

CA Krishna Wadher explains how her life was during COVID and how she could introduce effective time management strategies to make her days be more productive.

“The secret of your future is hidden in your daily routine.” – Mike Murdock

I am a Work from Home mom for more than 2 years now. I have my flexible timing of work and can plan my work according to my schedule. I am really thankful to the technology which is helping most of us to Work From Home during this Pandemic, where many people have lost their job in the areas due to minimum or no Internet connectivity. I was really enjoying my Work From Home and my motherhood journey with my two little kids(one being 7 years and one being 1 year old). However suddenly COVID 19 attacked the whole world and the world seemed to come to a standstill. COVID-19 has brought a lot of challenges and tough situations for many people across the globe. Where one side the pandemic of COVID-19 has hit many businesses across the globe, on the other side it has brought a great boom to the digital world and virtual platforms. Work from home for professionals, online classes for children, video conferences meetings and many more, which was never before so popular, is the new way of life. Especially online classes for school kids, we never thought that our kids would be taking classes sitting at home. Also meetings being conducted virtually is a new way of connecting with people. Although there is no comparison of physical and online classes/meetings, however this became the new normal in 2020, which is the safest option as of now.

Although the travel time is nearly nil/negligible due to this new normal, still this change has brought in a lot of added responsibilities, distractions and stress to many people across the globe.

Specially for women entrepreneurs managing household chores, kids, elderly parents, etc is a very big responsibility along with her official work.

Some of my own experiences were taking audio calls while cooking, working on some of my “LP” list task while making my child complete his school assignments, attending some educational webinars in late night or early in the morning when there is minimum distractions and the list is never ending. I am sure many of you can relate to this example. We will learn about the “LP” List task as we move forward. Life was a chaos from March 2020 to July 2020, as it was a sudden change which we have never imagined, suddenly domestic help was stopped, outdoor dining stopped, going on vacation etc. came to a stop. Life seemed to have come to a standstill by just staying at home and completing all the tasks. Although I was getting a lot of help from my family still, I always used to feel that I am short of time and my to do list use to keep piling up & up every single day and I use to fill so stressed even at staying at home which I never felt even when I was going to office.



One day I decided to break this pattern and make a plan for myself to make my days more productive and have a stress-free life, as it was affecting me and my family as well. If you are not happy from within, you cannot make your family happy. I applied the techniques of time management with some trial and errors which were tough in the initial days, however by practising them regularly and consistently, now I am very happy and satisfied that I am able to complete the majority of my to do list as per my schedule.

Here I am sharing some of my personal experiences techniques which has really helped me:

- 1) **Discipline your life-** Discipline starts from school days. School days were filled with discipline in terms of punctuality, maintaining clean uniforms, homework updation and many more. However, once we cross our school life the discipline gets

off us slowly and slowly as there is no one to monitor and we are not answerable to our teachers/principal for planning our day. That is the time when we entered into the zone of unproductivity. Discipline is very important in every phase of our life. With the proper discipline you can achieve all the goals in your life. Stick to it no matter what the situation is and you will slowly and steadily start seeing a lot of changes in your productivity and efficiency. Maintaining discipline is not easy but once implemented and practised on a daily basis it becomes a habit and you will soon see a better version of “YOU”.

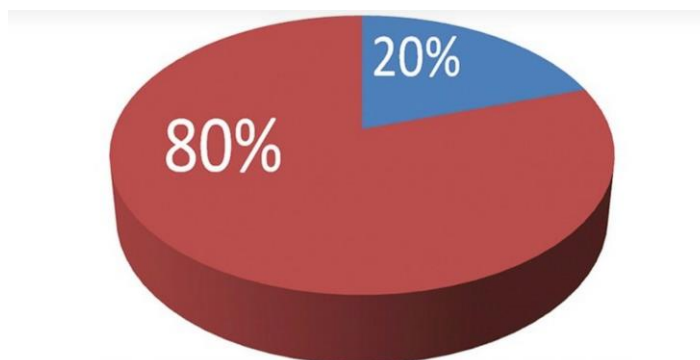
2) **Start your day early-** Starting the day as early as possible will help you to be more productive in your work and at the end of the day you will feel so much accomplished. Rise up early and finish up your personal and your family commitments in the early first half of the day. Preferably before 8:00 A.M, so that you can start your official work on time latest by 8:30 A.M, considering most of us are working in Indian time Zone (IST), women entrepreneurs who are working in other time zones can alter the timing as per their schedule.

3) **Make your “Grading” To Do list-** Make your To Do list a day before going to bed and be clear what your to do list for the next day. After you have your list ready, start grading the to do list items according to the priority of the work. The one which is your top priority and most important should be graded as “TP”, then the medium priority should be labelled as “MP” and then the low priority work should be labelled as “LP”. Reminds me of the Audit Risk which are categorized as High, Medium and Low Risk areas. Below is just an example and format.

Details	Top Priority(TP)	Medium Priority(MP)	Low Priority(LP)
Office Project	TP		
Kids School Project		MP	
Attending a family function			LP

“The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.” – Stephen Covey

4) **Follow 80:20 rule-** As per the “Pareto Principle”, it says 80% of our output comes from 20% of our efforts. Likewise, after labelling your task as per the “Grading” To Do list in step 3, start your work with “TP” To Do list. This is the list where we should devote our time and effort to increase our productivity and performance. Do not touch the “MP” or “LP” To Do list until you are done with “TP” list which is your highest value work. You will be surprised to discover, how much of your productive time is getting wasted in unproductive work. Work on your strength and passion to analyse what are your key areas. Then analyse which is 20% of your productive work and start working on them and either eliminate the other 80% of the unproductive work which does not yield any result or is not worth your time or delegating those portions of work from your daily schedule. Practise this for 21 days consecutively and it will become a habit, and gradually you will be amazed at your efficiency and effectiveness to get majority of your task getting completed.

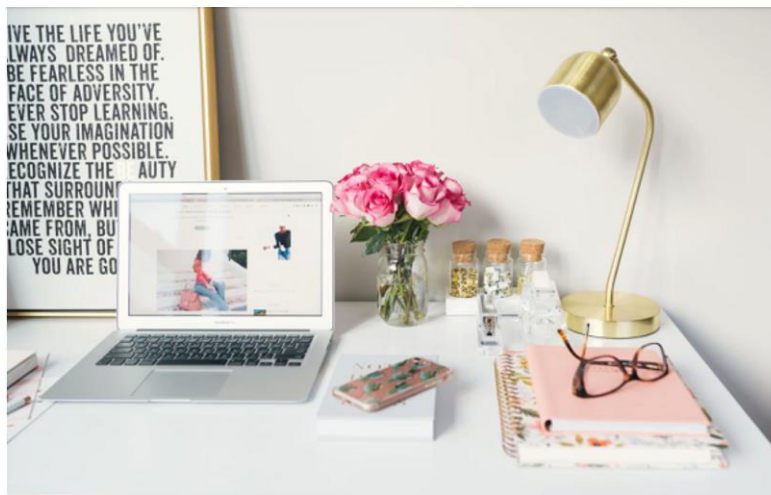


5) **Learn the Art to delegate-** Go through your To Do list and find out the labels “MP” and “LP” and then see if there is any task which can be delegated to your subordinate. If there is some household chores then work out and check which task does not require your expertise and can be easily delegated to other members of the family. Once you find out the task to be delegated, then the next important part is to find out the right person with the right mindset to take up that work who can duplicate your expertise into that work. While you delegate your work ensure that you select the person who can take ownership of the work, is responsible and is teachable. Initially you might have to spend some time to coach the person gradually it will be a great help to you. This step will help you to focus on your “TP” list which is your top most priority work. Set up healthy boundaries for yourself and respect your time, when you do so other people around you would start understanding your priorities and will not take you for granted.



6) **Set Up a “Holy Workspace”-** Have a dedicated place for your official work, even if you are working from home, somewhat similar to which you have at your

office. You can be as creative to make your workspace more appealing to work for you and make it look as beautiful as you can, which will keep you motivated and positive whenever you start to work. Keep the workspace neat and tidy for the next day. Make sure that the sitting area is comfortable. Make your workspace a very holy place. You can add some crystal, plants, pictures of God and be filled with positive affirmations.



7) **Stop Multitasking-** This is a very common and famous way of doing all the work specially with women. If you are doing it, stop it right away. Do one thing at a time. Most of us have got a habit of multitasking especially after marriage, the reason being we want to complete a lot of the work in a short period of time. Mothers have a habit of multitasking like cooking and babysitting the child, attending to older children and making her office presentation and so on. However have you ever noticed that you are so stressed out the whole day and you are not able to concentrate on any one task at one point of time which reduces the efficiency and the quality of work we do. We might feel we are completing a lot of things together, considering the quantity, but actually it is just spreading out attention and thoughts in multiple places, thereby losing focus on the quality of any particular task. Just take a pause, focus on one task at a time. Be completely focused on completing one particular task for that point of time. Do not think of anything else, like what is my to do list after this, I have to cook food after this etc. Just be in that moment and be involved in whatever you

are doing so that you enjoy doing that task with a lot of efficiency, creativity and without any stress. When you practice this regularly over the period of time you will definitely feel more relaxed, on track with your goals and being more efficient in delivering more quality work.

8) **Track your time-** Most of us are so much engaged in our routine daily task that we never have time or intention to track our time spent on different areas of our daily task. Jot down for at least the next 7 days where and how you are spending your time of the day. Starting from the time you get up in the morning to the time you go to bed at night. Give complete details of the time where and how is the time spent. In this way you can analyse where is your productive time getting wasted and how are you can reschedule your daily routine. To start with this divide your timing into three parts “Personal”, “Work” and “Family”. Personal Time will include your daily routine, nap time, workout time, reading books, listening to podcasts, etc. Work will include all the official works on system, phone or video meets etc. It will also include any educational webinars you attend for your work topic. Family time would include household chores, baby sitting, spending time with family, cooking etc. If you are a homemaker you can switch your household chores, cooking and any other work to “Work” category. Try to divide your time in 1:2:1 ration for Personal, Work and Family. To get a clear picture look at the table below which is just an example, you can customise according to your schedule and requirement:

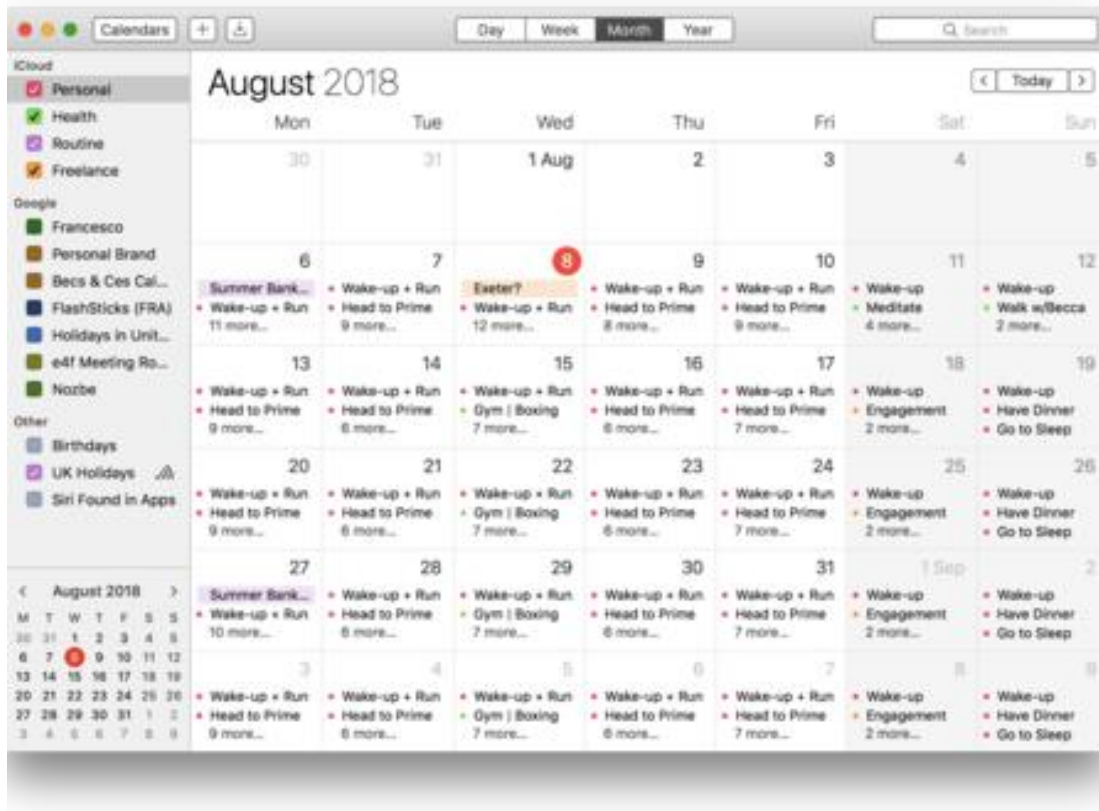
Time	Personal	Work	Family
5:00 A.M to 6:30 A.M	Workout, Meditation		
6:30 A.M to 7:30 A.M	Own Study Time		
7:30 A.M to 8:30 A.M	Personal Manoeuvre		
8:30 A.M to 12:30 P.M		Undivided Work Time(“TP” list)	
12:30 P.M to 1:30 P.M			Lunch Time
1:30 P.M to 3:30 P.M		“MP” list if you are done with “TP” list if not complete the “TP” list	
3:30 P.M to 5:30 P.M		Left over task for the day, plan for the next day	

Time	Personal	Work	Family
5:30 P.M to 7:30 P.M			Spending time with your loved ones, go for nature walk, have dinner together, share daily stories
7:30 P.M to 8:30 P.M			Happy Time with family as per their demand
8:30 P.M to 9:00 P.M	Reading your favourite book before going to sleep		
9:30 P.M	Off to bed		
Total Hours Spent	4	8	4

As we moved out of school, we left behind the discipline and punctuality with those good old days. However if we can bring back the same discipline and punctuality we will surely be finding a “Majestic Life” ahead.

9) Do not have guilt to succeed in your career path because of family- Yes this is very true, never ever have the guilt that you are successful and succeeding at the cost of your family time. Especially mothers would feel that I am earning so much money but do not have time to spend with my family or kids so what’s the use of earning this money. This guilt keeps growing up and up and one day the mother gives up and leaves the career for her kids. Again when her kids grow up to a certain age she wants to join back to work, however she again has to go with a lot of compromises and join at a junior level with a lesser salary, due to career break. I am sure many of us can relate to this and must have come across such a situation. However please remember you have put your heart and blood to get the two letters against your name as “CA”. Chartered Accountancy course is one of the toughest courses in the world. I would strongly encourage you to do justice to your degree along with your family life. Nowadays a lot of flexibility options are available with various companies, you can opt for them or COVID 19 have made work from home very attractive and it is the future, you can opt for various of these options. If you plan your day appropriately and effectively you can very well balance your professional and personal life there by not leaving your career behind. However if you feel you want to take a career break, you should listen to your heart and

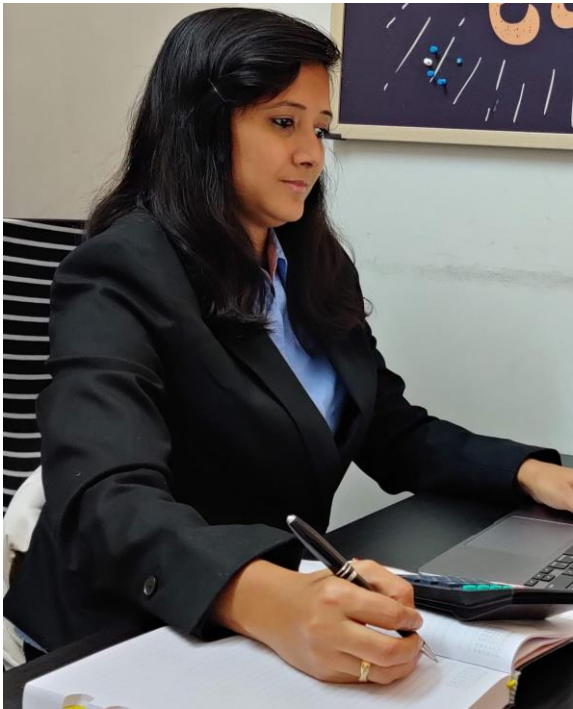
gut feeling. At any point of time do not feel guilty of joining back to work/ succeeding in your career path. Family and Work both should be given priority because that is what at the end would matter and would give you more happiness and you would feel more contented and successful there by growing your kids at the same time with all the happiness and motherly love.



10) Book your calendar to get your work up done- Yes this is as important as making your to do list. Block your calendar a day ahead with all the meetings, webinars, video meets or any important catch up you will be having the next day. This will help you to plan your day appropriately and schedule your 8 hours of work according to the calendar, so that you have a very productive and well planned day.

I hope the above points will help you for a better time management and once you start with the above stick to it for next 21 days and after that it will become a habit. You will definitely be amazed by the result of each day following all the above steps. Do share with me your feedback and suggestions once you implement these steps. Would love to hear from all of you. The above steps have really helped me in my personal journey and I am amazed at each day's productivity. At the end of the day I feel so content and happy, and I am ready with the same momentum for the next day. All the very best to all the Chartered Accountant Women Entrepreneurs.

Thanks for reading!



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