

hibernation

YOUR CORONAVIRUS GUIDE TO DAILY LIFE

Home sweat home

MANAGING WORK-LIFE BALANCE WHEN YOU'RE STUCK AT HOME IS A NEW CHALLENGE FOR WORKING MUMS, WRITES DIANA JENKINS

Work@Home

Working women with children are among the hardest hit by coronavirus lockdown measures, with homeschooling and domestic demands skyrocketing while normal support systems disappear.

Whether they organise the kids before heading to the office or drop them at school and then run a business at home, racing through tasks before the bell rings, the usual daily structure has been up-ended.

It leads to one conclusion – stick to a routine but dial back expectations because this condensed family time is precious and freedom will be on agenda again.

It's a point not lost on mother of three Tara Lamond who has a business Mandala Living selling luxe Australian-made, eco-friendly yoga and meditation products and yoga retreats. With retreats suspended, Ms Lamond now organises her online store with the entire family working under one roof.

"Ava is 15 in Year 10, Louis is 13 in Year 8 and Toby's 11 in Year 6. Three different schools, three different technologies," Ms Lamond says.

"The biggest issue for us is that Toby didn't have a device, so he and I are sharing a computer and I have to negotiate time with him."

She says many of her working mum friends are battling to keep all the plates spinning — especially those with younger children.

"I've got girlfriends who've got seven, eight-year-olds, and they're trying to work as well and they can't, particularly while they're homeschooling because the kids need to be helped with each bit of work that comes through.

"Normally my boys would be out playing sport and surfing for hours on end. You can get them out for a little bit but our battle now is screen time. I just lose it. I lose it like a crazy woman. My neighbours probably



Businesswoman Tara Lamond and son Toby who is helping her stuff her yoga cushions. Picture: Sam Rutty

don't think of me as 'retreating', Ms Lamond says.

A survey by Humaniti, a personal finance app that rewards users for participating in research, asked how parents were coping. Over 15 per cent of mums working from home answered "Not too well" or "Not at all well", revealing a significant proportion are suffering. Humaniti CEO Ben Dixon says with 41 per cent of Australians now working from home, working parents of both sexes have a greater challenge.

"They face the difficult juggling act between their day job and home life. Sixty-five per cent of non-parents are coping well under the current situation, however this number drops to 54 per cent for those with children at home," Mr Dixon says.

Many mums currently commiserate via Zoom, Houseparty and #virtualvino sessions, trading jokes about self-medicating with sauvignon blanc. But for every mum sharing hilarious clips of her costumed family bopping to pop songs in their lounge room, there's another mum looking for reassurance and practical advice.

how to stay calm

- Beat the kids out of bed — early birds get a blessed cup of tea in peace.
- Make like Elsa and let it go — give yourself a break each day.
- Put your legs up the wall — yogis swear by it for an instant reset.
- Get out in nature and move your body — exercise is always a great idea.
- Binge TV is everybody's new best friend. And that's OK for an end of day wind down.



One working mum with two boys under 10 said she confessed on Messenger to other school mums that she was struggling, but the awkward silence meant she quickly followed up with lighthearted banter about baking with the kids. The thing to remember is that none of us is in this situation forever.

Rebecca Klodinsky, founder of IIXIIST — formerly Frankii Swim, the swimwear label beloved of celebrities from Hailey Bieber to Rihanna — says running the business

from home while juggling her young son is hardly glamorous but rewarding nonetheless.

"It's really hard. Instagram and a lot of the stuff you see at this time and some of these influencer mums, it's just rubbish," Ms Klodinsky (inset) says. "Life isn't what you see: it's a messy house, crying, the toddler's running around everywhere, Weetbix for dinner and then I'm having UberEats in bed at six o'clock, absolutely ruined. We're doing everything which is crazy."

DANGEROUS LIAISONS



WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

Nick invents a new martini and lasagne is a success for clues

"Look at that, my new creation," said Nick, holding up the glass to La Contessa as she came back into the garden.

"How is it different from any other martini?" she asked.

"I poured the vodka with my left hand," said Nick. "I think I will call it the 'Quarantini'."

"It looks lonely, perhaps you could make it a friend for me," said La Contessa. "So, I dropped off my lasagne to Alice Turner."

"How was our dead billionaire's sister?" asked Nick. "Grateful for your generous gesture?"

"Not exactly, she seemed rather grumpy about it really. Not what I expected from a woman so renowned for her philanthropy and good works."

"Maybe this coronavirus isolation is getting to her. Did she have very much to say?"

"The only thing of interest was someone's wedding — it's being held on Zoom and she had no idea what that was."

"Whose wedding?" asked Nick, handing over the freshly shaken martini.

"The daughter of Lady Arabella Saunders apparently."

Nick jolted so suddenly the liquid sloshed from the glass. He stepped over to the table and the pile of stolen letters from Turner Towers. He held one up triumphantly. "Ron and Lady Arabella Saunders, Charles Turner's old racing manager. Apartment number five."

"Wasn't there something very dodgy about him?" asked La Contessa.

"Yes, very dodgy," said Nick. "Perhaps I can get us invited to that Zoom wedding."

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