



Health & Wellbeing Bulletin

Work Life Balance

There have been considerable changes to our culture in the last 20 years, resulting in men and women taking on multiple roles. Multiple roles & responsibilities have contributed to a greater emphasis being placed on balancing work responsibilities with child care, elder care or more generally personal-life commitments and hobbies.

Many of us report having too much work to do and little time to do it in. Thinking rationally is key when tackling a daily workload. At the end of an eight or nine-hour working day are you going to be as productive in the next hour as you might be in the morning? Will looking at something with a fresh mind mean an issue is tackled proficiently?

Very few office-based employees can put in more than 9/10 hours a day and still be productive. Not only does everything take longer to do, but tiredness and inefficiency sets in and this is when mistakes and accidents occur. It is important to weigh up the benefits of working extra hours; you may find there is a more efficient way of tackling your daily workload.

In order to achieve balance in our life, we need to practice self management, be clear on our goals & have a structure in place to achieve these goals.

Look After Your Health

Because life challenges, work load, family demands and our own expectations can provide us with imbalance it is important to be in top shape both mentally & physically. Challenges in our life can often result in imbalance. Prepare for these challenges with good health by getting enough sleep, eating regularly, choosing healthy options, taking time out for relaxation, and exercise at least three times per week. Remember poor health affects all areas of our life.

Setting Personal Boundaries

Today, work is less defined and many of us take work home literally (in our brief cases) and figuratively (in our heads). Achieving work-life balance is very dependent on defining and adhering to boundaries created between work and home life.

Achieving your personal boundaries can be very simple. Some ideas are listed across.

- When at work – always be aware of the need right now and complete this task.
- Avoid procrastination – a clear mind is a fresh mind.
- Leave your work at the office – avoid taking work items home on a regular basis – files, laptop, mobile etc.
- Plan your schedule for the next day each evening before leaving the workplace – writing a list works for some.
- If ideas or business solutions occur to you at home write them down quickly and put them in your suit pocket until the next working day.
- Change your clothes when you get home from work to create a separation between these two domains of your life.
- Protect your private time, plan fun activities for yourself with family & friends.
- Set yourself a time when you leave the office – manage your time so you can reach this goal.

Poor work life balance can be a source of stress for individuals. Stress is defined as a temporary imbalance in a person's emotional state and behaviour. It is important for us all to take breaks during our working day. This will increase our "cognitive ability" – that is our ability to reason, problem solve and be creative. Many people who say they are "too busy to take a lunch break" do not realise how much their productivity decreases during the afternoon.

Like any behavioural change, it is really important to commit to the actions/ boundaries you have set yourself and ensure you adhere to them. Setting a reminder on your computer, which pops up every Monday, or sticking a post-it note on your PC to remind yourself of what they are, may provide the motivation you need.

For further information on QUINN-healthcare's Health@Work Services please call 1890 907 088 or email och@quinn-healthcare.com

Relaxation Techniques

Simple breathing exercises can be used throughout the workday when you are feeling particularly under pressure. Another good way to relax is by stretching your muscles. Office workers in particular should stretch their neck, shoulder and back muscles every day. But always remember to stretch slowly and stop if it becomes uncomfortable.

Useful forms of relaxation outside of the workplace include massage, aromatherapy and yoga. Exercising after a working day at the office can reduce stress and improve sleep levels. Meeting your friends socially or spending quality time with your family in the evenings after work can also help you unwind and switch off.

It is important to remember that while most of us need to work we also need to live, so striking a balance between work and homelife is crucial. This will help maintain our physical and mental health.