

Stressed over the Risks of the Internet? Keep your Children Safe and Protected

Do you have young children who are about to begin using the Internet or already use it? Do your children use chat rooms, instant messaging or social media sites?

While the Internet is invaluable for children in several ways including educational resources for homework, online games, information and fun, there are irrefutable downsides too. At best, the Internet can be described as a mixed blessing and it is up to us as parents to protect our children from potential pitfalls. Children spend a great deal of their time on the Internet (which is now available to them over their Smartphones and other devices too) and it's important to be aware of the risks and dangers that lurk on the net. As parents, we need to understand the problems that may crop up so that we are better placed to keep our children safe. The risks come in a variety of forms and could include porn, gambling, inappropriate sexual content, sexual predators and cyber-bullying among many others. In earlier days, parents usually knew the people whom their child interacted with on a daily basis. You knew people (and your child knew people) face-to-face and personally. That is no longer the case on the Internet. There is often a big difference between what you see the child doing at home and what they do online.

According to the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children), UK, more than 3,000 sex crimes against children were committed in 2016. Moreover, alarming statistics reveal that more than 43.6% of children between the ages of 11 and 16 experience cyber-bullying in some form or the other. This article describes different forms of risks associated with the Internet and explains how you can help protect your

child. We will also discuss some general strategies and precautionary measures that help mitigate the risks involved.

Limitations and Dangers of the Internet

- The Internet is an easy place to falsify your identity or lie about your age. Your child could lie about his or her age or another person talking to your child may do so. The difference between the Internet and real life is that you are unable to see the person who is on the other end. Most times, it's only chatting by typing words. People can and often do lie about their age, name, occupation and so on.
- There is easy access to good as well as dubious websites. On one side, there are educational, informational and entertainment websites, and on the other side there are thousands of violent, macabre and other unsuitable websites which are as easy to access as the reputable ones.
- Information is not always private. Your profile may be set to public (children are not always aware) in which case it can be viewed by anyone. Many search engines index public profiles and your child's information is open and accessible to anyone. Online message boards, for example, can be easily viewed by others.
- Your child is in control while they're surfing the internet. They may access undesirable websites while you are not at home or when you're otherwise engaged. This leaves them free to chat with strangers, post pictures online, provide personal information and so on; all these activities can compromise security.
- The portability of devices makes it very difficult to control access to undesirable websites or interaction with questionable individuals. Numerous apps, Smartphones, Tablets, etc. make it difficult (if not

impossible) to regulate access.

The following signs may indicate that your child is in trouble online and probably needs intervention from parents or carers:

- Radical change of interests to obsessive online chatting or interaction. If your child was interested in sport, dance or dramatics and suddenly feels disinterested in these activities and spends all their time online, it's time to have a talk.
- Changes in eating patterns, moods and behaviour may indicate trouble. This is especially true if your child has been spending long hours online and in chat rooms. Encourage your child to speak to you and to develop outside, healthy interests.
- Your child tries to hide away with his or her smart device and keeps checking messages every now and then. He or she is becoming more secretive than before and they are making excuses to go shopping or to the cinema to meet someone that you don't know.

Without proper guidance and control, children are likely to be more vulnerable to online threats. It's also a good idea for parents to learn the language that children use online; you may often see entire conversations written in short-form or abbreviated words. However, parents can consider using holistic internet safety plans and communicating with children regarding the risks and dangers on the Internet.

Let's take a closer look at some ways in which you can protect your children on the net.

Set some rules

Implementing overly stringent restrictive orders may not always work (especially with teens) and the child may be driven by curiosity. Hence, it may be a good idea to set clear rules similar to the rules regarding supervision of TV time. Allow reasonable time for the children to browse the Internet,

but avoid allowing unlimited time whenever they want. Sit down with your child and make the setting of rules a mutual process. Lay down rules about the websites they should or should not visit. For example, you may allow them time to play games, but restrict time on social media.

Do not impose excessive authority, but be firm at the same time. For instance, disobedience should be connected with clearly explained consequences (such as reduced TV time, etc.). Older children may have the tendency to rebel so keep your discussion friendly and explain that you have their best interests at heart. The rules that you set should address some of the following basic issues:

- Are they confident of taking responsibility when they are alone with their smart devices?
- Will they be able to recognise undesirable websites and content?
- They should only make online friends with those people that you know in real life
- They should never agree to meet someone that they have only met online
- They should consider immediately informing you of uncomfortable encounters or bullying behaviour
- Learn how to use privacy settings on apps, social media platforms and software in order to protect passwords, etc. Public profile settings leave your information open to access to the public. Strangers can even find out where you live.
- Avoid posting provocative, racy or inappropriate content about yourself online including pictures
- Try to keep computers in the family room so that you can have greater control over usage times and duration. Also place the computer in a highly visible area (not with the screen facing a wall, for example) so you are able to keep an eye on the content
- If you have young children, keep a close watch on videos

because quite a few of them contain profanity

Setting boundaries is important because you, as the parent, are in charge.

Use systems that offer adequate parental control

The simple solution of installing content filtering software and parental controls can still be implemented, but they may not be effective due to evolving net technology; many undesirable websites and content may be programmed to bypass such controls. According to a research study conducted by Norton Online Family, 63% of teens admitted to knowing how to hide content from control software.

This is why it's important to install a parental control software or firewall that is foolproof and effective in blocking undesirable content. Some well-known options that help you establish control over digital content include Google, Safe Search, Norton Online Family, YouTube Safety, K9, Windows Live Family and Maxthon Kid-Safe Browser, etc. For comprehensive parental control, you can try some paid packages including [Qustodio](#), [ScreenLimit](#) and [Home Halo](#). YouTube, for example, has introduced a new YouTube for children app that curates content and restricts access to adult videos. However, this app is not accessible from all browsers.

In addition, you can also consider linking certain websites to a parental control filter. Better still is to set up parental filters on the router itself. This is one of the best ways to control Internet content flow. Many routers are specifically designed to allow for parental control. It's best to tell your child that you are using monitoring techniques and that they will lose Internet privileges if they disobey the ground rules.

Protect your child from the risks of gaming websites

Most of the time, the risks of the Internet are associated with social media, pornography and so on. But recent research by Kaspersky indicates that 38% of children meet people at gaming websites who are not what they pretend to be. Such individuals also use gaming websites to meet children and solicit personal information. Keep a watch on the gaming websites that your child likes to play on.

Financial safety

It pays to be particularly aware of websites that require payment or funds to use. Keep your credit cards safe and away from your child. If they need to pay for a game or a video, please make sure that they do it with your permission. Credit and debit cards can be easily misused by unscrupulous people, especially if they know that they are dealing with a child.

Counselling and Education

The best and most effective way to keep your child safe on the Internet is to educate them about the inherent dangers that lurk in cyberspace. This will work much better than enforcing parental control apps and software (although you can use them too as additional aids). Explain that public images can be used illicitly and describe the dangers of pornography. Tell them about the risks of communicating with strangers which may result in kidnapping, sexual advances, rape or even death in extreme cases. Obviously, you don't want to scare them and it will depend on their age, how you tell them and exactly what you tell them. A good way to explain to them is by telling them that just as they wouldn't give their personal details to a stranger on the road, they shouldn't give their details to strangers online either.

Discuss the issues involved in a mature, patient and friendly manner. This is likely to achieve more results than tools and technologies.

Support and Encouragement

Teach your children that online opinion, 'likes' and approval should not affect their self-esteem and confidence. Social media pressure and cyber-bullying have been the cause of teen depression, stress and suicides. The best way to combat this danger is to train your children to grow up as healthy and confident kids. In most cases, the main reason for posting images online is to gain approval and make comparisons with peers. Tell your children that they are beautiful and that you love them. These simple strategies are powerful and effective in their outreach and your child will automatically be on his or her guard against undesirable interactions, comments or activities on the net.

You have to engage with your child's online life and take steps that put you in control. Please do remember that at the end of the day, technology is only a tool and is not a replacement for parenting. Parenting does not come with a handbook and can be particularly trying when you are dealing with teenagers. They may rebel or resent what they see as intrusion into their personal lives. Teenagers sometimes become aloof and uncommunicative and you may have no idea of what they are doing online. However, disapproval from children is a lesser worry than exposing them to online risks and, if you have to lay down the law at times, you simply have to do it. Take your children out or play other games with them at home, cook meals together and spend quality time with your children. This way, they will be more likely to open up to you and, at the same time, will discover activities and interests outside of the Internet.

The Internet is here to stay and will be an inevitable part of our lives as well as our children's lives. The trick lies in

teaching them to use it responsibly without imposing overly strict rules. If you disallow the Internet in your house, they can and will access the online world on their friends' devices and computers. Forbidden fruit is always tasty, especially when we are young and curious.

It may be easier to lay down rules for younger children and they may listen. But the scenario may be different when it comes to teenagers. Being online is part of their ordinary every day social fabric and many are more or less immersed in their online chatting and texting. It's also true that most teenagers above a certain age have an ingrained sense of self-preservation and may not reveal personal details. However, it's also true that many teens also hide their content from parents. The truth is that we cannot take these facts for granted. For instance, many children stumble upon pornography by accident. Children should be protected from the dangers of the Internet and parents and carers are the best people to take decisive steps in that direction.

The Best Accessories for your Home Office

Whether you are a stay-at-home mum or working professional, having an at-home office is crucial for staying organised, ensuring your focus and maximising your productivity. For many mums, a home office can be not only a space for work, but also a space for respite from the craziness of everyday life as a mum. If you are looking to create your first home office, or simply looking to revamp your current home office, it is key that you fit it out with the right accessories. This article

will showcase some of best accessories for a busy mum's home office.

Before buying any home office accessories, first think about the space that will be your home office. This is important if you are choosing that space for the first time or re-evaluating the space in which you currently have your home office. The needs you have for your home office space will be different for each mum. However, there are several things everyone should consider. First, how isolated do you want your home office to be? If you are a mum of small children, you may want an office in which you can leave the door open and still keep any eye on your children. For example, a home office that opens onto or connects to a playroom may be a good fit. If you are a mum of older children, you may want a home office that is set away from louder parts of the house and that has a door you can fully close. Next, think about the amount of space you need for your home office. You will want to make sure that you will have room for a desk and chair, as well as additional storage. Finally, you will want to pick a space that offers ample lighting, whether through overhead lights, plugs for lamps, or windows. While working, it is necessary to have enough light to comfortably be able to read whatever you are working on.

Office Desk & Chair

Now that you have considered the space in which your home office will be, it is important to select the right accessories for your home office. The most important thing you will buy for your home office is a desk and a chair, as this will be the spot from which you do your work. With a desk, it is important to think about your specific needs. The first thing to consider is the size of the desk. How much surface area do you need? The second thing to consider is if you want your desk to have built-in storage. Do you want desks and shelves built-in or would you rather purchase storage

separately? Once you have selected your desk, you must pick a chair. Be sure to pick a chair that you feel comfortable sitting in for extended periods of time. Remember, you could potentially sit for hours working in this chair. When shopping for a home office chair, pay attention to special features such as lumbar support, extra cushioning, armrests and adjustability. Check that your chair be can be raised or lowered, as this will allow you to ensure that your chair is at the right height for whatever desk you have selected.

There are many great home office desks and chairs available on the market at a range of prices. Regardless of your budget, you can find something that perfectly suits your needs.

Desks such as the [Coaster 800434 Nesting Computer Desk](#) or the [Songmics L-Shaped Corner Computer Desk Workstation](#) offer style and space (both available on Amazon UK). Some potential chairs to look at as suggestion or inspiration include the [LANGRIA Comfortable V Shape Medium Mesh Back Home Office Desk Chair](#) and the [Herman Miller Aeron](#) (both available on Amazon UK). Both chairs offer comfort, support, adaptability and style. If you are shopping for a desk and chair for your home office on a budget, consider exploring options at IKEA or at your local charity shop. You can also buy a cheaper chair and add a supportive cushion for extra comfort. Great cushions for your home office chair include the [LoveHome Memory Foam Lumbar Support Back Pillow and](#) the [Seat Doughnut Cushion](#) (both available on Amazon UK), as well as any of the cushions available through retailers like [Temper Pedic](#).



Working remotely from home means a decrease in stress, with statistics showing **it can reduce stress by as much as 82%**

Stability Ball

In addition to purchasing a desk chair, you may also want to consider purchasing a stability ball to substitute occasionally for your desk chair. A stability ball is a large, rubber exercise ball which you use in place of your desk chair. The stability ball helps you build and tone your core muscles, improves your posture while you work and prevents back pain. For busy mums, this means you can sneak in a bit of a workout while you work! Investing in a stability ball will not only offer you a choice of seating in your home office, but will also help you stay toned and ward off back pain while at work in your home office.

Storage

If you didn't purchase a desk with built-in storage, you may want to consider purchasing additional storage accessories. There are countless options for home office storage accessories to choose from. Before purchasing, think about what your specific storage needs are. Do you have enough space in your home office for something large, like a bookcase, or do you need something small and compact that could fit under your desk? Also think about the décor in your home office. Do you want something sleek and modern or fun and colourful? When shopping for storage accessories, consider a classic wooden or

sleek metal bookcase, small drawers which you can fit under your desk and fabric or wicker bins which you can stack. If you are on a budget, there are many DIY options for building your own storage bins. Many mums love the ease of storage bins, as you can simply toss things into them and close the lid, without having to worry about dusting or tidying bookshelves.

Other Decorative Items

Once you have your desk and desk chair (or ball) sorted, it is time to focus on other accessories for the walls and surfaces of your home office. One of the most important accessories for your home office is a calendar. A calendar is necessary for visually keeping track of your schedule. Consider a large, paper calendar for your wall, which will help keep detailed account of your daily, weekly and monthly schedule. Paper calendars are available in a wide variety of themes and many online retailers will even let you customise your calendar. That means mums can feature their own family snapshots on their home office calendar. If you are looking for something more minimalist than a wall calendar, consider a [desktop block calendar](#) (available online through retailers like Etsy and Amazon UK). Made up of interchangeable, stacked wooden blocks, this calendar lets you track the month and date with style. Another stylish yet playful option is a weekly planner pad. Each sheet of the pad is divided into seven sections, one for each day of the week. Jot down your meetings or list of things to do, then at the end of the week, simply rip off that sheet and throw it away.

Lighting

Once you have chosen the best calendar for your home office, it is time to focus on lighting accessories. Even if you have chosen a space for your home office with lighting in mind, you will still want to purchase a lamp. A lamp will help you to

see better at night, supplement any overhead lighting and allow you to move your light source closer to you or your work as necessary. With lighting, consider whether you want a standing floor lamp or a lamp that you can place on top of your desk. You may also want to consider purchasing a floor or table lamp that has dimming capabilities. A dimmer will allow you to customise the brightness of your lamp. This is useful for ensuring that the light is at a brightness that is comfortable for you to work within. You can also make the light brighter in the evening and lower during the day.

If you don't have the floor space for a floor lamp or the desk space for a table top lamp, consider a wall light. A wall light mounts easily to the wall, allowing you to benefit from the additional light without having to worry about clutter from a lamp. A wall light is a particularly good option if you have a tiny home office or if your home office is part of another room.

When selecting a lampshade for your lamp, you must consider both form and function. Your lamp shade should match your home office's décor. Lampshades are available now in a range of fabrics, textures, colours and patterns, ensuring that you will be able to find one that works with your home office's décor. Second, you will want to consider your lampshade's function. The lampshade should softly diffuse the light throughout the room, so that there are no pockets of darkness or pockets of extremely bright light. The lampshade should soften any shadows and create a soft, ambient light.

In addition to purchasing lamps, you can arrange your home office to enhance any natural lighting. If your home office has windows, leave them open during the day to usher in the sunlight. Also consider purchasing blinds or curtains that easily open, allowing you to quickly and conveniently adjust the natural light in the room. When arranging your home office, try to place your desk facing either north or south, as this will eliminate any harsh shadows from the natural

light. If the natural light is too bright at certain times of the day, consider investing in a set of sheer curtains. Not only are sheer curtains a tasteful addition to any home office, they also allow the natural light to filter into the room without any harsh shadows.



30%

of workers say that they feel like **they accomplish more on the job while working remotely** as opposed to physically in the office

Music Maestro

In addition to lighting, you may want a speaker for your home office. A speaker will allow you to conveniently listen to your favourite music, podcast or radio programme while you work. For many people, having background noise – such as music – enhances their productivity and makes working in their home office more enjoyable. When shopping for a speaker for your home office, the first thing to consider is size. Do you want your speaker to be small and portable or larger and louder? The next thing to consider is if you want your speaker to be wireless. A wireless speaker means that your speaker will connect to your smart phone or computer through Bluetooth capabilities, allowing you to play music on your speaker without connecting the speaker through cords. While wireless speakers are convenient, they can be frustrating to use should you encounter technical difficulties, such as an inability for your Bluetooth to properly connect. Wireless speakers are also dependent upon a Wi-Fi connection to play music.

There are numerous speaker options, both wireless and non-wireless, at a range of price points available at retailers such as Amazon UK. Brands such as Bose, Sony and Beats by Dr. Dre offer small yet powerful Bluetooth capable speakers. [The UE Boom 2 speaker](#) was recently cited by technology website [techrader.com](#) as the best Bluetooth speaker of 2017. Features such as portability, loud and clear sound and easy to understand design elevates this speaker. The UE Boom 2 is even waterproof, meaning that if you decide to take this speaker outside the home office (or even lend it to your children), you don't have to worry about accidents or spills.

Other Accessories

In addition to a speaker, there are many other electronic gadgets that are useful and necessary accessories for any home office. The first is a set of cable ties. Cable ties will help sort your various electronic cords, such as laptop chargers and phone chargers, and prevent them from getting tangled. Anyone who has spent hours untangling their various electronic cords knows the value of such a tool. Cable ties come in a range of styles and colours, many of which will blend in seamlessly with or even enhance your home office's décor. For example, Amazon UK offers countless cable ties in any colour imaginable. You can even get [cable ties shaped like a dog or a cat](#) (available on Etsy UK).

You will also want to purchase USB drives (also called flash drives) in order to save and share your files. Rather than a traditional plain black USB drive, consider ones shaped like [smiling pieces of toast](#) (available at [Firebox.com](#)), an ice cream or a fish (available from Amazon). Not only will these USB drives safely store and share your files, but they will also look adorable while doing so.

In addition to cable ties and USB drives, accessories such as a bright mousepad or keyboard cover can liven up any home

office, as well as give you a chance to customise your electronics and workspace. There are mousepads available to suit any taste. However, the real fun is in customising them. Online retailers will let you upload your own image, which is then printed on the mousepad. This means that you can upload a family portrait, a silly picture of your children or even a photo of the family pet if you want. This means that even when you are hard at work, your loved ones are with you. A keyboard cover is another way to customise – and protect – your electronics. A keyboard cover protects your keyboard from damage, crumbs or spills. Cleaning is also easier, as you simply lift up the keyboard cover and wipe it down. Keyboard covers come in a range of colours and patterns, letting you choose whatever best suits your taste.

You can also express yourself through other home office accessories. Consider purchasing cute or fun alternatives to the normal, humdrum office supplies. For example, rather than purchasing plain, plastic drawing pins, consider purchasing a set of delicate, butterfly drawing pins. If that's not your style, get your hands on some quirky moustache drawing pins instead (available on Etsy UK). Rather than a black, plastic tape dispenser, use an adorable otter tape dispenser or a chameleon tape dispenser (both available on Amazon), with the tape serving as his trademark sticky tongue. If you need to jot down some notes, there are countless options for fun notepads and sticky notes. Whether it's a notepad with a built in tiny catapult; sticky notes shaped like miniature beards; see-through sticky notes shaped like ghosts – convenient for notating and underlining text; sticky notes shaped like sprinkled doughnuts; or a notepad shaped like three-dimensional pieces of fruit. These whimsical office supplies will help keep your home office fun as well as functional.

No home office would be complete without writing utensils. Even though you may take the majority of your notes on a computer, writing utensils are still crucial for jotting down

notes and reminders for yourself. Luckily, your writing utensils don't need to be boring. Remind yourself of your upcoming holiday with a quirky palm tree pen or keep a smile on your face with an adorable puppy pencil, for example. Correct any mistakes you may make with brightly coloured zoo animal erasers.

You may also want to consider purchasing storage accessories for your desk. Desktop storage will allow you to easily sort, store and locate the odds and ends – like pens, drawing pins and sticky notes – that accumulate within a workspace. While there are many traditional options for desktop storage available at retailers like IKEA, you can also seek out more playful, unique storage options. For example, let a fleet of [tiny construction vehicles](#) hold your business cards, paperclips and pens (Available at Uncommongoods.com). These also double as a toy for your little ones if you're at a pinch! For something more refined – yet still fun – consider a delicately painted [wooden desk organizer](#), styled like a vintage letter rack (available at Etsy UK).

Finally, for busy, multi-tasking mums of young children, there is one more crucial home office accessory. Many mums use their children's nap time as a chance to catch up on a few minutes of work. To do so with peace of mind, consider investing in a high-quality baby monitor if you don't already have one. Many baby monitors even offer video streaming capabilities, ensuring you can both see and hear your little ones. This will allow you to keep an eye on your children from the privacy of your own home office. If you still want to keep the look of your home office professional, there are numerous baby monitor options that will stylishly blend in. For example, the [Angelcare AC517](#) is a compact, sleek, minimalist white device with a video monitor and baby breath tracker (Available at [angelcarebaby.com](#)). This device fits just as well in a home office as it does in a nursery.

For many mums, a home office is a sanctuary in which you can

get work done in a space that's all yours. When designing and outfitting a home office, there are numerous accessories to consider. Whether it's a desk chair, a lamp, a speaker, electronic accessories or a baby monitor, each purchase is an opportunity to both ensure the best function and to insert your own personality and style into your home office. Whether you prefer a chameleon tape dispenser or butterfly drawing pins, there are home office accessories out there for you. It's just a matter of finding and purchasing the best accessories for your home office.

Six Stay-at-home Mums Who Made It Big

For today's modern mums, staying at home with the children doesn't have to mean staying bored. Whether through blogging, social media or building a culinary empire, many stay-at-home mums have found ways to not only stay busy, but to build successful brands and businesses. Many mums even manage to build their brands and businesses from the comfort of their own homes, while still managing to take care of their families. The following six mums did just that – going from full-time stay-at-home mums to making it big!

Alison Perry

Alison Perry got the idea of her blog, the cheekily named "[Not Another Mummy Blog](#)", while staying at home on maternity leave with her daughter. Leveraging her fourteen years of experience as a writer and editor at women's magazines and websites, she created a vibrant and approachable blog. Alison's chatty and

down-to-earth writing style make each post read like a conversation with a close girlfriend.

Since its creation in 2011, Alison has grown her London-based lifestyle blog into a multi-platform destination for parenting, travel and style advice. Posts chronicle Alison's adventures with her now six-year-old daughter and her husband, coyly referred to as "Mr. P."

In addition to browsing her website, readers can shop Alison's looks on her Instagram page, tune in to her Not Another Mummy Podcast or peruse her Pinterest board. Content is divided neatly into categories including 'Life', 'Travel' and 'Style' and ranges from the light-hearted to the hard-hitting. Recent articles include "10 Free Things To Do In London With Kids", "7 Things That Happen When You Go Through IVF" and "Revamp Your Make Up Bag for Under £10". Posts are accompanied by bright photographs featuring Alison and her family, both in their day-to-day London life or on one of their many holidays.

Readers can also connect directly to Alison via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. In her "About Me" section, she notes that she "[loves] hearing what readers think, even when (actually especially when) you don't agree". That willingness to engage with readers has fostered a space in which readers can come together to discuss the intricacies of life as a parent, as well as just life in general.

Since its creation in 2011, Not Another Mummy Blog has been featured in The Telegraph, Grazia and Daily Mail. In 2011, Alison received the title of Best Blog Writer at the Gurgle Awards. In 2017, Alison created her podcast, which soon after rose to the top of the iTunes Kids & Family chart. She has also spoken at the 2013 Mumsnet Blogfest and chaired a 2014 panel at Mumsnet Workfest.

Clemmie Hopper

Another stay-at-home mum who made it big through blogging is Clemmie Hooper, a South London-based midwife and author. Through her blog, "[Gas & Air](#)", Clemmie communicates her passion for helping women through pregnancy, birth and motherhood. She also shares photos of and stories about her four adorable daughters and her husband.

Despite having previously worked in advertising, Clemmie feels she was born to be a midwife. Joking in her 'Hello' section, she describes how, "According to my mother when I was 4, I declared that I wanted to be a midwife. So I put on my nurse's dressing-up outfit, wrenched one of my beloved dolls out from under my dress, and made the obligatory new born baby crying sound (if only it was so easy)". Clemmie's lifetime of knowledge and insight shines through her blog posts, each of which offers frank advice on the various stages of pregnancy, birth and motherhood. Whether discussing maternity clothing, nursing bras or what to pack in your labour bag, she writes with honesty and humour.

Readers can engage directly with Clemmie by asking her questions via the "Ask the Midwife" section on her blog. She also shares (with the mother's consent) a "Birth Story of the Week". These posts offer weekly insights into real women's joys and struggles during pregnancy, birth, and motherhood. Readers can send their own birth stories, comments or questions to Clemmie via Twitter. They can also follow her photogenic life via her Instagram, [mother_of_daughters](#), which has over 380,000 followers.

Clemmie has since expanded her blog into a book, *How To Grow a Baby And Push It Out*. The book was published by Penguin Random House in February 2017 and is available for purchase as a paperback or Kindle edition on Amazon UK. Readers rave about how informative yet funny the book is, as well as the helpful,

practical advice it offers mums and mums-to-be. Gas & Air has been featured on the Mumsnet Blogger's Network and at Brit Mums Live! 2015, as well as recognised as one of the Tots 100 Love Blogs. Clemmie has also been featured in the Mail on Sunday, Mail Online, Closer Magazine and a range of other blogs and websites dedicated to pregnancy and parenting.

Jools Oliver

Another mum known for her enviable social media presence is Jools Oliver, wife of celebrity chef Jamie Oliver and mother of five children – Daisy, Poppy, Petal, Buddy and River. Jools shares candid snapshots of her family, country home and, of course, mouth-watering food with her over 500,000 Instagram followers. Jools previously worked as a model and TV researcher before leaving to stay at home with her brood, splitting time between homes in London and Essex.

Jools has parlayed her social media success into a variety of business ventures. She serves as co-designer of Little Bird by Jools, a line of clothing for children aged newborn to eight. Little Bird by Jools offers decidedly practical, yet beautiful, children's clothes, intended to be shared and passed down to the next generation. Jools designed this clothing line to encourage children to dress themselves and to express their own unique sense of style. Pieces are inspired by her own childhood memories from growing up during the seventies and feature a range of quirky prints, nostalgic motifs and vintage touches. Little Bird by Jools is available for purchase at [Mothercare](#).

In addition to her clothing line, Jools has also [written several books](#). The first, *Minus Nine to One, The Diary of an Honest Mum*, candidly and humorously chronicles Jools' journey as she discovers she is pregnant with her first child, Poppy. Jools describes how the book is "simply my story and I hope that you can relate to it in some way (and maybe even relax

with it in the bath!)". Jools also wrote a children's book in 2008 called *The Adventures of Dotty and Bluebell: Four Delightful Stories of an Ever-so-naughty Little Girl and Her Big Sister*. This whimsical book tells the tales of two sisters and their adventures throughout the seasons.

Not only does Jools write books, but she has also written a celebrity guest blog featured exclusively on [Gurgle](#). Posts discuss family parties, holiday preparation and baking tips, as well as insight into her and her family's day-to-day life. Many readers love the glimpses she offers into daily life with her celebrity-chef husband and brood of adorable children. Whether it's through her Instagram, her books, her clothing line or her blog posts, Jools has made it big without sacrificing her duties as a mum.

Ree Drummond

While Jools Oliver is married to a chef, other stay-at-home mums have found success themselves in the kitchen. Ree Drummond is an American blogger, New York Times bestselling author, food writer, photographer and television personality. She lives on a working ranch outside of Pawhuska, Oklahoma with her husband, rancher Ladd Drummond (who she endearingly refers to as 'The Marlboro Man') and her four children.

Ree created her blog, "[The Pioneer Woman](#)", in May of 2006. Her posts discussed her family's life on the ranch, home-schooling her children and food recipes. Ree posted her first food recipe and a tutorial on "How to Cook a Steak", which included step-by-step instructions with over twenty photos illustrating the steps. Readers loved how detailed and easy to follow Ree's recipes were, and soon, Ree made photographic, step-by-step food tutorials a feature of her blog. Just three years after its creation, The Pioneer Woman was receiving more than 13 million page views per month. The blog has received numerous awards for its writing and design.

By 2009, Ree realised that she could expand both her blog and her brand by focusing more specifically on food. She started TastyKitchen.com, a website allowing readers to share their favourite home recipes with one another. She also redesigned The Pioneer Woman to better allow readers to search, print and share Ree's recipes.

Based on the success of her food blogging, Ree was invited to appear on a 2010 episode of the Food Network's Throwdown! In April of 2011, Ree began hosting her own Food Network show called The Pioneer Woman, which features Ree cooking her own recipes at home on her family's ranch.

In addition to her blogging and television success, Ree has also penned numerous books, some of which have even gone on to become best sellers. In 2007, she released *Black Heels to Tractor Reels*, which tells the story of how Ree met and married her husband. The film rights to the book were later purchased by Columbia Pictures, with rumours of Reese Witherspoon in talks to play Ree herself. Ree has also written three cookbooks: *The Pioneer Woman Cooks: Recipes from an Accidental Country Girl*; *The Pioneer Woman Cooks: Food from My Frontier*, and *The Pioneer Woman Cooks: A Year of Holidays: 140 Step-by-Step Recipes for Simple, Scrumptious Celebrations*. Her second cookbook, *The Pioneer Woman Cooks: Food from My Frontier*, became a Number 1 New York Times Bestseller.

Ree has also written several children's books which tell stories of ranch life from the perspective of her family's Basset Hound, Charlie. Her series of children's books include: *Charlie the Ranch Dog*, *Charlie and the Christmas Kitty*, and *Charlie and the New Baby*. The books have received praise for their humour, as well as their ability to appeal to both adult and child readers.

The Pioneer Woman has been named one of the "25 Best Blogs" in the world by TIME Magazine, and Ree is estimated to earn more than a million dollars annually in advertisement revenue from

her blog. Her blog, television show and books continue to attract and enchant readers and viewers. It's undeniable that in the past decade, Ree has truly built an empire from the comfort of her home (and her kitchen!)

Stacey Brown

Stacey Brown is another stay-at-home mum who has built a successful business from her kitchen. In 2007, Brown was busy raising her four children in Alabama, then between the ages of two and seven. To help supplement her family's income, she began making homemade chicken salad and selling it door to door. Soon, neighbours developed a taste for Stacey's cooking and Stacey was getting regular business from her door-to-door sales. However, she was soon contacted by the Health Department, who informed her that her fledgling business was illegal as she was not cooking the chicken salad in a commercial kitchen. She was forced to halt sales of her chicken salad immediately.

However, Stacey didn't let that setback stop her. In 2008, she and her husband, Kevin Brown, opened their first restaurant, [Chicken Salad Chick](#), selling Stacey's homemade chicken salad. The restaurant was an instant success and soon they were approached with franchise offers. As of May 2017, Stacey had successfully opened sixty-two locations, with plans to open between thirty to forty new restaurants annually over the next several years. Chicken Salad Chick has a recorded growth rate of more than 6,000% and earns more than \$9.8 million in revenue annually. However, throughout the process of growing her business, Stacey remained committed to her role as a mum. She told Forbes Magazine in 2017 that, "Sure, it would have been easy to stay at work longer or open on Sundays to bring in more money, but our commitment was to our family. As difficult as it was at times, our family became stronger because we remained faithful to that decision". Stacey manages to effortlessly balance her roles as both a mum and

entrepreneur.

Natalie Lee

Natalie Lee is another busy mum who has managed to build her brand and her business while juggling motherhood. Natalie lives in East London with her husband, Matt, and two daughters, who she affectionately refers to as the 'the ratbags'. After falling pregnant with her second daughter in 2012, she left her career as a midwife and lactation consultant to become a full-time mum. However, she realised that she still needed a space in which she could express herself, voice her opinions and let her creativity loose. To create that space, she started her blog, '[Style Me Sunday](#)', and her Instagram account, 'stylemesunday'.

Her blog and Instagram account were met with immediate success. Readers loved Natalie's quirky-yet-chic sense of style, as well as her affinity for bold lipsticks. She also celebrates the unique beauty of all mums, as well as the inevitable messiness of motherhood. Writing on her blog, Natalie describes her brand as "We love curves, wrinkles, realness, anything that doesn't pretend to fit into a cookie cutter mould. You'll never see any photo shopping here". Many mums find Natalie inspiring in her ability to keep it real about the realities of motherhood, presenting a welcome contrast to the often high-gloss, photo shopped, idealised depictions of motherhood.

Readers are also able to easily purchase items they see Natalie wearing. By going to the 'Shop My Look' tab, they can browse online items that Natalie has worn on her blog or Instagram account, as well as items she personally endorses. For busy mums, this is an easy way to freshen up their wardrobe.

In addition to inspiring with her sense of style, Natalie is also an advocate and role model for mums raising a seriously

ill child. Natalie's oldest daughter has a rare genetic condition called Brittle Cornea Syndrome, which causes her to slowly lose her sense of sight. Natalie confronts the realities of this disease on her blog. She shares the struggles she feels as a parent, her desire to work through a bucket list with her daughter before she fully loses her sense of sight, and her commitment to raising a daughter who is not held back by any illness or disability. Readers will find strength in Natalie's determination and positivity.

Through her blog and Instagram, Natalie also leads her Warrior Woman Project. The Warrior Woman Project involves sporadic challenges, which motivates her readers to feel confident and be the best woman (and mum) they can be. Readers can interact directly with Natalie through Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

Many stay-at-home mums have managed to not only nurture their families, but also nurture a brand and business. Such mums include "Not Another Mummy Blogger" Alison Perry; midwife, author and blogger Clemmie Hooper; entrepreneur, blogger and author Jools Oliver; blogger, television personality and author Ree Drummond; restaurant-owner Stacey Brown; and blogger Natalie Lee. Despite the challenges and demands of being a stay-at-home mum, these women have found the time to create and cultivate successful businesses, often from the comfort of their own homes. These six stay-at-home mums have truly managed to make it big.

How to Advertise your New

Business on Facebook

As a business, advertisement is one of the most important things to boost new clients and sales. Not too long ago, people used to call in early to make sure they got their advertisement printed in the daily newspaper. The larger the audience that you can reach with an advertisement, the better. This is why newspapers were an extremely popular means of advertisement in the past.

However, as the world adapts it is necessary for us to adapt to it. Since becoming widely accessible, the internet has become the best way to reach potential clients either domestically or internationally. Since there are no longer barriers to communicating with somebody either a kilometre away or all the way around the world, many people choose to take advantage of advertisers like the giant social media corporation Facebook.

Why Advertise on Facebook?

Since a rather large number of people (over 1 billion) in the world use Facebook, it has risen to become one of the easiest ways to spread the word about your business. However, since there are a wide variety of approaches and different ways of using Facebook as a means for advertising, it is important that you consider all of these different avenues before purchasing any sort of advertisement campaign.

For example, you can decide to purchase an advertisement which generates more traffic to your social media page, website, posts on your social media page, and you can even set up campaigns to get the contact information from interested customers. Since there are many different ways you can advertise to an audience of 1 billion, it makes it easier to access for a wide array of advertisement needs.

Facebook uses a system which allows you to generate an *extremely* targeted reach, where you can even pinpoint potential clients by figuring out what pages they like, where they live, what languages they speak, what their beliefs are, and so on. Since you can narrow down who your audience is and even receive a number of people it can reach, it is one of the most effective means of advertising.

How to Advertise your Business on Facebook: 3 Main Strategies

Before you have somebody else run your advertisement campaign for you, realise that it is rather simple to do. For a business page ([if you don't have one, create one](#)), there are only 3 major types of campaigns that you can do. To access a list of potential advertisement campaigns for your personal page, navigate to your social media page and then click the "Promote" button to see a list of main options. Keep in mind that your page type might help generate different individual options than the ones presented below.

Once you reach this page, you will probably want to learn more about each of the potential options before you decide which one is best. Since there are different niches of social media pages, you might be presented a slightly different list than the one above. However, there are three themes in the different types of campaigns which can be broken down and considered from all of the different types of advertisements. Here are the three main types of Facebook campaigns that you will find across different types of social media pages.

Advertisement Strategy No.1: Lead Generation Campaigns

If you have a new business, getting leads on interested clients is one of the ways to instantly boost your income.

There are many different ways that you can do this, such as redirecting them to a link to your website and fill in contact info, giving your customers coupons or similar items to use in-person, boosting the visibility of an event that you created and generating an offer to be used on your company's website.

There are a wide variety of ways to collect leads, whether you are a locally-based business or one that connects to potential clients worldwide on the internet. Depending on your personal budget and needs, you will need to decide which method you want to pursue. For instance, you might ask customers to fill in a contact information form so that you can e-mail them coupons for your local store on a consistent basis.

Advertisement Strategy No.2: Website Conversions and Traffic Campaigns

A popular option for people who have a website and want to drive customers off Facebook and then convert them to potential customers on your website. These sorts of advertisements are very popular for people who either have a heavy online presence already or want to increase their website's visibility. If you have already put in the work to build a beautiful website, you can heavily benefit from Facebook advertisements since they have a ginormous base of users both locally and internationally.

There are many different ways that you can set up a campaign for increasing website traffic such as picture-based ads that show up in unrelated news feeds. These can include multiple product pictures that your potential customer can scroll through. You can also just make a simple one header image that connects to your website. These types of ads can be for a wide variety of purposes, such as boosting sales and downloads of mobile applications, sales on your websites and the overall purpose of pulling customers away from Facebook and onto your

desired link.

Advertisement Strategy No.3: Brand Awareness and Page Promotion

If you have a social media page that you want to use to the fullest, you might be interested in an advertising campaign that allows you to increase awareness of your brand and boost the overall credibility of your business' social media page. These are great for people who want to engage with plenty of their customers online through social media and ideally, lead them to sales in the future through whatever your sales strategy is.

This can be done by advertisement campaigns to boost engagement on your posts, videos and likes on your business page. In any case, this type of advertisement strategy should be pursued by business owners who are looking to boost the awareness of their brand on social media and increase online presence on your business page.

Simple Advertisement Campaigns for New Businesses and Novice Users

If you simply want to explore how well Facebook advertisements work for you before you get too intricate with all of the possible demographic and picky details behind each of your advertisements, you might choose just to do a simple advertisement campaign that can be easily done by a novice or beginner user of Facebook within minutes. Here are a few of the popular options for small business owners.

1. Boost Your Business Page

To set up this sort of advertisement, navigate to your social media page URL and then find the location on the page which displays how many likes that you have. If you are logged in as

the page owner, there should be a button nearby to “Promote Page”. If it is not visible by the links, it might otherwise be navigated by clicking on a “Promote” button and then clicking on “Promote Your Page” and then following the on-screen instructions.

In any case, the purpose of doing this advertisement is to increase the presence on your business’ Facebook page. This shouldn’t be confused with boosting individual Facebook posts from your business account or having customers go to your business website. If you want to get more likes on your Facebook page, for example, this is a great way to attract real people to your business page.

2. Promote Your Business Website

If you simply want to experiment with getting people to a link on your website, this can be easily done using your business’ Facebook page. If you have supplied your business web address on your Facebook business page, the link to access this advertisement should be found by navigating to your business Facebook URL and then clicking the “Promote Website” button. From this page, it will give you a sample advertisement which a common user will easily be able to customise within minutes.

With this sort of advertisement campaign, it is easy to direct a lot more traffic to your website using the massive platform that Facebook has. If you are confident that your website is professional and attractive enough for users, it can help lead to a lot of sales which can then, later on, turn into regular clients. This is for people who want their advertisement to take people off Facebook and convert them into potential customers.

3. Boost Social Media Page Posts

People who are active on social media will often realise how difficult it is to engage an audience for a new business.

These people are the ones who will benefit the most from a simple post to boost the activity on your business' social media posts. To do an advertisement like this, simply log into your business account and look at one of your recent posts. It should have a button that says "Boost Post" on most of your recent posts.

When you click this button, it allows you to customise the settings for your advertisement and it will be showing up in potential customers' newsfeeds after the review process. This sort of advertisement is great for people who want to have a heavy presence on social media. Many successful food or product brands will purchase this advertisement to keep people talking about their brand by interacting with the page's content.

Advertising Using Facebook Ads Manager (For More Advanced Users):

Although each of the above campaigns can be easily created by the common user, it doesn't give you full insight into the full features and capabilities offered for business owners who are a little more tech savvy. If you choose to advertise with Facebook Ads Manager, you can narrow down your audience using the built-in tools. Just keep in mind that setting up an advertisement using Facebook Ads Manager can be a tad more time-consuming if you are new to using this module.

If you have some extra time on your hands, there are many different benefits to creating an advertisement on Facebook Ads Manager. To start this process, [click this link](#) to go direct to the advertisement creation module for Facebook Ads Manager. You will then go through a slightly more detailed process to create a more personalised advertisement. For your reference, here are the steps that you need to pass through in order to set up a successful advertisement on Facebook Ads manager.

Each of the following steps will now include the name of the tab you will be using in brackets so that you can keep on track with the steps required for advertising your new business on Facebook.

1. [Campaign] Select the Type of Advertisement

Before you can place an advertisement, you need to be savvy with the type of advertisement you want to receive. Some examples of this might be website conversions, clicks to your website, page likes, app installs, video views, and much more. If you already know which type of advertisement that you want, click and it will take you through the basic process of getting your advertisement started.

Once you are familiar with the different types of advertisement campaigns, the fun of using Facebook Ads Manager really starts to develop. For example, you will now have a more customised audience and will be able to get the most advertising options possible.

2. [Campaign] Define Your Campaign Objective

To start your advertisement, the first thing you will need to do is define who your audience is. If you have a vast collection of e-mail addresses, for example, you could use this contact information to have Facebook send out to their registered Facebook accounts. Additionally, anybody who is a known visitor to your website can also be defined as a member of your audience.

Start by navigating to the “Campaign” tab and selecting your type of advertisement. When you are finished fine-tuning your settings, finish by finalising your Audience name and clicking the “Continue” button which will take you to the next step in

setting up your advertisement. Remember that you still have plenty of settings left to add regarding your audience and not to spend too much time here.

3. [Ad Set] Enter Your Audience's Demographic Information

Once you get to this point, you should see the ability to enter locations, age, gender, languages and so on, of your advertisement's audience. Think about who the average person is that would be interested in your product and service, and be as detailed as possible. This will help ensure that you get an audience which is pinpoint-targeted solely at people who would be interested in potentially becoming your client.

If you are a locally-based business, this will be the portion where you ensure that your advertisement doesn't reach people who would simply not be interested in buying from your business. For example, you wouldn't advertise your coffee shop in the heart of London to Facebook users over in New York. Odds are that the vast majority of these people will never come to your coffee shop after seeing your advertisement.

4. [Ad Set] Enter the Detailed Targeting Behaviours, Connections and Save Audience

This is the portion where you will probably do the most planning. Imagine Facebook as being a highly advanced engine for recognising who the Facebook user truly is, behind the profile. Using the information that the user supplies to Facebook, such as their current work status, where they live, interests, behaviours and just about any sort of thing that might be of convenience to somebody like yourself who wants to have a very targeted audience.

Be sure to spend plenty of time thinking about all of the pages that your clients might like and every detail behind who

they are according to their Facebook settings. You might be surprised at how large your potential client base is, even when you enter in dozens of different precise details. Once you have finished pinpointing your target audience, make sure to click the “Save This Audience” button to keep this strategy for later use.

5. [Ad Set] Bid for your Advertisement Campaign

Now is the time to think about what your advertising budget is. You can calculate this either as a recurring daily budget or a lifetime budget for your advertisement campaign. Depending on what type of advertisement campaign you are running, what type of advertisement you place will affect what exactly you are paying for. As a result, you will need to keep the data in the “Audience Size” tab in mind as you are bidding for your campaign, as it will give you an idea of how much of an effect it will have.

For example, website conversions can be priced per-click or per-impression. Page promotion strategies will pay by the results accomplished through the campaign and likes will result in an estimated amount of new page likes based on past data. In any case, make sure to view your results in the “Audience Size” module on the right side of the screen.

6. [Ad Set] Confirm your Campaign’s Ad Set

Using the charts and demographic information, make sure that you are satisfied with all of the information before continuing on to designing your ad using Facebook’s online advertisement tool. For example, you might want to edit the placement of your advertisement, add the connections you already have or simply just make sure that you have all of the settings right in the Ad Set before you start designing and

finishing your ad.

Since each of the settings is a potential variable that either adds or reduces the cost, finish by making sure that you are getting the best possible deal for your bid by playing around with some of the settings that don't really matter to you. Once you are completely finished fine-tuning your advertisement settings, go ahead and click the "Continue" to take you to the page to design your ad.

7. [Ad] Finish by Designing and Completing Your Advertisement

Depending on your advertisement strategy, you will now be presented with various different options for designing your advertisement. This page is where you will find the settings to add in your URL, personalised images and to format the advertisement itself. Be sure to follow the up-to-date settings and specifications provided by Facebook for things like your pictures, headline, and so on.

While you are selecting all of your settings and filling in your personalised information, you should see what your advertisement will look like in the "Ad Preview" column on the far right. In any case, make sure that you are happy with the overall look and design of your advertisement and the quality of the words you use before moving onto the confirmation.

How to Advertise your New Business on Facebook: Quick Summary

Learning how to advertise your new business on Facebook may seem like a complicated and time-consuming process, but the benefits that come with reaching out to a worldwide market offset the minor downfalls of having to learn how to use their system of advertisements. If you become informed about the different advertisement campaigns they offer and then choose

to either do a simple advertisement campaign or one through Facebook Ads Manager, it is easy to create a massive audience or sales boost if you create a successful advertisement.

People who run local businesses that don't necessarily need to reach out to a global audience can also benefit from Facebook advertisements. If you design your advertisement on Facebook using [Facebook Ads Manager](#), you can make your advertisement pinpointed to a very precise audience that can either be a global or locally-based audience. Since Facebook advertisements allow you to essentially even list the beliefs of your potential customers, there are few options in the world for advertising to such a large audience which narrows down in a definitive manner to a select group of likely clients.

How to Start a Blog: Tips, Tricks and Strategies to make it Successful

Attain a Good Work-Life Balance: How to Successfully

Juggle Family Life and Work

'Dreams don't work until you do'

The phrase 'work from home' invariably brings to the imagination a rather clichéd image: A relaxed individual lounging around in pyjamas and sipping a cup of coffee on the couch. However, this is not always the true picture. While working from home affords balance between family and career, you have to be professional, disciplined and committed in order to develop your career or business and make it a success. Working in a home environment is quite different from working in an office and it pays to understand the differences between the two. Once you appreciate the different ways in which you can straddle both worlds comfortably, you are likely to enjoy the excitement and fulfilment of a work-at-home career.

While the article is mainly relevant to mothers looking to resurrect their career by exploring work from home options, it's equally applicable to those who wish to give up a regular 9 to 5 job and consider working from home. Juggling family life and a work-at-home career becomes easier when you learn how to overcome problems and obstacles that typically crop up. We have listed several different ideas. However, you can choose those that work best for your preferences and requirement.

Benefits and Challenges of Working from Home

As women with young children and babies returning to work in an office, we often face a catch-22 situation: In the office, we feel guilty about neglecting our responsibilities as a mother and at home, we feel frustrated about not being able to

go out to work. Since women by nature tend to be others-oriented, work from home options offer benefits that help you overcome guilt and frustration.

Let's begin with the benefits of working from home. You do not have to be worried about answering to a boss peering down your shoulder, you enjoy flexibility of hours, you don't have to navigate traffic jams or stand in queues for the bus or train and most importantly, you can keep a watchful eye on your children and home. It's a myth that work from home careers cannot provide a regular source of income; in fact, work from home careers can provide an excellent source of income over time. Moreover, you can work with people from all over the world! Emails make it possible to work with people who live in other time zones.

As with any life transition point, challenges also arise in certain areas. You need to be able to separate your personal life from your work, you need to develop self-motivation and commitment and most importantly, you may need to get used to the concept of faceless communication with people you may never meet. Other challenges include adjustment on the part of family members to your new schedule and goals. You must also avoid distraction such as watching TV or chatting with your neighbours, etc. It's a good idea to treat your new work-at-home career with the same dedication and seriousness as you would accord to a regular corporate job.

Contrary to popular belief, working from home does not imply shorter working hours. As a matter of fact, if you don't draw up a disciplined schedule, you may find yourself working in spurts throughout the day and into the late evening. You may also miss the warmth and spontaneity of face-to-face meetings, but that is resolved with the help of interactive online meetings using Skype, instant messaging, Google Hangouts, etc.

Read on for useful strategies to overcome common challenges of working at home:

1. Schedule an interesting activity at the end of the work day in order to add structure to your work day. Otherwise we tend to work long hours without realising it. If something new crops up, reorganise your schedule so that you plan it for the following day. Make sure that you inform your clients or colleagues about your preferred timings.
2. Babies and very young children may not always follow regular sleep and waking schedules. They may not realise that they should not interrupt you during work or during a telephone call. It's a good idea to schedule your work around their nap time or during the time when someone is available to babysit them.
3. Family life can be rather unpredictable in several ways. Guests, for example, may turn up and may stay for longer than they said they would. It may be impossible to work while everyone around you is chatting; there are likely to be too many distractions. This is why it's a good idea to identify cafes, shopping centres or even parks, etc where you can work for a while without being disturbed. A noisy home can affect quality of attention and reduce work productivity. It's also wise to let relatives and family members know about your work timings. If you find people imposing on you, inform them politely but firmly that you have work to do. If we expect clients, customers and colleagues to take us seriously, we must be professional and committed from our side too. Excuses for delays and frequent confusions with work deliverables will end up frustrating your clients.
4. Although working from home helps reduce costs of

commuting, etc, you should be prepared for a few incidental expenses that may arise. For example, you may need to invest in a good printer and scanner. If you choose to work for an employer, you may be able to negotiate these expenses or request the office to help out with a few expenses. If you are looking to start your own freelance career, you may need to buy these basic pieces of equipment. Since unexpected power outages and server issues may occur anywhere, make sure that you identify one or two alternative places where you can sit and work. Take along an extension cord for improved flexibility.

5. We may often feel compelled or pressured to complete pending household chores since we are physically at home. A basket overflowing with clothes, a sink full of dirty dishes or a dusty living room may distract you from work. It's also easy to feel guilty about not completing household chores. However, please share chores with your partner if possible, or schedule them for another time after work. Otherwise we will end up wasting a lot of valuable work time completing household tasks. Household chores are usually a never-ending list; there will always be something to do. Avoid becoming obsessive about it.
6. While working from home can feel meaningful and exciting, you are vulnerable to exhaustion and burnout just as you would be in a regular job. Remember to keep weekends free from work (this is also a good time to catch up on laundry, buy groceries, etc). However, sometimes, if your child has been sick or there are unavoidable delays, you can work on a weekend. Try not to make it a habit. If you keep working throughout the weekend without a break, you are likely to feel exhausted. Since you work from home during the week and are also at home during the weekend, the lines may become blurred. It's important to develop a schedule that helps you balance work and family life. Set regular

work hours and stick to it. Otherwise, there is a tendency to become addicted to the computer screen.

7. Since home also functions as an office, we can begin to feel excessively housebound when we choose to work from home. Make it a point to go out for a walk every day and plan more outings during the weekend. This will refresh your mind and body. Even if you need to buy something trivial like a loaf of bread or milk, take the opportunity to get some fresh air.

There is nothing wrong in taking a small nap between work tasks, but this should also be scheduled. It can sometimes feel awful to have to complete work-related tasks. But this can seem tough when you have sat up for most of the night with a crying baby. There will be days when you feel weary and exhausted.

The upside of working from home is that you can sleep in for some time, feel refreshed and sit down to work at a later time – something that will be practically impossible if you're going out to work. Just remember to stick to time deadlines (make sure that you incorporate some breathing space when negotiating your contract), but there are different ways to meet deadlines. At the end of the day, your client or boss will not mind if you work in the morning or evening as long as you deliver quality work.

Additional Techniques that help Juggle Work-at-Home Careers with Family Life and Children

- If you've been used to going to work, you may need to change your approach to get in the mood. For example, you may feel like working only when you get dressed and go somewhere. To overcome this mental block, try getting dressed as if you are going to work and then sit in your

workspace at home. This will help put you in the right frame of mind. While working in pyjamas may work for some, it may not suit others. Get dressed for the part.

- Choose a work at home career that piques your interest, fits in your new schedule and suits your inclination. For example, if you were a PR executive or management workshop trainer, you may not necessarily be able to work at such careers from home. This is because you will need to physically go out and visit people, venues, etc. The good news is that there are numerous work-at-home careers to choose from.
- Eat a healthy breakfast and set aside 10 minutes for yoga or meditation to relax your mind and body. If you are behind schedule, please avoid skipping breakfast (you may feel that you can always eat later because you are at home). The objective is to attain a healthy work-life balance, not to starve or invite health problems.
- Once your children are old enough, provide clear instructions on your work times when you will not be available for chores or playing, etc.
- If you work at home, chances are that you will have to put up with a blaring TV or music system during bank holidays or school holidays. It helps to demarcate certain timings when you can request that the TV be turned off. Allocate an alternative time when children can enjoy TV. It's also a good idea to practise mindfulness as this helps focus our attention on work despite external distractions. You may also consider using headphones, especially if you have toddlers or young children playing around you.
- Do not allow work to consume your life. Keep time for meeting friends, family and playing with your children.
- Cook quick, non-fussy dishes in the morning and close the kitchen counter until you are free to cook in the evening. Having adequate food in the kitchen goes a long way in preparing for the day. Older children can help themselves and younger ones will not go hungry (and

become cranky in the process). You do not have to get up from work every now and then in order to cook.

- Once your work from home business or freelance career begins to earn you income, don't forget to keep your accounts in meticulous order and pay your taxes. You can consider hiring a tax consultant to help you update your books.
- Talk to your family and tell them not to take your time and availability for granted. Your partner may expect you to do the laundry or your daughter may request you to drop her off at an unexpected class. Share all chores and train children to respect your routine. Meticulous planning helps avert unexpected delays.
- Harness technology and use it to save time and effort. Use your computer, emailing, mobile phones, etc to maximum extent to reduce manual effort.
- If you're earning a good income, consider hiring part-time help for mundane household chores. This can go a long way in easing the burden of straddling the two different worlds of family and work.

It's never easy to juggle a family, children, household chores and a career. However, it's not necessary to alienate yourself from the world of career ambitions and work once you have a baby. You can invest your ingenuity, resourcefulness and talents into working from home and can expect excellent results through consistent effort and diligence. It may be challenging to begin work with a baby or toddler in tow, but you can achieve success and earn a good income. There are several ways to incorporate a work from home career even if you have to deal with a lengthy task list.

A supportive family who understands your needs and commitments is important for career success. Good health is paramount to proving your mettle at a work-at-home job and managing a bustling household at the same time. If you get the balance right, you can have your cake and eat it too.