

10 Practical Tips for the WAHM

Being a mom is hard! Adding the dream and desire to work from home makes it almost impossible to remember to breathe some days! I have found over the past 10 years of being a wahm that if you face your day with nothing else, DON'T forget your sense of humor. Boy, I could not get through most days without it. Some days I do not find it until the next day but hey, a late laugh is better than no laugh! And of course if I had my sense of humor with me at all times, I would not be able to rendezvous with my good friend, chocolate. Back to my thought, though, a good sense of humor... a good brand of chocolate, a good cushion for your computer chair and perhaps those favorite sweatpants you would not be caught dead outside of the house in...maybe those are the essentials?

Laugh, live, love. I can not say it enough. You are a wahm for one reason, your children. You have to admit that even on the days when the kids have tied each other up, put pantyhose on the cat, ate all the cookies in the jar-and then complain their tummies hurt, decided you needed some artwork on the living room walls-you know, the abstract free hand kind, put regular dish soap in the dishwasher, kindly put crumbs in your bed for your midnight snack...and that may all be before 9am! You are home for those kiddos, it is true- but you are also home for you! You have a dream, girl!! You have a desire to be everything and afraid to be nothing- take time to love yourself. Take time to be you- it will spill over into all your other roles. The wife, mother and business woman will all jump with joy when the "you" feels like a queen! Even if you are Queen only for a few minutes!

Tip#1- Bathroom Privacy

Of course, this topic is not new to mothers or is it exclusive to wahms. It is a topic, though, that we have to talk about. I mean have you known a mom ever who didn't at one time wish they could be in the bathroom alone?

I am still not sure how to conquer privacy in the bathroom. I was hoping maybe there was a secret out there that we got to find out eventually. I am still waiting though. I try to tell my kids that I don't bother them when they are in the bathroom. Of course, this makes little point to them since most times they are hollering for me from the bathroom.

I have tried locking the bathroom door but this only results in them thinking for sure I have climbed out the window never to return.

The way to overcome this is to pound on the door and yell until you open the door. They are clever, I will give them that!

I have tried distracting them- give them a snack, put a movie on, tell them dad is calling them. Isn't funny how they think you can make another sandwich, fix the DVD player and find dad for them all while you are going to the bathroom? Boy, they think we are magic!

I have tried pretending that it doesn't bother me having them in there. My thinking was maybe it wouldn't be as much fun and they would leave. You would think I might have thought differently after the streamers went up and the band started playing...see, it was PARTY time when mom wasn't telling them to get out. Sure, they just all moved in, brought all their stuff and thought it was a grand ole' time.

Maybe moms will never find the answer. Maybe it is something we just have to live with or maybe we wait...one day they will

have their own children who can't stand to be on the other side of the bathroom door!

Tip #2- Hey, Stinky, did you shower today?

This tip I have to say is one I struggle with daily. I am one of those people who can not go without showering. It just makes me feel too yucky. (Did you like that use of yucky?)

So, what to do? Do you get up before everyone and sneak a shower? I mean get up before you have to, before your husband hits snooze for the first time. It is after all quiet, calm and still out there in the dark, cold house. But it is also dark and cold.

But if you wait until the kids get up, will you end up sharing the shower as I often do? My four year old can't seem to be clean enough! He will bathe and shower with anyone who is trying to get clean- I have seen the kid go straight from the shower into the tub- really! Not that I mind sharing with my two smaller children but some days you are just not in the mood for blue shampoo and laughing over getting water in your nose. Of course there are mornings when you can't get a minute to get in the shower and you are hoping you can be clean before the other kids get home from school.

Hey, if I got up early and exercised, I would be warmer so the cold out there in the cold, dark house would not bother me...hey, did I say exercise? What is wrong with me? See what getting up too early can do to a person?

My 10 year old daughter asked me the other day why I shower and get dressed if I am just staying home. Of course at first I felt defensive and then I thought that coming from a 10 year old this is

a really good question. I just smiled and told her that I didn't want to stink for her. She walked away laughing saying she would stay in her pajamas all day if she didn't have to go anywhere.

I am not sure I have found out when the best time to shower is, I just am glad that I get to it at all!

Tip #3- Make your phone calls at nap time.

So in my business, I have to make phone calls a few times a week to stay in contact with business associates and clients. I find that nap time works best to make my calls- for obvious reasons. (My kids' nap time, not mine!) The problem I run into is that a lot of the people I need to call are also wahms and they make their calls at nap time. What happens if you don't have in-synch nap times? Not a problem! You have to use the call code.

Dial the number and let it ring once. If the mom on the other end sees on her caller id it is you and has a moment to talk, she will call you right back.

If you do not get a phone call right back, what does this mean? Did she hear the one ring? Is she busy? Is she home? Will she call back later? How do you know?

Email! Of course, turn your phone call into an email. Maybe she is on her computer and will e mail you back right away. Maybe not. Is she home? Is she busy? Are you adding to the lack of her bathroom privacy? Is she sleeping? She better not be sleeping...although if you're not sleeping you can be happy for another mom who is!

Okay, now what? Hey, you could use a little drive. Put the kids in the car and drive on over to see if she is home. Just leave a little note on the door if she isn't home to have her call you back when she can. Not a rush, you were just in the neighborhood-2 hours away- and thought you would leave a note. Do you ring the bell, knock on the door? She may be up, the kids may be up but what if they aren't? You don't want to take a chance on waking anyone up. You just leave your note and drive back home.

When you get home you are so tired, the kids are tired and the day is about shot. Hey, there is a message on your voicemail. Two minutes after you left, a whole ½ hour after you called and e mailed, she called you back!

Boy, you just don't look forward to the days when you have to make a conference call!

Tip #4- On delivering products to customers

So it is delivery day!! It may also be collecting money day so things are looking up already. You have stayed up late the night before making sure you have all the orders complete and labeled with the right customer. You have put your thank you notes and other goodies in your bags or boxes and now you are off!

The process of loading your car is essential. The secret is to keep the kids and the packages far enough apart that they never meet! That perfect shade of lipstick for the woman across town whose daughter is getting married in two weeks HAS to get there safe! The entertainment serving set for the Pastor's wife has to arrive in one piece- you know how the church ladies will talk if it doesn't! Remember last time when your car smelled like musk for six months? Oooo, that was a learning experience! Do you think you can really come up with another reason why that lotion smells and

tastes so good and why we can't eat other lotion that the kids will believe?- It was a close one last time!

Make sure the kids have a snack with them. An apple, maybe, something that will take them a while to eat. This way if they get out of the car with you to bring the goodies to the door, they will not fill your customer in on the "goings on" in your house. No one will know that dad snores or the cat ate the fish. Your customers won't have to hear about lunch and their favorite television show. Of course if your customer is a grandma type, you may want your kids to talk, this may increase your sales!

Tip #5- Eat a balanced diet- on a regular basis

This one I am not so good at. I just have too much else going on. I do feed the children, just not always myself. I try to eat healthy. It is hard, though, isn't it? The kids eat a well balanced diet. We get our fruits and veggies in. But what can I eat while making phone calls, placing orders, working on my web site, putting laundry in, feeding the cats, checking homework, sorting orders, sending e mails and trying to scrub the kitchen floor. I have not yet found a food suitable to take along with me while I am working. My husband tells me that there is this thing in the dining room called a table; it even has chairs for you to sit in. You put your food on it and you sit and eat. I seem to remember that from my childhood. I just can't seem to make it there!

Hey, when you get up at 6am, is eating breakfast at 2pm bad? Okay, I know it is but how many days do you get going and realize that you haven't eaten until your body starts getting annoyed? Dizziness, headaches, your mouthwatering and a growling stomach may be indications that you need to eat something.

Tip #6- Smooch your Sweetie

Remember when you could have a quiet dinner or had time to see a movie? Now you and your sweetie gaze at each other over cartoon movies, books that are telling the moon goodnight and product catalogs. Take a minute to pull your sweetie into another room and give him a big smooch! It will make you feel better and maybe leave him wanting for more later...maybe if everyone goes to bed on time in their OWN beds... Your time is being stretched in a lot of different directions now that you are working from home with your own business, your sweetie may feel like he is the last one on your list. As supportive as he may be (mine is my #1 fan!!) he may be wondering when it is time for him. Make sure you take a minute or two or maybe sixty of them and let him know that you are his #1 fan and that the customers, product catalogs, home parties, dirty dishes, school functions, laundry, cats and dogs do NOT come before him, he just is the one who is patient enough to wait for your time.

Tip #7- Take a minute for yourself

I suppose that all of this could be tips for any mom, not just the wahm, we as wahms, though, have a few added complications to our lives and schedules. The most important tip I can give is take care of you!! On a serious note for a second, it is a very important thing to do and we just don't do it! I know it is hard to soak in the tub full of bubbles with kids pounding on the other side wondering what you are doing and dad trying to calm them down saying "Let mom have some time alone". I know it is hard to feel justified in sitting down to read a book without pictures and that does not start "once Upon a Time..." I know you faintly remember the days

when books were maybe a romance story or a biography. It is hard for us to just sit a minute when you know you could be selling or shipping items or putting in laundry. Marketing your business, contacting customers, making sure the kids and house are in order are always your priority and always on your mind and that is okay. But you need to take some time to get reacquainted with you. Take some time to unwind, relax, decompress. The world won't fall apart if you do. I guess I should practice what I preach; it is easier said than done, though, I know.

Well, I got you to 7 tips, not 10. Hey, that is more than I thought I would. I know that none of the tips were practical and probably nothing you don't already know. I am hoping, though, that maybe you got a few minutes of down time to read it and maybe a laugh or at least a little smile. It is important to take time to be silly and funny in your day. I know it may not seem like you should given everything else you have to do but it will make you feel better!!

Your customers, your family and your friends all look to you to be the best you can be all the time. You have chosen to be a wahm. To be home with your children and to help contribute to the household financially. You have chosen to follow a dream, be a business woman, "Have it all", as they say- and you have chosen to do it in the comfort of your home and yes, maybe in your pajamas. It is what works for you and your family and it was the best choice you ever made. – The point I wanted to make is be sure to take some time for yourself in the midst of your crazy life. That really was the only point I wanted to make in this whole thing. As women we need to take a step back sometimes and just remove ourselves from our lives. It may sound funny but it is true. Even ten stolen minutes a day can be Heaven and we need to be sure to do it! As I said, this hold true for all moms but as wahms we have

added some extra weight to our load and we need to realize it is okay to take a day off once in a while!

Enjoy your path; it is going to take you great places!

Heather Piehl is a WAHM to 5 beautiful children. She has almost 10 years of experience being a WAHM including two original businesses, working in direct sales and as founder of [Minnesota Women's Source](#) and the [Minnesota Women's Small Business Expo and Sale](#). Heather is a life long Mickey Mouse collector, an animal lover, an author and she is also very passionate about helping other women in business realize their dreams and goals.

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