

**7 ESSENTIAL STEPS
TO BALANCE
HOME
AND
HOMESCHOOL**



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HOMeschool *to* **HOM**eschool

7 ESSENTIAL STEPS TO BALANCE HOME AND HOMESCHOOL

When you think about finding more balance, do you feel like it's an unobtainable dream? Like a mirage that only exists in your imagination?

Creating balance between your home and your homeschool isn't impossible, but it does take some work. And it takes time.

But sometimes instead of really focusing and creating balance, it's easy to go through life stumbling from one crazy moment to the next, never really catching your breath or having a chance to stop and think. Instead, you're just putting out fires and managing one crisis after another. It feels like it would take too much time to stop—and you *don't* have the time to stop—because the next “moment” that needs to be managed is right in front of your face.

Getting to the point where you are more in balance is fundamental to a successful homeschool, because whether you're just starting out or whether you've been at this for a little bit (but things haven't been working the way you hoped), you really really want a homeschool that works. You want kids who love to learn and you want great learning to happen in your home. You want a home that feels peaceful and exciting and joyful.

Of course, you *could* keep doing what you've been doing, going from crisis to crisis, putting out fire after fire, but I promise that will lead to homeschool burnout and mom crashing—where you hate your homeschool and you dread getting up in the morning and you just want your entire family to go away!

What I'm going to share with you can help you avoid getting to a point of burnout disaster!

Regardless of the level of balance you have in your life right now, you deserve to have moments of calm and peace. You are meant to have a homeschool that works, because if you've decided to homeschool your kids, there's a reason, and raising and educating your children is too important. You deserve to feel successful and confident doing it, to feel like you have things under control and you can manage everything happening all around you.

Let's dig in and talk about the 7 Essential Steps to Balance Home and Homeschool.

1. Accept Limitations

The reality is no human can do everything, not even you! There's something I call the Yes/No Principle: if you say "yes" to one thing, you are saying "no" to all the other things in your life that you could have done instead. That's an absolute that won't change, so you can only break yourself against the idea.

Likewise, if you say "no," then you are giving yourself room to say "yes" to something else—anything else.

With your homeschool, that means if you are sitting on the couch reading a book with your kids, you are actively choosing *not* to do laundry in that moment or talk on the phone or visit someone. If you choose to go on a fieldtrip, you are choosing to not be home where you could be folding laundry or doing the dishes.

It's not that one is better than the other, it just means that you have to choose.

The more deliberate you are in the choices you make, the more at peace you can be with what you're *not* doing. This is because you can say to yourself, "I'm choosing to sit and read with my kids. I'm choosing to not do dishes or fold laundry right now, because this is what I *want* to be doing. It's okay if those things aren't finished this moment."

Also, by deliberately choosing, remember that you are also saying "yes" to learning certain things, and that means you're saying "no" to all the other things you *could* be learning in that moment. If you are engaged in an amazing discovery of bugs in your backyard, you are *choosing* to not be working on spelling words.

It can be a huge stress reliever when you embrace the Yes/No Principle, because there's no way you can possibly do *everything* in your homeschool.

Think about what you're planning for your homeschool. Based on what you have planned, what will you consciously be choosing *not* to do?

2. Engage the Workforce

This one applies more when your children are older. If you have only littles, you'll have to wait a bit. But in order to create greater balance, you *must* get your kids to do a lot of the work.

I like to say that as your kids get older, if you're still doing basic household maintenance, then you haven't received your promotion—and every mom deserves a promotion! Kids as young as 5 and 6 can run a load of laundry, empty a dishwasher, or wipe counters (even some younger kids can do these things). As they get older, they can clean bathrooms, vacuum floors, and even cook dinner.

If you take the time to train them and work together when you're little, by the time they are about 10, they can do pretty much all of the regular housework. Now that my youngest is 10, I have *four* solid workers in my house and I haven't done any of the house cleaning in a long time.

And if your kids are older and you haven't trained them yet, don't worry! My oldest was 7 when I started to train her, because *I* had to learn how to clean first. (That's another story!) She had almost no chores before then, but now she is one of my best and hardest workers.

Think for a minute about the jobs you are still doing in your home. Are there any that you could begin to hand off, even if it meant taking the time to do some training?

3. Embrace the Rhythms of Life

Life is all about ups and downs. Just when you think that everything is settled, you get pregnant, you decide to move, your kids get sick for two weeks with the flu, your husband loses his job, or your sister gets cancer and you need to spend every day helping her for the next six months.

Life is like that. If you fight the rhythm of life, you will end up frustrated all the time! But if you can accept that some times will be busier than others, you can more gracefully float through them.

For example, every year I *know* that the month of December is going to be crazy. There are holiday parties, music recitals, and tons of extra shopping. Over the years, I've learned to embrace a very light school schedule that accommodates that busy time of year. That means I don't get frustrated when my Christmas shopping conflicts with my school plans; instead, they all fit together.

I'll bet you have something right now going on in your life that is bumping up against your homeschool plans. How could you do a better job of embracing this part of your life, rather than fighting against it?

4. Get Creative

Sometimes in order to feel successful, you have to think outside the box. The traditional 5-days-a-week, 40-weeks-a-year schedule just isn't going to work all the time. One of the beautiful things about homeschooling is that you have so much more flexibility.

There are so many ways to get creative with your homeschooling and your life.

Could you trade time with another mom? Maybe she takes your kids one day and you take hers another so that you both have time to run errands without dragging your little children along.

What about schooling for four days each week and taking one day to get bigger house projects done?

Maybe you do three weeks of school and then take a week off, letting the kids focus on their own projects while you get to focus on catching up on some of your house stuff.

What about folding laundry while you listen to a book on CD, or using lunch time to watch an educational video series?

Or you could use driving time to review math facts, but make a game out of it so the kids think it's tons of fun?

What's one part of your homeschooling or your life that you just *assume* has to be a certain way, but maybe there's a different way to do it? Can you think outside the box and get creative?

5. Multitask the Education

One of the big misconceptions that new homeschoolers have is that you have to teach every subject to every kid based on their grade level. In fact, one of the things I love about homeschooling is that you can combine so many subjects, even if your kids are different ages.

Science and history lend themselves easily to combining, with the younger kids falling off as they lose interest and you engage the older kids at a higher level.

Even with subjects like math, which definitely have a sequence, you can look for the “activity” portion. For example, we recently did an activity that had us coloring charts with multiples. My younger kids could do it just as easily as my older ones, even though everybody was getting the concepts at a different level.

Planning your homeschool day so that you combine as many subjects as possible makes your homeschool more efficient, and that means you’ll be creating time that can be applied to other areas of your life.

Which subjects could you combine and teach together? How much time would that create for you?

6. Manage distractions

This is a big one, because we live in a world *full* of distractions. Social media and email and texting all come at you all the time. And then there's neighbors coming to the door asking to play or people asking you to help during the day "because you're home."

The reality is that homeschooling is a job—yes, a happy wonderful job that you *want* to do—but it's still a job. You have to treat it like one.

That means you want to treat teaching your kids like you would if they were your employer. No checking social media in the middle of your work day. No taking time off just because you can. Make homeschooling the priority that it needs to be.

In fact, I don't even usually answer my phone during our school time. People know that if they call me or email me or message me, they won't hear back until later in the day. People are okay with that, because when I respect my time, other people do too!

Recently, I completely turned off all the alerts on my phone as well, so now I don't even know when other people are talking. It's hard to even quantify how much more balance this has brought into my life.

Minimizing distractions is crucial to your time management, but remember that you do have to embrace the rhythms of life. If you have an emergency or you feel like an interruption is truly important, then you *choose* to say "yes" in that moment, realizing that you are saying "no" to your homeschool at that time.

See how they all start to fit together?

**What is one distraction that is a problem in your life right now?
What could you do to actively manage that distraction?**

7. Organize

I left this one until last because I know that this can be a bit of a sore spot for a lot of people. Just about everyone I know—including myself—wishes they were more organized than they are.

I think that's because even if you're great at organizing, you are still subject to the law of entropy, which means that everything is always slowly decaying. That's why you can clean your counter and come back a few hours later and it's a mess again. Or you can have your kids pick up the playroom, and then the minute you turn around, it looks like a tornado just blew through your house.

But the truth is that if you can get more organized, you are able to make better decisions about how you use your time *and* you end up saving a lot of time because you can more easily find the things that you want.

I'm a big advocate of taking the time to get both your house organized and learning how to organize your time during the day. I'm not perfect at it, but over the years I've discovered that as I organize my spaces and my time, I feel so much more calm and able to balance all that I need to do.

As you look over your life, what is one area of your home or your life that if you were more organized you would instantly feel more balanced?

So there are my 7 Balance Principles. Whether you're a brand new homeschooler or you've been homeschooling for a while but you want a fresh start, these principles will work for you—because these are the things that successful homeschool moms do!

If you're just starting out, you can put these principles into practice and create a more balanced homeschool straight out of the gate.

And if you're starting over, you have the flexibility to focus on applying what you've learned and seeing the difference that they will make.

I've covered a lot of ideas all at once, so now take a moment and just breathe. There's no way you're going to be able to apply all of these principles at once. Remember that part of creating balance is accepting limitations, which means you're going to have to be realistic as you start to make changes.

And one final thing: the secret to balance is accepting that it does not mean that everything is working perfectly 100 percent of the time. Balance means that if you're focusing on one area, you're going to be less focused on another area, and that's okay! That's how this works. Balance is about feeling in control as you gracefully shift your energy and focus to the things that need to be a top priority at the moment.

I know that you can do this. Balance *is* something that you can achieve. It takes effort—making decisions, getting creative, and embracing life—but it *is* possible. It can be a part of your future. Your homeschool can be an amazing part of that balance—at times taking front and center stage, and at other times taking more of a back seat to the other things going on in your life.

Balancing your home and your homeschool, and your entire life, is worth all the time and effort that you put into it. Not only does it make you a better mom, it makes your entire homeschool more successful and exciting. You will have the energy to really engage in your kids' learning. You will have the clarity to know when and what to teach. You will be able to be present in the moment.

It's wonderful and it's totally worth it!



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ToriAnn Perkey is a mother, mentor, keynote speaker, and teacher. Homeschooling since 2004, she strives to lead each of her children—along with others that she mentors—to discover, celebrate, and prepare for the unique role that each has come to earth to play. Since 2008 ToriAnn has been empowering families through her interactive workshops, inspiring keynotes, and online programs to feel confident and successful as they liberate their children’s education. She has served as the past president of Wasatch Home Educators Network (the largest homeschooling network in Utah) and the main teacher for The Homeschool Support Group.

