

Choose Life Balance

Balance Your Time

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Welcome to the Choose Life Balance self-study course from K-State Research & Extension.

Balanced Living Topics

- **Manage Your Time**
- Manage Your Stress
- Feed Your Body
- Move Your Body
- Rest Your Body



This self-study course will examine five topics that are important for balanced living: time management, stress management, nutrition, physical activity and sleep. This first session will focus on the importance of managing time in living a balanced life.

Balanced Living Definition

- Stability, equality, harmony
- Caring appropriately for all life areas
- Don't over-do or under-do



The definition of balance is stability, equality, and harmony. Individuals achieve greater life balance when they do not let one area of life take over all of their time at the expense of other priorities. Overdoing or underdoing even good things like physical activity can lead to imbalance. Ultimately, living an unbalanced life can lead to stress, health problems, poor relationships, and lost productivity. This class was developed to give you information and help you gain skills to achieve and maintain a balanced life.

Determine Priorities

- Relationships
- Health
- Learning
- Work
- Money
- Recreation
- Spiritual



We all have priorities—things that we value. These priorities are often classified in seven main areas.

- Relationships. This includes time with your spouse, children, extended family, or friends.
- Health. If health is a priority, you might focus on healthy eating, regular physical activity, getting enough sleep, or making time for relaxation.
- Learning. Those who place a lot of value in this area may read a lot, take classes, or participate in other lifelong learning activities.
- Work. If your profession is a high priority to you, you may be working extra hours for a promotion or raise.
- Money. Financial priorities might be earning a large salary, buying a home, or getting out of debt.
- Recreation. Perhaps your priority is pursuing a hobby such as scrap-booking or flyfishing.
- Spiritual. Spiritual priorities may include regular prayer, meditation, or church attendance.

Your Top Priorities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Handout 1



Considering the previous list of priorities...

Download *handout 1* and begin by listing your top priorities. Write down the top three or four things that matter most to you. Listing more than 3 or 4 can be distracting and too difficult to manage. Write down what comes to mind now, but take time to think deeply about your priorities over the next week.

What Takes Your Time?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



Now, think about how you use your time.....

Using *handout 1*, list what takes up your time? How do your priorities match with the things that take most of your time?

Your priorities will change over time, so it's a good idea to evaluate them at least yearly. You might want to repeat this activity during major life changes such as a job change, a move, marriage or divorce, or the birth of a child.

Life balance comes when your priorities and your use of time start to line up.

Analyze Your Time

- Keep a detailed time log for several days
- Look for unproductive time
- Adjust tasks or methods
- Write a master list
 - Include everything
 - Note key dates and deadlines
- Write a daily task list
 - Appointments and scheduled events
 - 3-5 things from master list
 - Prioritize items on the list



To find out exactly HOW you are spending your time, you should keep a detailed time log for several days. A small pocket sized tablet is a good way to do this. IF you have a smart phone, there are some apps that you might find helpful. This will help determine activities that can be eliminated to free up more time for priorities that are most important to you.

A master list will include all the things you need to do. You can keep separate lists for work tasks and personal tasks or keep everything all on one list. Write key dates and deadlines on the master list.

From your master list, you will create a daily task list. You can make your list on a notebook, a daily planner, or a smart phone that can sync with your computer. Make sure it is easily accessible to you throughout the day.

First, list any appointments and scheduled events from your calendar and keep them at the top of the list.

Next, put three to five items from your master list onto your task list. If you put only one or two things on your list, you may get only one or two things done. If you list ten or twelve items, you might become overwhelmed and not be able to accomplish much either.

Now, prioritize your daily task list by assigning "A", "B", and "C" to items to indicate importance. "A" items are most important, and you should do them first. "B" items, which are important but not urgent. "C" items are routine and should come last or be delegated to someone else.

After writing your task list, see whether the items on it match your priorities. *For example*, if one of your top priorities is spending time with your children but you are not spending any time with them, plan time to read to them, take them to the park, or do some other activity together.

Compare Your List and Your Priorities

- Does your list match your priorities?
- Remember to include time for:
 - Self
 - Relationships
 - Physical activity
 - Sleep



Several areas are easy to overlook when you are busy:

- Self: You will be happier and more productive if you take time every day to care for yourself. Take time to relax and do nothing or to pursue a creative interest or hobby. Read a chapter in a favorite book, take a walk around the block, or do another favorite activity.
- Relationships: Make sure you include time for the people that are important to you. If getting everything done on your task list takes priority over time with family and friends, your relationships can suffer.
- Physical activity: Regular exercise is good for your body and your mind. You will be more productive if you engage in regular physical activity. Physical activity will be discussed in detail in the fourth session in this series, *"Move Your Body."*
- Sleep: Getting enough sleep helps you be productive, deal with stress, and be healthier. In general, adults need 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night. Sleep will be discussed in detail in the final session in this series, *"Rest Your Body."*

Quadrant Living

STEPHEN COVEY'S TIME MANAGEMENT MATRIX		
	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	Quadrant 1 Crises Pressing Problems Projects with Deadlines	Quadrant 2 Relationship Building Planning Recreation
NOT IMPORTANT	Quadrant 3 Interruptions Some Phone Calls Some Mail Some Reports	Quadrant 4 Busy Work Some Phone Calls Some Mail Time Wasters



Using *handout 2*, transfer your to do list items to the appropriate quadrant.

Management expert Stephen Covey developed this analytical tool to lead people towards *effective* time use.

Quadrant I is for the immediate and important deadlines.

Quadrant II is for long-term strategizing and development.

Quadrant III is for time pressured distractions. They are not really important, but someone wants it now.

Quadrant IV is for those activities that yield little is any value. These are activities that are often used for taking a break from time pressured and important activities.

Many people find that most of their activities fall into Quadrant I and III. Quadrant II is often under used, yet Quadrant II is exceptionally important because one must work both tactically and strategically at the same time.

Big Rocks

Put Your Big Rocks First

Inspired by the teachings of Stephen Covey

by Unstick.me



Better Management

- Focus on one thing at a time
- Do the most important things at your peak energy time
- Build in a margin
- Set limits
 - Time limit for each task
 - Number of tasks to accomplish



If you are using a master list and a task list but are still struggling with time management, consider these ideas:

- Analyze how you spend your time for several days. Keep a detailed log of what you do and how much time it takes. Although this may seem time-consuming, you will get a lot of information about where you are spending time.
- Look for unproductive time. Your time log will show any mismatch between your goals and your actual time use.
- Adjust method. If you are frequently interrupted by telephone calls, let callers leave a message and return the calls when you have completed your project. If large projects are not getting done because you are spending too much time on “busy work,” make a daily appointment with yourself to work on the project. Delegate the “busy work” to others or don’t do it at all if it is not a priority.
- Don’t book every minute. Leave time that is not scheduled. If your time is too tightly scheduled, it will not allow for unexpected things that come up. This may be stressful.

SIMPLIFY

- Your schedule
- Your mornings
- Your stuff



Another way to manage time is to simplify your life. Simplification saves resources for the things that are most important to you. There are many areas where you can simplify.

These ideas can help simplify your schedule:

- Don't fill the calendar: If your schedule is too full, there won't be room for unexpected opportunities, not to mention time to relax. Leave open time in your schedule.
- Schedule time for fun and relaxation: As mentioned previously, make sure to include time for yourself, your relationships, physical activity, and adequate sleep.
- Delegate: There are things in your schedule that you could delegate to someone else. Family members can help with cooking and housework, and coworkers could do routine projects. Delegating enables you to do the things that only you can do.
- Combine errands: Save time by doing several errands at once, such as getting gas and picking up a gift on the way to the grocery store.
- Say no: Say no to some requests for your time. It is alright to say no. Write a list of

things you are doing that you are going to stop doing so you can focus on your priorities. Before you say yes to a request, think about whether it fits with your priorities.

Mornings can be a stressful time, especially if you are responsible for getting yourself AND someone else ready for the day. You might be able to simplify by doing some things the night before like laying out clothes, packing lunches or planning breakfast. Waking up a little earlier...even 15 minutes can make a big difference. Choosing simple grooming, such as an easy-to-care-for hairstyle and cosmetics, can also simplify mornings.

Simplify your stuff:

- Quality most important. Many people feel that their worth is based on how many things they have. Remember, though, that quality is more important than quantity. After your basic needs are met, research shows that having more things does not make you happier. In fact, clutter can be quite stressful. If you have possessions that are cluttering your life, work to eliminate the clutter with the following step-by-step process.
- List areas to work on. Go through your house or work area and make a list of all the places that hold clutter. Be specific. Rather than listing your bedroom, list the places in the bedroom that are cluttered, such as the nightstand, the closet, or your dresser drawers.
- Decide where to start. Determine what area you want to work on first. Choose the place that bothers you the most.
- Set a date and time to start. Devote 1 hour for your first session. Set a timer so you don't waste time looking at the clock.
- Get others to help. Friends and family members can be a great help in this process. They are not as attached to your possessions as you are and can help you make decisions about what to keep and what to let go.

Go through items in each area. At your set time, start your organizing project. Take all of the items out of that area.

- Sort into categories. Go through the items one by one and place them in one of four piles:
 - Keep. Find a "home" for each thing you keep. Train yourself to take each item to its "home" when you are done using it.
 - Donate. Bag items to be donated. Take them to the donation site as soon as possible.
 - **Toss, recycle, or repair.** After the organizing session, immediately place these items in the garbage can, recycling bin, or fix-it box.
 - **Unsure.** If you are not sure what to do with an item, put it in a box. At the end of the session, seal the box and date it for 6 months in the future. If you don't need anything from the box by that time, throw the box away without opening it up.

Another way to simplify possessions is to give something away each time you buy something new. If you have uncluttered your closet and decided you only need eight pairs of pants, give an older pair away each time you buy a new pair.



Take Time To....

- THINK
- PLAY
- READ
- HELP OTHERS
- SHOW LOVE
- DAYDREAM
- LAUGH
- PERFECT NEW SKILLS
- PLAN

THINK - it is the source of self-renewal

PLAY - it will keep you young

READ - it will rejuvenate the mind

HELP OTHERS - it will return more than you give

SHOW LOVE - it is the key to life's satisfactions

DAYDREAM - it will provide a road map for your future

LAUGH - it restores your balance

PERFECT NEW SKILLS – it will keep you in demand

PLAN – it will determine whether you have time for everything else

SMART Goals

- Set a time-management goal that will help balance your life
 - S = Specific
 - M = Measurable
 - A = Achievable
 - R = Rewarding
 - T = Time-bound



Today you have learned about priority areas and have reviewed your priorities. You learned about managing time by using a master list and a task list. Finally, you have learned ways to simplify your life. Establishing your priorities, using time management strategies, and simplifying your life will help you to live a balanced life.

Using **Handout 3**, set a specific time management goal that will help to bring your life into balance.

- **S = Specific.** Rather than say, “I will simplify my mornings,” choose something specific such as “I will set the table for breakfast before I go to bed.”
- **M = Measurable.** If your goal is measurable, it is easier to track. An example would be to say “I will relax for 30 minutes before bed each night,” rather than “I will relax more.”
- **A = Achievable.** Goals that are too lofty set you up for failure. Paying off all your debts in a year may not be achievable. It would be better to set a goal to not add further debt and to focus on paying off one debt at a time.
- **R = Rewarding.** You will be more motivated to complete goals that are personally rewarding.

- **T = Time-bound.** Set a time frame for accomplishing your goal. Don't say "I'll clean out my closet when I have time." Set a deadline instead, such as "I will spend 10 minutes per day cleaning my closet until it is done," or "I will clean my closet on Saturday morning before lunch."

Please Provide Feedback

Your thoughts and opinions matter! Please provide feedback to help us to improve this program.

The link below will take you to our online survey system where you can tell us how you will use this information and evaluate the program.

https://kstate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0uJNcYnvc8nGmXz



We would love to know how your are going to use this information to improve your life!
Please follow the link below to go to our online evaluation form.

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