

Work-Life Balance



Spending more time at work and less time with the family? More than ever, Canadians are working longer and have more family responsibilities than they did 10 years ago. All too often, this means juggling home chores and work duties around the clock. Recent studies confirm that, on average, Canadian workers spend 45 minutes less with their family during workdays and hours spent on the job have generally increased. But even though you've heard it all before, there's always something more to say about striking the right balance between your work life and personal life.

- Try to respond to e-mails once or twice a day, then close your e-mail program in order to avoid being distracted.
- Distinguish between your work life and personal life. Protect your private time by turning off electronic communication devices whenever possible.

MORE RESPONSIBILITY. LESS TIME.

Truth is, most Canadians are faced with more responsibility and play several roles in the course of a day. We play the part of worker, parent, spouse, friend, caregiver, and volunteer – even a shoulder to lean on. The list is endless. And so are the hours. If you're finding it difficult to balance the different elements in your life, you're not alone. In fact, fifty-eight percent of Canadians report feeling overwhelmed by their ever-increasing responsibilities. Indeed, today's workplace is a lot different than just a few years ago: there's the daily barrage of email, sleek laptops and PDAs that go where we go, wireless overload, and the added pressure of being available 24/7. Most employees – and an increasing number of employers – now agree that technological innovation intended to make our work lives easier is having a dramatic impact on our work/life balance.

YOU'RE IN CONTROL

Some of us might be surprised to learn that a moderate amount of stress improves our efficiency and our mental sharpness. But how do you know if your busy routine is doing more harm than good? You may need to slow down if you experience:

- A loss of control over daily activities;
- Feelings of guilt about neglecting different roles;
- Difficulty concentrating;
- Persistent fatigue.

If any of the above seems familiar, take a moment to assess how well you take care of yourself and what you can do to improve your work/life balance. You might want to consider the following:

AT WORK

- Schedule 10-minute breaks throughout the day. You'll feel less tired and accomplish more.
- Set realistic goals about what you can accomplish in a given time frame.

AT HOME

- After work, take a brief walk, relax or listen to some music before starting your evening routine.
- Prioritize household chores and share tasks with others. Don't try to do everything by yourself.
- Remember to exercise: Even 15 minutes is enough to keep you energized and refreshed.
- Create a household budget and set aside some money for a rainy day.

By taking a few simple steps toward protecting your mental health, you can get back to an acceptable work/life balance faster than you think. And remember, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) coordinator has the necessary resources to help you along the way.

*Courtesy of the Canadian Mental Health Association

Need help?

Your EAP coordinators are here to assist you with any issues that may be impacting you or the well-being of those close to you. Give us a call.



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