

Balancing work life and home life

How you can help yourself

A healthy work-life balance is essential for protecting your mental health against the effects of work-related stress. Here are some steps you can take to help yourself achieve a healthy work-life balance:



Be flexible. More and more employers offer flexible working conditions. If starting earlier in the day or working from home would help, ask your employer if it's possible.

Work smarter, not longer. Prioritise and allow a certain amount of time per task. Try not to get caught up in activities such as unstructured meetings that take up time.

Learn to say no or delegate. There's no point volunteering for every project if the quality of your work is going to suffer. Say 'no' occasionally or delegate tasks to keep your workload more manageable. Speak up when work demands are too much.

Take proper breaks at work. Keep your energy levels up with a proper lunch break and go for a walk at lunchtime if you can.

Draw a line between work and leisure. If you need to bring work home, try to ensure that you only work in a certain area of your home - and can close the door on it. If you're always thinking about work, you'll never really feel relaxed.

Look after your mental health. Take seriously the link between work-related stress and mental ill health. Do all you can to reduce stress. If you let your health take a back seat to your job, the quality of your work will go downhill and you'll end up stressed.

Make the most of your free time. Recognise the importance of exercise, leisure activities and friendships. Try to ensure that these are not sacrificed to working longer hours, and spend your spare time on things you enjoy. Don't put off fun!

Watch out for the cumulative effect of working long hours. Keep track of your working hours over a period of weeks or months rather than days. Research has shown that regularly working longer hours leads to a greater risk of heart disease, stress and mental health issues.

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