

Mum's the word

It's time as a mum to stop feeling guilty about taking time out – it actually isn't a luxury but an essential part of being a mum or carer. As mums we have this terrible habit of thinking that we have to do it all and as a result we tend to sacrifice ourselves, and the time we have, for the benefit of our families and others. Are you finding yourself nodding or agreeing with this? Well read on as **Amanda Lecaude** shares what you can do to make more time for YOU.



"Taking care of yourself is part of taking care of your family"

I am the first to acknowledge, as a mum now to two teenage boys, that I have certainly had my challenges along the way and finding 'me time' has not always been easy. I learnt early on to ask for help and establish clearly a couple of 'non-negotiables' in my life. These are spending time with my friends and exercising regularly at the gym and I have gotten much better over time in trying not to let anything interfere with these. You have to admit when you get these times it is a great feeling not to have someone pulling at you, nagging you or just being under your feet all the time!

Mothering isn't always easy and the basic day to day activities can see you juggle lots of balls in the air, can be demanding and often leave you little time to care for yourself. You might also find yourself being overwhelmed

with all that you have to do. The one problem with this is that if you stop caring for yourself then your ability to care for your child and family can be impacted as well as the enjoyment of it all. I am a big believer of ensuring you look after yourself, taking the time to have fun, relax and rest, will mean that you can look after your family better. If you don't look after yourself and fall into a heap then quite often everything else can and will fall down around you.

Review your schedule and find time to do what you love

It is important to remember that you are a person to and therefore take the time to do what you enjoy and love – hopefully you remember what it is that you like to do!



adequate time to this when you can. Seek others to mind the baby or children while you catch up.

Exercise too is so important and helps to regulate both your mood and keeps you healthy. It can be simple like walking around the block, doing some yoga or exercise at home, or having someone mind the children while you partake in a gym class, go for a swim or do a pilates class. Every little bit, even if only for a short time, adds up and you will feel much better for it.

Remember those important you are watching

Many of us actually forget about the fact that our children are watching everything we do. Therefore, isn't it important for them to be able to see that we are in fact looking after ourselves and at the same time teaching them that this is important so they too will learn and do it for themselves when they are older?

It's time to take action

Lastly, without putting steps into self-care, we can literally find ourselves running on empty. Sound familiar? How can we keep giving if there's nothing left to give? So, as we have established, looking after ourselves is essential. By taking the time for yourself you are actually likely to be more content, happier and patient than if you don't. Personally, I know I am a much better mother when I get to exercise and have enough sleep than when I don't. I am sure by finding and taking time it will ultimately see you achieve more balance in your own life and benefit not just yourself but that of your partner and family too.

In order to make time for these activities, you will most likely need to plan ahead, mark the time on your calendar, just like you would with any other activities. I know it can be challenging to find time for those non-child related activities but if you don't make the time yourself then no one is going to find you that time and say here you go 'take it'. You need to schedule it and make it happen for you!

Establish a support network

This part of self-care involves having a supportive network of people around you to guide, talk to or even assist from time to time. You can bet you are not the only mum who has challenges and sometimes it is easy to forget that others are no doubt facing similar issues.

Get together with other mums and plan outings together – sometimes this can help to share the responsibility of caring for the children amongst many. Even offer to swap time by looking after other women's children in exchange for them having yours on occasion can be so worthwhile. This is a great idea particularly if you don't have family or friends close by who might be able to assist.

In terms of being able to find time, please don't be afraid to ask for help from others when you need it. Enlist the help of your partner or a babysitter to take over from time to time. Remember when you do this please don't apologise for making yourself a priority either or feeling guilty about asking your partner to step in as remember they are a parent too!

Look after yourself - exercise and sleep

Physical self-care is vital and involves your fitness and sleep. These are both essential to help you manage and function day to day. Other than when you first have a baby, where it can be difficult to expect to have the time to devote to these, at all other times both of these should be a must!

We all know that sleep deprivation can cause other issues, like anxiety and depression, so it is important to devote

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Amanda Lecaude is an organising expert who loves being able to help people – her clients – get organised. She sees the difference it makes in their everyday lives, particularly families, just to have a way to create some TIME, SPACE and BALANCE! She is also very passionate about equipping school students with organising skills for life to maximise greater results primarily in secondary school and limit the overwhelm and frustration for both them and their parents.

Get in touch 0409 967 166
amanda@organisingyou.com.au