TRINITY
school of natural health

Reclaim Your Life: Replace Busyness with Wellness

"I'm too busy." Those three words can indicate that you're in overdrive and rob you of peace. It might be something you tell yourself when you want to go for a walk, take a warm bath, or read a book. Strangely enough, it's probably not an excuse you give to others. When someone asks you to take on more responsibility, do you tell them you're too busy? Or do you feel the need to please them and prove yourself capable of handling anything that comes your way?

Busy Can Be Dangerous

In today's individualized society, people are constantly fighting to get ahead. Many experts have suggested that humanity has gone so far as to "glorify" busyness, holding it as a standard for success.[1] We keep adding commitments and activities because we think it will make us feel better, but it actually can make us feel worse.

Playing the Comparison Game

Because we have constant access to social media, we get front-row seats into others' lives. It's easy to start comparing our own experiences with theirs and feeling like we need to measure up to them. However, these comparisons can add to our stress levels.[2] If you're a competitive person, it's even easier to find your self-worth in your busyness, and this will likely lead you to set aside your needs to meet an invisible standard.

Hurting Productivity

When you put a lot of items on your to-do list, you might feel like you're getting more done, but "busy" and "productive" are not synonyms. When you overcommit, you often have to multitask. One study from the University of Michigan found that trying to juggle several tasks at once increases the amount of time it takes you to finish both of them by 25%.[3] When Microsoft took this study a step further and evaluated their own workers firsthand, they discovered that it took people an average of 15 minutes to return to a task after being interrupted. Being busy might feel effective, but if you're spending most of your time multitasking, your productivity is directly impacted.

Sacrificing Wellness

The ultimate impact of busyness can be evident in every aspect of your health. You may be mentally, physically, and spiritually exhausted. When you fill your time with work, volunteering, meetings, and

more, you might forget to take time for self-care. Eventually, putting so much pressure on yourself will compromise your wellness and leave you burnt out. In fact, 77% of Americans say stress impacts their physical health, and 73% say it affects their mental health.[4] These are a few signs that indicate your full schedule may be taking a worrisome toll on your life:[5]

- Anxiety
- Anger
- Frustration
- Muscle tension
- Headaches
- Insomnia

When you are always making plans, adding commitments, and trying to do it all, you lose touch with what your soul truly needs.

If your body and spirit are telling you to slow down, it might be time to listen. When you feel these physical and emotional effects, try to identify their source—are you stressed about a work assignment, an upcoming event, or something else? Uncovering the cause is the first step toward reclaiming your life.

Less Is More

Simplifying your life can bring more peace to your mind, body, and spirit. When you are always making plans, adding commitments, and trying to do it all, you lose touch with what your soul truly needs. If you feel like you're just going through the motions and running on empty, these three ways can help you to make space for peace in your routine:

1. Reorganize Priorities

Do you know what is most important in your life? It might be your job, a spouse, kids, or even a volunteering position you love. When you're busy all the time, it might seem like everything is a priority. To reclaim some free time, follow these suggestions on organizing your priorities:[6]

- *Identify your core values.*

  There's a difference between what matters and what is obligatory. If there are things you've agreed to because you felt forced to do them, those don't qualify as core values. Make a list of your responsibilities and decide which ones feed your soul.

- *Connect your values to goals.*

  What are your long-term aspirations? Do you want to move up in your company? Are you raising strong children? Consider whether your current priorities are actually serving the goals you hope to achieve in 10, 15, or 20 years.

- *Stay consistent.*

  When something new comes along, it's easy to get distracted. You might think you want to switch priorities or add something else to your plate. However, committing to your timelines and staying consistent will keep you from overextending yourself. Set a limit on the number of roles you're willing to take on and hold yourself accountable to it.

- *Know when to pause.*

   If you feel overwhelmed by expectations, then don't be afraid to take a step back. Take time to clear your head so that when you revisit your list of responsibilities, you'll be able to start fresh and make the best decisions.

- *Reflect intentionally.*

   At regular intervals, review the priorities you've set to make sure they're still the right ones. What has been going well so far? What have you learned about yourself? What is still causing you stress? Answering these questions will guide you in finding balance.

2. Designate Moments of Calm

Busyness is a product of overworking and overcommitting. Mark out specific days and times in your calendar that are just for you. Ask yourself what feels restorative and instills peace in your mind, body, and spirit. These are a few options:

- Practice mindfulness.
- Go on a walk outside for fresh air.
- Adopt an exercise practice like yoga or aerobics.
- Find a secluded place and read a book.
- Take a nap while diffusing relaxing essential oils like lavender, chamomile, or jasmine.

3. Choose Freedom

While it is easy to feel trapped in a continually moving lifestyle, busyness is a choice we make for ourselves. Part of stepping back involves admitting the need for change and taking steps toward a better, healthier pace. You are allowed to say "no" without feeling guilty. Give yourself the freedom to design a calm, unhurried lifestyle instead of a full one.

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Conclusion

Taking time to slow down and reevaluate your responsibilities is a process, and it's hard to do it alone. Find someone to hold you accountable to your new goals and ensure you're dethroning busyness and replacing it with wellness.

Are you ready to take the next step in reclaiming your life? Become a Certified Natural Health Professional to learn how to support every aspect of your wellness: mind, body, and spirit. With this certification, you'll be able to apply core naturopathic concepts to your own life and the lives of others, serving as a source of inspiration for whole-body health. If you're ready to get started, call 800-428-0408, option 2, to talk to an enrollment specialist.

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