

OBLIGATIONS & PLEASURES



The Cycle of Work-Life Balance

Each of us has a variety of priorities, obligations, relationships, interests, and activities that compete for our time. We have things that we really must do, like going to school, going to work, caring for others, and paying our bills. We also have things that we enjoy and that bring us joy, like spending time with family and friends, volunteering, and working on a hobby. Balancing these two sides can be challenging, but very important. It's not only essential to our physical and mental well-being, but also to our professional success, productivity, personal happiness, and fulfillment.

The Consequences of Losing Your Balance

Along with stress and eventual burnout, research has shown that those who work more than 55 hours per week had a 13% greater risk of a heart attack and were 33% more likely to suffer a stroke compared to those who worked 35 to 40 hours weekly.

Many of us equate working more hours to getting more done. We justify extra time in the office and responding to emails late at night with the belief that we're getting ahead of our growing to-do list. Research seems to debunk this. In fact, working beyond 49 hours per week can have a negative impact on our productivity!



How do you know if you've found balance? Ask yourself two questions...

- 1 When I've done everything that I have to do, do I have the time and energy to enjoy the things I want to do?
- 2 Can I do something without worrying about another task or feeling guilty that I'm not doing something else?

If you can say **Yes!** Then you're probably on the right track!



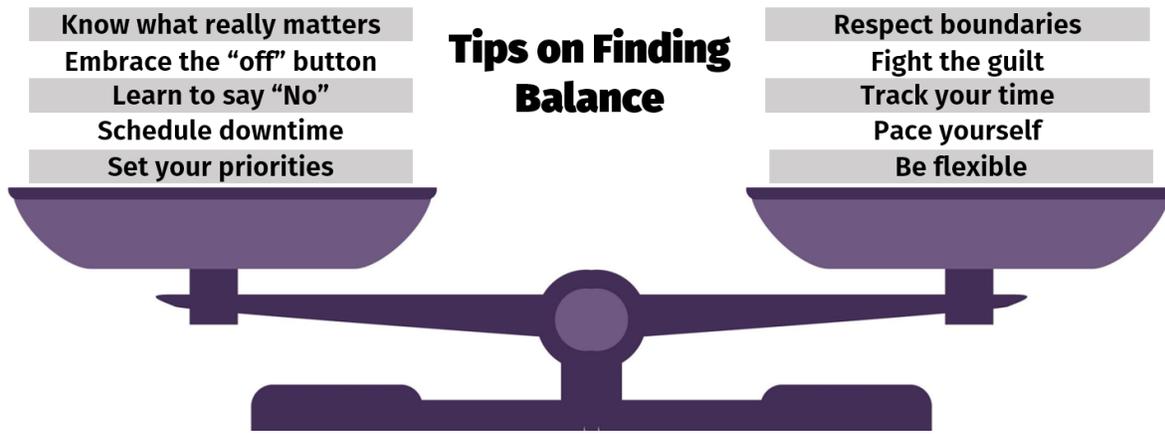
My Priority Guide

A long To-Do List that can feel overwhelming. Try prioritizing items into smaller lists. This allows you to focus on the most essential items first and not feel guilty once you're enjoying what you'd like to do!

I MUST DO...

I SHOULD DO...

I'D LIKE TO DO...



Research has shown that overworking isn't good for us, but it can be difficult to overcome unhealthy habits and achieve a more sustainable work-life balance. One study found that it is possible to resist the pressure of working long hours and reach a healthier balance by increasing awareness and consciously implementing changes. It's important to recognize that work-life balance is not a one-time activity, but rather an ongoing cycle of continuous re-evaluation and improvement.

01

Pause and Denormalize.

Make a point to stop and reflect. Identify what it is that's causing you to feel stressed or unsatisfied. Be aware of what you're prioritizing and what you're sacrificing as a result.

02

Pay Attention to Emotions.

Once you're aware of the current situation, look at how that situation makes you feel. Awareness of your emotional state is essential to determine the changes you want to make in your work and life.

03

Reprioritize.

Awareness helps you put things into perspective and determine how priorities may need adjusting. Be intentional about reprioritizing how you spend your time so they align with your true priorities.

04

Consider Alternatives.

Improving your situation takes experimentation and time. Reflect on different solutions and how certain changes will better align with your priorities before choosing what to adjust.

05

Implement Changes.

After careful consideration of options, it's time to act. Change can be *public*, which shifts others' expectations (asking your partner for help with errands), or *private*, an internal decision (choosing not to work evenings).

“
 The key is not to
 prioritize what's on your
 schedule but to schedule
 your priorities.
 - Stephen Covey
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Sources hbr.org/2021/01/work-life-balance-is-a-cycle-not-an-achievement | www.health.harvard.edu/blog/only-the-overworked-die-young-201512148815
www.businessfamilies.org | Images from Freepik.com