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## Less Is More: How to Simplify Your Life

Life today is complicated. Most Americans are pulled in multiple directions every day by commitments to their families, workplaces and communities.

Many people have responded to the pressures of modern life by seeking ways to consciously simplify their routines and attitudes at home and work.

"The goal of living a simpler life isn't to arrive at a static point in your life but to become skilled at balancing your personal relationships, workplace issues, finances and other demands," says Heather G. Mitchener, coauthor of *The 50 Best Ways to Simplify Your Life*.

### **Being in the moment**

One way to simplify your life is to practice mindfulness — to slow down and recognize and appreciate the simple things in life. To be mindful instead of mindless, stay in the moment and be conscious of what you're doing. Don't think ahead or look back.

"When we look ahead constantly, we not only rush through the less pleasant tasks, we also tend to hurry through the things we love to do, because we're always thinking or worrying about what we have to do next," says Ms. Mitchener.

A good way to practice being in the moment is to follow your breath, a technique that doesn't require any special training or self-consciousness. To breathe mindfully, take notice of your breaths and try to make them as calm and even as possible. Your breaths should be long and slow and should come from your diaphragm rather than your upper chest. Pay attention to each breath, letting thoughts fall away.

"You can do this exercise any time you think of it," says Ms. Mitchener. "Make it a goal to be mindful, in general, but also set aside short periods to practice. This will improve your ability to make mindfulness a habit. As you learn to live this way, you'll feel more centered."

### **Slow down**

If you feel like you have too much information in your life, stop subscriptions to magazines, newspapers or email newsletters you rarely have time to read. Leave the radio and TV off unless you're really listening to something that matters to you. Turn off your cell phone unless you're making a call or waiting for one that's important.

To reduce the amount of stuff in your home, ask yourself these questions before you buy something: Do I really need it? How often will I wear or use it? Where will I store it? Is there a reason why I must buy it?

### **Get organized**

Begin by sizing up the problem areas in your home or workplace and making a plan of attack. If you're easily discouraged, start with a small, confined area, such as a single drawer. Otherwise, target an area that gives you the most grief. Your goal should be to clear out clutter that causes you to waste time — perhaps a hall closet that has become a catchall for everything from clothes to sports equipment.

Learn to focus at work. Multitasking can be an asset, but often the lack of focus it requires means you actually get less done in a day, or less done well. To increase your focus and break free from distractions:

- Begin each day by setting priorities on what you want to accomplish.
- Check email at set times, rather than letting each new message interrupt you.
- Set aside a time to retrieve voice mail and return calls.
- Keep a calendar of your deadlines and obligations.

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**Access your services at 800-968-8143 or online.**

Counseling | Financial Counseling | Elder and Child Care Resources | College and School Resources | Parenting and Adoption Resources | Home and Lifestyle Resources | Health and Wellness Resources | Work and Career Development | Legal Services | Pet Care Assistance

### Life Management Services

Your First Sun EAP benefit can help simplify your life. Use your life management services to increase your success of achieving work-life balance. Though your quest for balance will be on-going, ultimately, if you feel a sense of happiness



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and accomplishment each day — you're on the right track. Learn more about your [Life Management Services](#).



### Passport to Success

Using your EAP can help put your dreams within reach! Learn how easy it is for you and your immediate family members to get started.



### Clear Your Clutter: A Comprehensive Guide

Is your kitchen table covered in unopened mail? Is your bedroom floor covered in clothing? Is your basement a total disaster? Living with clutter is exhausting. Learning how to approach clearing the clutter can feel daunting. This webinar will offer specific, strategic ways to approach clearing it and staying organized!

[Log in](#) to watch the webinar and view answers to reader's questions or submit your own.



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