If you’re really feeling off balance, it may be important to put greater effort into managing your time and stress load.

- Make a list of weekly activities, and prioritize them on a checklist.
- Schedule time with your spouse each day if you’ve been working too much.
- Schedule your exercise each week.
- Maintain good nutrition and adequate sleep.

- Plan something fun to do together as a couple at least once a week.
- Talk with your employer if your workload is creating too much stress or pressure for you. Be prepared to offer some suggested strategies.
- Talk to your spouse if you feel that his or her work is negatively affecting your home life (using the techniques you’ve learned for positive communication). Develop strategies together.

Managing Home & House-Care Responsibilities

Look back on pg. 6 at the table showing marital role expectations. How much alike were your and your spouse’s responses to the questions related to household tasks and family responsibilities? It’s really not so important who does what and who does more or less, it’s whether you agree how the homecare responsibilities should be handled and shared. You should each feel that the distribution of labor—how much and what each of you does—is fair.

If one or both of you do not feel good about your current situation—or if you’ve never discussed what your homecare responsibilities will be—it’s a good idea to do a little detailed work to set up a plan and an agreement.

*Take a few minutes to make the following lists.*

List all of the household tasks that need to be done. (It helps to put the tasks into categories such as indoor work, outdoor work, childcare, financial management, and wage earning.)

List how often each task needs to be done. (Is it daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly?)

List how long it takes to complete each task.

List who will do or usually does the task. (Is it primarily the wife’s job, the husband’s job, or a shared job?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household task</th>
<th>How often?</th>
<th>How long?</th>
<th>Who does it?</th>
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If you’re really feeling off balance, it may be important to put greater effort into managing your time and stress load.
Healthy Marriage Handbook

**Tips for Managing Housework Together**

One of the challenges for busy dual-earner couples is carving out enough time to get the necessary household work done without cutting into personal, couple, and family time. This problem is a source of stress in many relationships. While one solution would be to hire someone to help clean the house, most couples can’t afford this. Here are some tips on managing the “second shift.”

**Tip #1 • Prioritize.** What really needs to be done and when? Some jobs are clearly more important than others. What must get done each day? What can wait until the weekend? What can children do?

**Tip #2 • Make a plan.**

A little planning can go a long way. Working out a plan of responsibility for household jobs—like the one suggested on pg. 23—can benefit both spouses in terms of their personal well-being as well as the health of their relationship. Making a plan can also help clarify who is doing work that the other may not know about.

**Tip #3 • Divide tasks by abilities, interests, and needs.**

Divide tasks by abilities, interests, and needs rather than simply by “men’s work” and “women’s work.” Most couples today are dual-earner couples, and the pattern of women doing all the “inside work” and men doing the periodic “outside work” is not often viewed as fair. A wiser division of tasks allows for balanced sharing and individual preference.

**Tip #4 • Ban micromanaging.** Make a rule that whoever does the task can do it his or her way without criticism. In the case of different standards, partners can work to reach a compromise that both can live with.

**Tip #5 • Be flexible.** Switch household jobs every now and then to minimize boredom. Also, allowing the other person to take responsibility for a household job might reveal some hidden talent or creativity.