

The Balance Sheet

Health, Balance & Wellbeing

April 2012



Achieving Work-Life Balance

Work-related stress has become a leading contributor to a myriad of physical health problems -- ranging from high blood pressure to auto-immune disorders -- to say nothing of its toll on relationships and people's emotional health. By keeping your stress levels to a minimum and prioritizing self-care, **a balanced life may be the single most important lifestyle change you can make in achieving improved health.**

But old habits remain hard to break. Many people readily agree that they need a healthy balance between their work and personal lives but struggle to actually achieve it. That's because they first need to understand the root causes of their work-life imbalance before they can even begin to address it.

What is Work-Life Balance?

Work-life balance is when your mental, emotional and physical resources (including your time) are equal to the

demands placed upon you, both personal goals and obligations stemming from the responsibilities you owe yourself, your family, and your community.

Think of work-life balance as an equation:

Mental resources +
emotional resources +
physical resources
(including your time)
= achieving your personal
goals & fulfilling your
responsibilities

Root Causes of Work-Life Imbalance

Most people who suffer from work-life imbalance tend to assume the problem is one of time. They often lament, "If only there were more hours in the day!" But while we don't have control over the passage of time, we do have control over what we

do during it. If you feel that you don't have enough time to achieve your goals and fulfill your responsibilities, then you may need to find additional resources to deal with them. More realistically, you probably need to reassess the goals and responsibilities you currently have.

Pitfalls to Avoid if You Struggle with Work-Life Balance

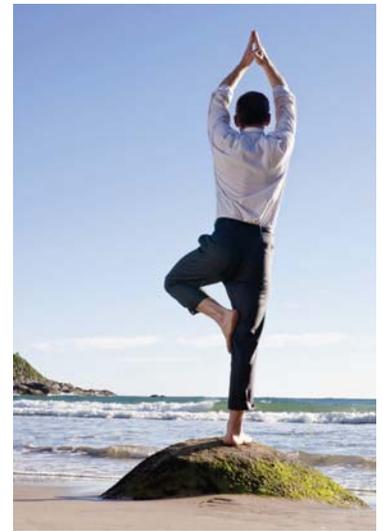
⇒ Excessive multi-tasking:

The more tasks you try to do at once, the less well you'll do on any single one. This includes trying to juggle work tasks when you're home.

⇒ Trying to work faster:

The way to achieve your goals is through efficient time management, not revving yourself up to work at an unsustainable pace. As a short-term tactic, working faster may produce results. Over the long term, however, it will leave you physically, mentally, and emotionally drained -- and far less effective in achieving your ultimate life goals.

⇒ **Making promises that you can't keep:** Don't tell someone at work or at home that you'll do something if you know you can't realistically do it. You'll only end up short-changing the demands you already have, while simultaneously disappointing the other person.



Did You Know....

Here are some common Signs that Your Life May Lack Balance

⇒ **A short temper:** You have difficulty processing feelings of anger and frustration, and frequently lash out at others.

⇒ **Lack of joy:** Everything feels like a chore. In extreme cases of imbalance, you may sink into depression.

⇒ **Constant worrying:** Even when you're not busy performing a task, your mind is continually dwelling on it, and what people will think of you if you do it well -- or badly.

⇒ **Feeling sick:** You find yourself more prone to getting colds, having headaches, and suffering from joint or muscle pains.

⇒ **Lack of control:** Your life no longer seems like it's of your own making. It feels like you're following a script.

⇒ **Addictive tendencies:** You turn to other sources of emotional stimulation, such as food, TV, the Internet, and thrill-seeking, in an effort to reassert control.

Use your smart-phone to access a free quiz to assess your work-life balance or [Click Here](#)



PPC Canada's Employee Webinar for April:

"Live and Work Well: Strategies to Achieve Balance"

Wednesday April 25th, 2012 12:00 pm to 12:45 pm (PDT)

[Click Here](#) to Register for the Webinar

Some Tips for Spring Cleaning

Create balance in your physical environment !

Don't allow yourself to clutter your house with unused items. Too many times we buy things or hang on to things that we never use giving the excuse that, "One day this may come in handy." If you have pack rat tendencies, here are some guidelines to help you reform.



⇒ **A place for everything and everything in its place**

- Everything - keys, extra groceries, dirty clothes - should have a place in your house. If they don't, assign them one and make sure

that everyone knows where that place is.

⇒ **Be practical** - How many pairs of jeans do you have in your closet? How long have they been there? Too often we make excuses for saving things we don't need or can't use. Learn to recognize excuses and then avoid making them.

⇒ **If you're on a roll, don't stop** - If you clean out your closet and you seem to be having an easier time than usual parting with things, take advantage of the mood and keep on cleaning.

⇒ **Handle paper as you come to it** - Avoid putting the mail or the newspaper aside to read later. As the mail comes in, handle it. When it comes to the newspaper, either dedicate a time to read it or set a limit to the amount of time you will keep it around before throwing it out.

⇒ **Avoid impulse buying** - Impulse buying seldom pays off, even if you get something on sale. Avoid browsing. Go to the store with a specific list of the things you need and stick with it.

Need help with your finances? PPC Canada provides free Financial Planning and Debt Management Services. Call **1.800.663.9099** to learn more!

How to Remain Balanced Through Shift-Work

Working nights doesn't mean you have to lose touch with your family and friends. With a little planning, you can still spend time and feel close to the people you care about. Here are some tips from veteran shift-workers.

⇒ Sleep while your friends are at work or school so you can spend any free time together.

⇒ Set aside time to talk with your partner every day. Even a few minutes spent together over coffee will help you stay in touch.

⇒ Plan at least one activity with family and friends each week.

⇒ If you're a parent, arrange your schedule so you can attend a few special events with your children each year; e.g. holiday dinners and school activities, etc. Let your child help pick the events you'll attend.

⇒ Video record the special events you'll have to miss, such as birthdays, Little League games, ballet recitals, etc. Watch them together.

⇒ Set up a family bulletin



board where you and your family members can leave school work, notes, drawings, photographs, cartoons, etc.

⇒ Make sure your partner can reach you by telephone or cell phone at work; if you can't receive calls, arrange a time for you to call home.

⇒ Post a calendar in a highly visible spot and mark your shift schedule as soon as it's assigned. Be sure to note recovery day (your first day off after several night shifts) so that everyone knows that it's not a normal day off

⇒ Bring up problems early and resolve them - before they threaten relationships.

⇒ When you feel irritable, make sure your family and friends understand that it's because you're tired, not because you're angry at them. This is especially important if you have young children.

⇒ Get involved with activities that don't require a set schedule - bowling, skiing, tennis.

⇒ Work out at a gym.

⇒ Attend workshops or hobby clubs that interest you; you'll have something in common with those you meet.

⇒ Develop a circle of friends who understand your work schedule and are willing to be flexible in order to spend time with you.

⇒ Organize co-workers or friends who share your schedule and plan activities with them.

Conclusion

Working evening hours can put stress on your family life and relationships, knowing how to cope with the challenges is the key. Through communicating, dealing with problems early and prioritizing socializing and recreation, shift work will have a smaller impact on your life.



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