

Work-life balance

In order to enjoy more peace of mind, and manage stress more effectively it is very important to create a good balance between the time spent working and the time spent focusing upon all other areas of life. This can be difficult to do initially, but with the use of the correct techniques and perseverance this can be achieved successfully.



Helping yourself

The Mental Health Foundation recommend that the following actions may help.

- Take personal responsibility for your work-life balance. This includes speaking up when work expectations and demands are too much.
- Try to 'work smart, not long'. This involves tight prioritisation - allowing yourself a certain amount of time per task - and trying not to get caught up in less productive activities, such as unstructured meetings that tend to take up lots of time.
- Take proper breaks at work, for example by taking at least half an hour for lunch and getting out of the work place if you can.
- Try to ensure that a line is drawn between work and leisure. If you do need to bring work home try to ensure that you only work in a certain area of your home - and can close the door on it.
- Take seriously the link between work-related stress and mental ill health. Try to reduce stress, for example through exercise, relaxation or hobbies.
- Recognise the importance of protective factors, including exercise, leisure activities and friendships. Try to ensure that these are not sacrificed to working longer hours, or try to ensure that you spend your spare time on these things.
- Watch out for the cumulative effect of working long hours by keeping track of your working hours over a period of weeks or months rather than days. Take account of hours spent worrying or thinking about work when assessing your work-life balance. These are a legitimate part of work and a good indicator of work-related stress. If possible, assess your work-life balance with your colleagues and with the support and involvement of managerial staff. The more visible the process, the more likely it is to have an effect.

Employee Assistance Programme

Your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available to keep you healthy. Stress and anxiety can have a massive impact on your general health. That's why you are entitled to free, confidential* counselling and information services, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Areas covered include:

- Relationship difficulties
- Financial worries
- Stress, anxiety and depression
- Alcohol or drugs misuse
- Bereavement

To use your telephone services simply call: 1 800 928 052 free, at any time of the day or night.

* Calls are confidential unless we believe there is a risk of serious harm to you or anyone else.

EmployeeCare

You can access health and wellbeing information online.

Simply visit www.employee care.com and enter your login details as provided.