

## You say

### BALANCE WORK AND PLAY

Creating a steady balance between work, motherhood and your relationship with your partner isn't always realistic, but there are ways to even things out. "The most important thing is to prioritise. Time management is essential," says Solomon. Don't let work worries consume your time spent at home and organise a babysitter a few times a month so that you and your partner can have some alone time.

Buy's agrees. "The best way to ensure you and your partner spend time together is to add it to your schedule," she says. "Plan something great to do together once a week or once a month and something extra-special to do once a year."

"Use spare time constructively: plan a picnic or take your partner for a walk," suggests Brisben. "Quality time spent with your lover creates an emotional bonding experience."

### DESTINY asks its Facebook fans:

Is stress killing your sex drive? How do you handle this?



**Bryony Kruger:**  
Unfortunately, yes – and I'm not sure how to get around it. The most important point is to try to let go and be in the moment, but that's not always easy.



**June Kithira Muthamia:** My husband and I have been married for years. Many people use sex as a tool to sort out issues. The only genuine intimacy is true and committed sex, but how many of us have that luxury?



**Nkulie Nomvula Radebe Msibi:** Actually, sex should be used to destress.

Exercise, send your partner sexy SMSs, spend quality time together and reminisce about old times. Keep the fire burning!



**Zukelwa Mnyabiso:** I focus on other areas of my life that are going well and exercise like crazy. I also talk about it to my girlfriends or watch comedies. When I feel better, I focus on the source and solution of my problem step by step.

\* Solomon presented his talk at a Johannesburg event organised by Beyond the Dress, a company which holds workshops addressing the needs of modern wives. For further information, visit: [www.beyondthedress.co.za](http://www.beyondthedress.co.za)

### HOW TO DEAL WITH STRESS

Dealing with stress more productively is essential in maintaining a healthy relationship. "Understand the stress process," advises Solomon. "Eat healthily, exercise regularly, sleep restfully, meditate, create opportunities to have fun and laughter and don't sweat the small stuff."

Buy's offers the following tips:

- **Stay healthy.** Your sexual health and overall health are intimately connected. Diet, stress, nutrition, exercise and medication all play a big role in sexual desire. Exercise increases metabolism, blood flow and the release of endorphins – which are natural aphrodisiacs.
- **Set realistic goals at home and at work.** Avoid overscheduling. If you're feeling overwhelmed, ask your partner to help out.
- **Identify the sources of stress in your life** and take control. For example, if traffic makes you tense, try to find a less busy route or come home an hour earlier or later to avoid gridlock.

- **Express your feelings, rather than bottling them up.** If you don't share your frustrations, you'll end up feeling resentful towards your partner for not helping you – which could cause relationship issues.

### ENRICHING YOUR INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP

Often couples get too consumed with how their sex life *should* be. There are no universally applicable rules, say the experts. "Measure the health of your own relationship by comparing it with itself," advises Buy's. Thinking of each other's needs is essential. "There's a high correlation between satisfaction with your relationship and frequency of sex," says Buy's.

Often couples become too complacent. "If you never put in any effort, your relationship becomes routine, excitement dries up and you lose the 'honeymoon' feeling," she adds. "We can regulate our sexual urges and responses by how we think about sex. If you desire a good sex life, change your attitude and

think sexual thoughts, which may result in more intercourse and general wellbeing."

Solomon suggests the following ways to spice things up:

- Take time out and have a regular date night.
- Spring sexy surprises on each other. Create an erotic atmosphere in the bedroom which may include candles, massages and exciting lingerie.
- Book into a hotel for the night or get out of town for the weekend. Be adventurous.

Trying something new can reignite passion. "Being open-minded about making love in new places or using products to enhance your lovemaking can bring a whole new experience," says Brisben. "When abiding to the core values of a relationship by communicating, adding variety and being spontaneous help stabilise your bonding experience."

Ultimately, it's your emotional connection that fuels sexual satisfaction. "Hang in there to see each other through the rough times," says Solomon. 