



EXECUTIVE HEALTH &amp; WEALTH INSTITUTE

ASK THE EXPERT OCTOBER 2006

Millions of Americans are thinking, planning, and scheming about how to stretch a 24-hour day into an endless and productive workday, an endless loop of "useful" time.

Executives face the daily quandary of finding new ways to thrive in order to achieve higher goals, to meet increased competition, and to function with progressively limited resources. Busy executives now need to work more hours to maintain their lifestyles. As they move up or across the corporate ladder, they find escalating challenges to remain level-headed and even-tempered.

**The Balancing Act.** Working women and men currently face greater responsibilities. They have access to higher positions in their workplace, endlessly juggling tasks and attempting to master productive interactions. At the same time, they face household duties as they

## **MANAGING WORK IN LIFE: Maximize the Four Pillars of Biological Health©**

by Gabriela Corá-Locatelli, MD, MBA

We manifest our mission into action within the physical dimension. Busy entrepreneurs, road warriors, and corporate executives are challenged with accomplishing more with less, stretching their biological systems to the max. Although we may be able to exert amazing levels of power, our physical systems may give in if confronted with ongoing challenges and without finding the right times to recover our energy. The four biological pillars that contribute to well-being are: nutrition, sleep, exercise, and relaxation. Maximizing your performance within each of these will enable you endure the ups and downs of dealing with personal and corporate challenges. I am often asked about a "magical" recipe for dealing with crisis situations. My biological strategy in the physical dimension is to maximize biology on a regular basis. This simple premise will assist you bounce back to a good, healthy lifestyle during challenging times.

### **Strategy #1: Maximize your Nutrition:**

Good nutrition is a key pillar providing for our physical, mental, and emotional stamina. There are too many guidelines as to "what" to eat, but few to guide as to "how" to eat healthy. The bottom line is simple: implementing a healthy diet demands discipline and adherence to a schedule. Balancing carbohydrates, fats, and protein is key and will depend upon each individual. As a rule of thumb, consider breakfast, lunch, a snack, and dinner, as the essential structure of a healthy diet. Considering an additional couple of healthy snacks may be plenty for the busy executive and entrepreneur, only if complemented with daily exercise. As a general rule, consider dividing the "awake" day in even intervals, say, four-hour intervals. Meal times ought to be included in your schedule, just as you would include a business meeting, or an appointment to hire a new employee. A thirty minute break if you can eat at your facility will suffice. Consider meal times as sacred: sit down and concentrate on your meal rather than eat while you are checking on your email or catching up with work. A ten minute break for a snack may suffice as well, using the same strategy. Eat with your family at home. Not only will this enhance your relationship with your loved ones, there is sufficient evidence showing that children who have dinner with the parents are smarter and do better in school.

### **Strategy #2: Maximize your Exercise:**

Exercise is another essential component of our formula to stay healthy. Morning exercise is the most effective, relaxing, and energizing. Morning exercise will allow you to start off fresh, increase your blood flow, increase your metabolism and produce natural endorphins (neurotransmitters that make you feel good and decrease your pain perception). After exercising, your body

arrive home tired after an exhausting day at work. Although some succeed in balancing and integrating this complex situation, others end up dreading the once-wonderful new opportunities.

Dr. Corá's chapter on **LIFE-WORK MANAGEMENT** is soon to appear in **GETTING THINGS DONE: Keys to a Successful Business**, with lead author and business guru, Ken Blanchard. The chapter is already available on The Executive Health & Wealth Institute website under "Resources." Dr. Corá's upcoming book, **LEADING UNDER PRESSURE: Strategies to Maximize Peak Performance, Productivity, and Wellbeing**, addresses managing life and work and more.

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may feel pleasantly relaxed physically, while mentally sharp, focused, and clear. Relaxing exercises tend to be the most repetitive (and boring) ones: walking, cycling, running, jogging, spinning, cross-country skiing and swimming. These are excellent exercises (and a must!) for busy executives and entrepreneurs who spend hours of sedentary work and for those who fly and travel as a part of their busy schedules. If you anticipate a more demanding work schedule, consider challenging yourself by increasing your strength. Weight lifting or increased resistance exercises will enable you to increase strength.

### **Strategy #3: Maximize your Sleep:**

Sleep is the third pillar of the healthy physical dimension. Many minimize the benefits of sleep and the essential properties sleep brings to our ability to produce and perform at our top level. Additionally, researchers have found that sleep dysregulation and stress can increase the risk for depression and anxiety. These problems may also have direct influence over the immune system and increase the risk for heart disease. Stressed executives and business owners carry their worries and concerns to their sleep. As they can't relax and re-energize throughout the course of the night, they wake up tired and exhausted, unable to focus, further prolonging the negative cycle. In short: they are stressed out during the course of the day and stressed out during the course of the night. In contrast, sleeping six to eight hours every night will enhance your physical, intellectual, and emotional stamina. Having a "good night sleep" will improve your ability to concentrate during the course of the day, gaining control over activities and responsibilities.

### **Strategy #4: Maximize your Relaxation:**

Relaxation strategies compose the fourth pillar of the physical dimension. Sleep and exercise have a direct impact on enhancing a relaxed state. Additionally, guided imagery, visualization techniques, meditation, and listening to music are powerful tools against physical signs of stress. These strategies include the ability to create a state of calm at the start of the day and the opportunity to anticipate activities or events with the opportunity to resolve situations throughout the day. Practicing relaxation techniques on a regular basis adds to the strategic armamentarium of the traveling executive, providing beneficial lasting effects in brain activity and the immune system. You may want to maximize the use of relaxation techniques in the morning, throughout the course of the day, as needed, and in the evening. Taking a few minutes throughout the course of the day may help some. Others benefit more from taking a couple of periods throughout the day. Times for relaxation range from five minutes twice a day to thirty minutes once to more times throughout the course of the day. Winding down toward the evening will enable you to sleep better at night as well. Listen to music or book audiotapes daily while you drive; meditate or use guided imagery exercises daily when you wake up, during breaks, at night, or while you travel (and are not driving). Although there are numerous relaxation techniques that you may want to practice, the most common induction techniques usually begin with deep breathing exercises. Progressive relaxation and guided imagery techniques share a common general outline. The more you practice, the deeper state of relaxation you will achieve.

It is vital to concentrate on each activity, one at a time, at the present moment, rather than driving in the car, listening to music, answering to business calls on the cellular phone while writing on a pad, eating a sandwich and punching in numbers to a PDA, all while driving! In essence, the trick is to "be in the here and now," and nowhere else. My experience in the wide

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spectrum of scenarios along wellness and disease has guided me to understand that it is those people who can be "busy on the outside, calm on the inside" who can truly create an integrated state of well-being.

Please visit our new webpage describing Dr. Gaby Corá's Executive Health programs at **EXECUTIVE HEALTH: [www.ExecutiveHealth.com](http://www.ExecutiveHealth.com)**.

To bring **Life-Work Management** programs to you and your organization, please contact us directly at **EXECUTIVE WELLBEING** or call us toll free at: 1-866-762-7632.

Please email your questions and comments directly to **Dr. Gaby Corá**.

Dr. Gaby Corá is President of The Executive Health & Wealth Institute®, Inc. Discover: *The Power of Wellbeing*®. Her expertise in managing work in life inspired her to design a powerful program assisting executives and corporations in Leading under Pressure, providing for effective strategies to maximize peak performance and productivity while maximizing health and well-being. She is a licensed medical doctor, trained mediator, corporate consultant, has a master's in business administration, and is a professional member of the National Speakers Association.

Dr. Gaby Corá's chapter on **LIFE-WORK MANAGEMENT**© is available as a download. The chapter is soon to appear in **GETTING THINGS DONE: Keys to a Successful Business**, with lead author and business guru, Ken Blanchard. In this chapter, Dr. Corá addresses key concepts to success, including the **healthy individual lifestyle**, the **healthy organization**, common pitfalls, successful strategies, and the **"AIM I AM" system of constant improvement** for individual and organizational well-being©. Additionally, her book: **LEADING UNDER PRESSURE** is soon to be published. Her first work on **QUANTUM WELLBEING** is already available. To learn more about these resources, please visit: **EXECUTIVE HEALTH & WEALTH RESOURCES**.

The Executive Health & Wealth Institute, Inc. is an international consulting firm based in Miami, Florida. Our experts provide consulting services, executive coaching, corporate advice, training workshops, seminars and consensus building meetings, assisting executives and corporations in Individual and Organizational Health & Wealth.

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—GABRIELA CORÁ-LOCATELLI, MD, MBA  
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