

Balance and the Court Reporter

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Summer is definitely here, the season of getting outside, wearing less clothing and having some fun. Are you having fun yet? I know the stress of our profession can be a source of distress in our lives. The technical kinks of remote proceedings, the logistics of getting back to in-person jobs, those are just a few of the general dilemmas we court reporters are currently handling.

I had a little time away from court reporting after Hurricane Harvey hit the Houston area. After a fun experience at culinary school, becoming a personal trainer and CrossFit coach and co-owning a gym, I was ready to get back to the profession that has given so much to me. After I replaced all of my equipment and software, I was chomping at the bit to work. I took on everything I possibly could, hired scopists, and I worked nonstop. I'm sure if I didn't have a husband and special needs daughter who requires significant care, I would have stayed in my office/cave even longer. I was fast and efficient, and it felt good.

I did this for six months, and then I realized I was neglecting myself in other areas of my life. Fitness is a staple for me, and I was not making time for it. After the year of quarantine and the resulting distant friendships, I wanted to reconnect, and I was neglecting that. It was understandable for me to do this after seeing what the pandemic has done to businesses and how it affected work and salaries for people in general. I was and am grateful for a career that can provide for me and my family even through the mess of 2020 and beyond.

But I also know the value of taking care of myself and my family in other ways aside from generating much-needed income. I had been going nonstop for six months and was not recognizing the beginning signs of burnout. Work-life balance is a phrase I'm sure most of you are familiar with, and it is so very important. Being a proponent of health and fitness, I can honestly say if you don't have your health, you have nothing. And health encompasses not just your physical self but your mental, emotional, even spiritual self. We have to be whole, healthy individuals in order to get the most out of life, to be happy and proficient with work, to have deep, meaningful connections with our family (and dogs), to be at peace with ourselves.

This is where the effort of carving out rest and recovery comes in. And I'm using that phrase, rest and recovery, in relation to time away from court reporting. This does not mean stop taking work. Instead, this means:

- Get out your calendar and make an appointment for your next workout. Try out this quick, easy 10-minute workout you can do at home. Yes, you have time.
- Make an appointment for meal prepping for the week. Check out these tips and tricks for a faster meal prep experience.
- Map out something fun with your kid/kids (and don't forget the pets). Explore these lovely summer fun ideas for parents with kiddos.
- Schedule an appointment for connecting with your significant other. This article covers some fun ways to engage with your partner.
- Plan to go to the park, take a leisurely walk, and sit in the shade of a tree by yourself. In recent years, I have discovered the importance of spending time alone. Take a look at these science-based reasons and research for why you should do the same.

Figure out what you need to feel balanced and slowly integrate a plan. Balance is a tightrope we walk every day, and we must work at it.