



Twelve Tips for Finding and Creating Flexible Work

1. **Ask Your Current or Future Employer for a Flexible Arrangement:** If you'd like to stay with your current company or organization, put together a proposal outlining what your schedule would look like and how this would benefit the company. See www.familiesandwork.org for free templates. According to Working Mother Magazine's *What Women Want* survey, 74% of people who asked for changes got them! On the other hand, if you are currently interviewing for a full-time position, remember that you can also negotiate for a flexible schedule after receiving an offer.
2. **Find Another Interested Employee:** If you know of another employee at a similar level who would like to work part-time, explore the option of proposing a job share schedule. Create a proposal outlining how this would work, and of course, how this would benefit the employer.
3. **Start a Flexible Work Taskforce:** If your company currently does not offer flexible work schedules, talk to your Human Resources department about this possibility. You can also create a taskforce of interested employees to investigate such options and create a winning proposal.
4. **Use Vacation Time:** According to a study by the Families and Work Institute, 36% of Americans did not plan to use all of their vacation time. Consider taking half a day a week to make your schedule more flexible – if you get 17 days paid vacation a year (the U.S. average), you could take off a half day for 34 weeks!
5. **Consider Starting a Home-based Business:** Have a great idea for a business you can run and manage from home? Although starting up typically requires much time, energy, and perseverance, self-employment usually offers a great degree of flexibility, especially since you are the boss! See www.ahbbo.com for a master list of home business ideas.
6. **Turn a Hobby into Paid Work:** If you have a deep interest in another field, consider ways you could get paid to do what you love. Having a second source of income will allow you flexibility if you want to change or reduce your hours.
7. **Join Mother and Children Groups:** Chat with other mothers and find out who has a flexible work schedule and where they work. Once you locate someone working in your field of interest, find out how they arranged this with their current company or organization and if they know of any other people within the industry that have similar arrangements.
8. **Attend a Professional Association Meeting:** Find a Professional Association in your field and attend a meeting. As you talk to people at the event, mention your background and desire for a flexible work arrangement to balance work and family. Be sure to ask if they know of anyone currently doing this that you could talk to.
9. **Send an Email Blast:** Compose an email to all of your friends, family members, and old colleagues (those that are not tied to your current job if you are working) and let them know that you are searching for a flexible work arrangement in a particular field or industry. Ask them to contact you if they know of someone currently doing such work, as you would like to talk to these individuals further.
10. **Check out Working Mothers Magazine:** See www.workingmother.com for their annual *100 Best Companies for Working Mothers* list. Then visit these companies' websites for more information and job possibilities.
11. **Look into Small Companies, Small Firms, and Nonprofit Organizations:** Often these employers are more willing to offer flexible arrangements as a perk to working with them, as they know this is one way to attract top talent over the big guys. See www.idealists.org for a great website listing nonprofit opportunities.
12. **Visit Flexible Arrangement Job Sites:** Check out www.simplyhired.com for jobs available at family-friendly companies as well as telecommuting, freelancing, and part-time job websites (e.g., www.tjobs.com and www.emoonlighter.com).