

ART OF WORK LIFE BALANCE



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Work & Life

Creating a balance between your professional and personal life is as difficult as it is important. We so often get lost in our work lives, that nothing else exists during that period, and when we eventually come out of it, we feel regret. As much as some of us might love our jobs, the ones who love us back are our families, our friends and the relationships that we have with them. So, here are some ways in which you can find a semblance of balance between your work and your personal life.

2

Don't take work home

Over time, we develop a habit of taking work home, and it always starts with the small yet, the most habitual thing. Checking e-mails. Our work interferes with our life with small steps, and that happens when we start checking out our e-mails even after we've left office. It could be just taking a sneak peek at the update you have been waiting for, or a reply that you could not wait for. Even though technology has helped our lives in many ways, it has also created expectations of constant accessibility.

The work day never seems to end. So, don't check your e-mail while you are out with your child, don't send work emails while you're hanging out with family. Make quality time true quality time. By not reacting to the updates from work, you will be developing a stronger habit of resilience. Remember, Resilient people feel a greater sense of control over their lives, while reactive people have less control and are more prone to stress.

3

Learn to Say No!

Saying No, is not a bad thing. From a very young age, it has been fed to us, that saying no when someone is asking for our help, or when we are doing out duty is wrong, and so, that habit continues at work as well. Often, we don't mind stretching our daily hours, or working 6 days a week. We don't mind coming back home and connecting to work through our laptops. But these are also moments where you are missing spending time with your family, or more importantly, with yourself.

If you're available 24/7 to your boss, and their increasing and unremitting demands, and you're the kind of person who as a result gets overloaded. If you tend to say yes without thinking when you're asked to do something extra, try stalling. Don't answer straight away. Say you'll get back to the person asking, then use that time to think clearly about whether to say yes or no. If you want to say yes, great, go ahead.

But if you want to say no, say no and keep saying it. Don't justify your actions or give excuses. Mental Health Foundations recommend that when work demands are too high, you must speak up.

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Perfection is sometimes Over-rated!

While many of us strive for perfection, we never realize what cost we are forced to give in order to achieve it. As we often fail to look at the bigger picture, we have to take small pauses to see what we doing, and where are going with our chosen path. Sometimes, while at work, we push ourselves over the brink where our quest for perfection is lost, because frankly we have no energy. By doing this, you leave yourself no leeway, and thereby lose a chance to perfect something that you probably could have, had you given yourself some time.

When are about to put work away for the day, it might sound like a great plan, but there are times when as you leave work, you realise you haven't done something as well as you could. You turn on your heel and go back to do it right. This is more of a personal trait, as there are some people who find it very hard to let things go. But, when you are overworked, you need to explicitly tell yourself that what you've done may not be perfect, but it is good enough. Do not push yourself to a point of exhaustion, as that leaves you with no energy for your personal life as well.

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Routinely Exercise and Meditate!

Our lives these days have become like a well-oiled machine. There are just a few essential things that we do, and that too, because we have no choice. Even when we're busy, we make time for the crucial things in life, we eat, we go to the bathroom, we sleep – but usually not enough! And yet one of our most crucial needs - exercise – should actually be the first thing to go when our calendars fill up. Exercise is an effective stress reducer. It pumps feel-good endorphins through your body. It helps lift your mood.

Dedicate a few chunks of time each week to self-care, whether it's exercise, yoga or meditation. It is imperative for your mental, physical and spiritual health! If you're really pressed for time, start small, something like deep breathing exercises during your commute to or from work. A quick five-minute meditation session morning and night, or replacing drinking alcohol with a healthier form of stress reduction.

Balance, is not the completion and achievement of a task, it is inclusion of self-care so that your body, mind and soul is refreshed. These exercises require minor effort but offer major payoffs. Biologically speaking, our autonomic nervous system includes two branches: the sympathetic nervous system (our body's stress response) and the parasympathetic nervous system (our body's rest and digest response). The key is to find something that you can build into your life that will activate your parasympathetic nervous system. Short, meditative exercises like deep breathing or grounding your senses in your present surroundings, are great places to start. The more you do these, the more you activate your parasympathetic nervous system,

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Remove Toxic from your life – be it people or activities.

Not all stress creating factors are from work, some are from our personal lives as well. And because of that, to achieve that Work-Life Balance, we might have to make changes in our personal lives. To begin with, identify what's most important in your life. This list will differ for everyone, so make sure it truly reflects your priorities, not someone else's. Next, draw firm boundaries so you can devote quality time to these high-priority people and activities. From there, it will be easier to determine what needs to be trimmed from the schedule.

Social media has taken our lives by a storm, and they've monopolized our time as well! If email or internet surfing sends you into a time-wasting spiral, establish rules to keep you on task. That may mean turning off email notifications and replying in batches during limited times each day. If you're mindlessly surfing Facebook or Instagram when you should be getting work done, try using something as simple as an alarm on your phone! Set one for 10 minutes later, with a self-imposed rule that after the 10 minutes are over, the social media time is over too! If you find your time being gobbled up by less constructive people, politely excuse yourself.

Focus on the people and activities that reward you the most. And No, it is not being selfish. It's like the airplane metaphor. If you have a child, you put the oxygen mask on yourself first, not on the child. When it comes to being a good friend, spouse, parent or worker, the better you are yourself, the better you are going to be in all those areas as well.

