6 ways to have a work-life balance

Feeling like you never take time-**off** and all you do is work? You’re not alone. What you need is a work-life balance but how can you achieve it, that’s the real game changer. Did you know 94% **of service professionals in the U.S. spend over 50 hours working per week, while many of these people work on the weekends. Forty-eight percent of Americans consider themselves to be workaholics, but 72% of people consider work-life balance when job-searching. Accepting these facts many people tend to juggle living two lives at work and home. Whereas people are finding it hard to adapt towards post pandemic changes, it’s an essential part for a healthy lifestyle.** **Managing work-life balance has gotten difficult.**

**What is work-life balance?**

The term work-life balance is often confused as the trade-off between time spent at work and time spent on other, non-activities. In an ideal setting this means any free time spent that nourish us as people, whether spending time with friends, family, engaging in a hobby, or sleeping is the balance of life.

The idea of ‘balance’ is the state of equilibrium where a person equally prioritizes the demands of one’s career and the demands of one’s personal life. A good work-life balance, has numerous positive effects, including less stress, a lower risk of [burnout](https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/15173-combat-workplace-burnout.html) and a greater sense of well-being. This not only benefits employees but employers, too.

**Why is work-life balance essential?**

Just like in our diets, to stay healthy and energized for the long-haul, people need variety in how they spend their time. We tend to fall into the trap of believing that we can be productive all the time, or that an eight-hour day at work equates to eight hours of output. However, that’s simply not true. [Research shows that beyond a certain number of hours](http://ftp.iza.org/dp8129.pdf), employees don’t actually produce anything more — but the impact to their health increases dramatically.

Workaholics and those who struggle to practice self-care find themselves at higher risk for burnout, fatigue, and stress-related health issues.

**The harmful impact of an unbalanced work-life dynamic**

Poor work-life balance can have a far bigger impact than just skipping the gym or not having a balanced diet. [One study found that the risk of stroke is higher](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)60295-1/fulltext) in people that work more than 55 hours a week. The same amount of work hours are also associated with [a higher risk of anxiety and depression](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/psychological-medicine/article/abs/long-working-hours-and-symptoms-of-anxiety-and-depression-a-5-year-follow-up-of-the-whitehall-ii-study/B19F5D1AC436F10E5954C8ADBBE2AC57). And even when adjusting for fairly normal sleep patterns, another study found that [working longer hours correlated with a decline in physical health](https://academic.oup.com/ageing/article/46/1/108/2605686?login=true).

By its very definition, work-life balance impacts all areas of your life. It tends to show up differently for different people, however. Here are 7 characteristics associated with poor balance:

1. You are still thinking about work when you are not at work. There is a high chance of burnout for those who find it difficult to set boundaries between work and life.

2. Your relationships, both personal and professional tends to suffer. You may be easily irritated with co-workers and distant with loved ones.

3. Your body have enigmatic aches and pains which makes it difficult for you to focus on your work.

4. When not at work, everything seems dull. You don’t feel like working often, turning down invitations, further isolating yourself from your friends.

5. Spending a lot of money on outsourcing personal support tasks like, laundry, dishes, and not checking up your mail.

6. Taking time off is a struggle when you’re sick, mentally strained, restless or need to complete personal tasks.

7. Lack of presence and direction [often leads to an existential crisis](https://www.betterup.com/en-us/resources/blog/what-is-an-existential-crisis-causes-symptoms-and-how-to-overcome-it?hsLang=en), when nothing seems right.

**How to achieve work-life balance**

Here are 6 ways to create a better work-life balance,

**1.** **Find a job that you love**   
Although work is an expected societal norm, your career shouldn’t be restraining. If you hate what you do, you aren’t going to be happy, plain, and simple. You don’t need to love every aspect of your job, but it needs to be exciting enough that you don’t dread getting out of bed every morning. Finding a job that you are so passionate about you would do it for free.

### 2. Prioritize your health Your overall physical, emotional, and mental health should be your main concern. If you struggle with anxiety or depression and think therapy would benefit you, fit those sessions into your schedule, even if you must leave work early. If you are [battling a chronic illness](https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/10041-manage-chronic-illness-at-work.html), don’t be afraid to call in sick on rough days. Overworking yourself prevents you from getting better, possibly causing you to take more days off in the future. Prioritizing your health doesn’t have to consist of radical or extreme activities. It can be as simple as daily meditation or exercise.

### 3. Take a vacation Sometimes, truly unplugging means taking vacation time and shutting work completely off for a while. Whether your vacation consists of a one-day staycation or a two-week trip to Bali, it’s important to take time off to physically and mentally recharge. According to the [State of American Vacation 2018](https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/media_root/document/2018_Research_State%20of%20American%20Vacation%202018.pdf) study conducted by the U.S. Travel Association, 52% of employees reported having unused vacation days left over at the end of the year. Employees are often worried that taking time off will disrupt the workflow, and they will be met with a backlog of work when they return. This fear should not restrict you from taking a much-needed break.

### 4. Make time for yourself and your loved ones While your job is important, it shouldn’t be your entire life. You were an individual before taking this position, and you should prioritize the activities or hobbies that make you happy. To achieve work-life balance you require deliberate action. When planning time with your loved ones, create a calendar for romantic and family dates. It may seem weird to plan one-on-one time with someone you live with, but it will ensure that you spend quality time with them without work-life conflict. Just because work keeps you busy doesn’t mean you should neglect personal relationships.

### 5. Set boundaries and work hours Set boundaries for yourself and your colleagues, to avoid burnout. When you leave the office, avoid thinking about upcoming projects or [answering company emails](https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/9241-check-email-after-work.html). Consider having a separate computer or phone for work, so you can shut it off when you clock out. If that isn’t possible, use separate browsers, emails, or filters for your work and personal platforms. It is advised notifying team members and your manager about boundaries beyond which you cannot be accessible because you are engaged in personal activities. This will help to ensure that they understand and respect your workplace limits and expectations.

**6.** **Ask for help**  
[High-achieving professionals](https://www.betterup.com/blog/what-we-can-learn-from-pandemic-thrivers?hsLang=en) are often guilty of taking everything on themselves. They don't want to “bother” anyone by asking for help. Sometimes this is tied to identity (“I’m supposed to be the one who has it all together”) or feelings of obligation (“Who else will do it if I don’t?”). Instead, consider that asking for help gives other people the gift of giving — and being part of a solution and support system. This builds the benefits of mutual relationships for all involved.