

Wellness

Maintaining work life balance Live well, work well

We all strive for balance in our lives: getting the right mix of ‘good food’ compared with food that’s ‘good for you’; ‘friends and family time’ vs. ‘me time’. Similarly, getting the mix of work and everything else in life doesn’t come without effort.

What is work-life balance?

Life is rich with possibilities. As we pursue our career, family and relationship goals, it’s normal to experience tension from time to time between the choices we make.

Work-life balance is adjusting your day-to-day activities to minimise the tension between your work and personal interests and commitments and achieve a sense of equilibrium between work life and personal life.

Research shows almost 7 in 10 Australian employees feel they are satisfied with their work-life balance yet 6 in 10 felt that work sometimes, often or always interfered with their non-work activities. So while some are struggling, many can successfully adjust their personal activities to fit more work in, without loss of satisfaction with their overall work-life balance.

Is my work-life balance out of equilibrium?

It is important to check in from time to time on all aspects of our wellbeing, including mind, body and spirit. Australian researchers have identified five key pillars of work-life balance:

- how often work interferes with responsibilities or activities outside of work
- how often work restricts time with family or friends
- how often work affects your ability to develop or maintain connections or friendships in your local community
- satisfaction with overall work-life balance
- frequency of feeling rushed or pressed for time.

Even if we are currently happy with our work-life balance, it may be possible we are sacrificing some of our interests and commitments that contribute to our health and happiness, especially in the long term.

How can I maintain good work-life balance?

There are some adjustments we can make now which can improve your satisfaction with your work-life balance. It's not so hard to take action. The trick is to make small gradual shifts each week rather than trying to overhaul your life.

There are two main approaches you can choose from if you want to improve work-life balance. You can also choose a combination of both.

- **I want to make practical changes to optimise my time management**
This includes using technology wisely, effective communication, regular planning, giving yourself breaks when you need it, and thinking things through before taking action.
- **I want to adjust some of my behaviours to optimise my wellbeing**
This may involve re-evaluating your commitments and the priorities you put on them, reassessing your time management, managing expectations with realistic thinking and focussing on things you can change rather than the things you can't control.

Further information



Australian Work and Life Index
<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/cwl/projects/awali.asp>



Sources:

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