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Making It Work**How do you make time for your significant other?**

By Jane Porter

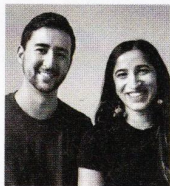


We love cooking Indian food at home because it's a long and loving process.

We toast the spices, and it makes our home smell delicious and feel nice and cozy. Every Sunday, we go to our local farmers' market and drop off our compost and shop for the week. —Nisha

While we are chopping and cooking, we discuss our days and catch up.

When we share a meal, we can have some space for ourselves each night. —Brendan



NISHA MIRANI, 30, AND BRENDAN KRAMER, 31, FOUNDERS OF SUNDAY / MONDAY, A TEXTILE BRAND IN NEW YORK CITY

The way my husband and I have made it work is to create quality family time with our hobbies.

Given our work and travel schedules, we don't have a ton of time during the week for something like a date night. But both of us love the *New York Times* crossword and spend time competing against each other to finish it first. We also have a personal trainer who comes and works with us both—and our 11-year-old son joins as well, so we make that a family activity.



TRACY KIM, 47, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AT AAPTIV, A FITNESS-TECH COMPANY IN NEW YORK CITY

My wife and I work side by side after our kids go to sleep (luckily they're good sleepers!).

Often she's grading papers and I'm doing spreadsheets, so even if we can't be directly interacting, it's really nice to be close to each other. I think it's super important for the family to be honest about the implications of our jobs and dreams. This is one way we have figured out that makes this possible.



JUAN PABLO MONTÚFAR, 40, CHIEF FLORAL OFFICER AND COFOUNDER OF THE BOUQS COMPANY, A FLORAL BUSINESS, IN ECUADOR

We like to do little things to brighten up each other's day when we're apart.

I went on a trip once, and when I came home, my husband had bought me some plants I wanted. I'll slip little notes into his suit pockets. Those little acts of love put us in a good place even when we aren't actually together. We also have three kids, and we try to go to places where they can be independent and safe without our having to hover over them so we can have our own alone time.



WENDY ALTSCHULER, 40, TRAVEL WRITER AND EDITOR IN CHICAGO

I like to add an extra day to my work trips and spend time with my wife in a city nearby.

For example, if we're working in Oakland, we'll go a little early and do some things for fun in San Francisco. Because my wife and I work together so often in the restaurant, it's important to have that extra time together when I can step away from the business, take care of my family, and refresh my mind.



RODNEY SCOTT, 47, PIT MASTER AT RODNEY SCOTT'S BBQ IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Make one-on-one time even more meaningful with the tips at realsimple.com/goodrelationships.

"I want people to understand that creating joy is not about making your house look like a circus."



CONNECT WITH NATURE

Outdoor views and greenery have been found to have a positive effect on our health and mood. With that in mind, Ingrid and Albert positioned their bed opposite a dormer window. The view of their backyard's trees is a daily dose of pleasure. "It's so nice to wake up and look out at that," Ingrid says. The couple added pops of bright color, like the antique bench painted fluorescent yellow (a particularly powerful space-brightening hue because of how it reflects light), pillows, and Moroccan rugs, to infuse the room with energy.

TO BUY: Paint on the bench: Lemon Twist SW6969 (similar to shown); sherwin-williams.com for stores. Vintage Moroccan rug; heja home.com for similar. (Opposite page) Paint on the chairs: Irish Clover 2038-20 mixed with Celtic Green 2038-10; benjamin moore.com for stores.



TOP: HIGHLANDS PILLOW XII, \$130; AND BLUE LIGHTWEIGHT THROW, \$115; MERIDIANNY.COM. MALABAR PILLOW, \$80; SHOPSUNDAYMONDAY.COM. ASSORTED PILLOWS; REBECCAATWOOD.COM. CASABLANCA BOLD STRIPE THROW, \$398; SERENAANDLILY.COM.