do things that you like to do, you are better able to have healthier and more positive relationships with those around you.

How to Have Fun

If you've filled your time with so much work that you've forgotten how to play, take some cues from kids. They easily go from one fun activity to the next, typically with smiles and laughter. Watch your child at the playground and see how he or she becomes immersed in the present activity, whether it's playing in the sandbox, scaling a climbing wall or going down a slide. Try to have a similar state of immersion and happiness when you get to take time for you. Here are some tips to make the most of your fun times:

- Choose activities that are just for you; choose others that involve the family
- Schedule a time for leisure into your daily calendar
- When having family time, pick sports, hobbies or locations that everyone enjoys
- Choose meditation or other relaxing, quiet activities to de-stress
- Aim to be fully present when you're having fun

Having Fun Solo and With Your Family

Here are some ideas for activities to do on your own:

- Try a new hobby or revive a former one
- Join a gym or start going to fitness classes
- Join a book group or enroll in a class
- Take a walk in the neighborhood and enjoy nature

Some activities to do as a family can include:

- Take a day trip to a special spot
- Take family walks
- Have a game night
- Participate in fundraisers or volunteer functions
- Take dance, tennis or other lessons
- Plan a family vacation and get the whole family involved in the planning process





Listening Tips for Difficult Situations

During your workday, you may encounter meetings, lectures or conversations which require attention that may be hard for you to give. In these situations, it's key that you stay engaged. Use the tips and techniques below to help you stay focused so you can better listen and take in what's going on.

Listening During Meetings

- Take notes. By incorporating an activity into your listening, you can focus your attention.
- Mentally list or relate the points being made. How do they affect you? What do you know about them?
- Ask questions and stay engaged with the speaker.

Staying Alert During Lectures

- Sit near the front of the room and try to have a clear view of the speaker.
- Do research about the lecturing topic beforehand.
- Refrain from having your cell phone on the table with you.

Staying Focused in an Interview

- If you are unclear about what the person has said, try repeating what he or she has just told you. This will tell you if you heard the person correctly.
- Provide eye contact and appropriate body language.

Handling Problems through Effective Communication

- When a person approaches you with a problem, listen to what he or she tells you, and then rephrase the problem. This way, the person can correct you if needed, and you can also help him or her visualize a solution.
- Notice the body language of yourself and adjust it if necessary. Notice the body language of the other person; it'll give you insight into what he or she is really trying to say.
- After you and the person finish talking about the problem, summarize what's been said and agree on steps to move forward.

Listening to Your Boss

- Don't let attitudes interfere with listening. Drop judgments and sharp criticisms when speaking with him or her.
- Avoid mental and emotional filters when you talk to your boss.
- Be aware of body language and tone.
- Listen with empathy and understanding.

