



Creating An Effective Work-Life Balance



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- Founded in 2011 we focus on empowering employees to improve physical and mental health through lifestyle change.
- Worked with over 500 organisations, including Vitality, OCS, NHS, Network Rail, AmcoGiffen & many more!





Agenda

Understanding work-life balance

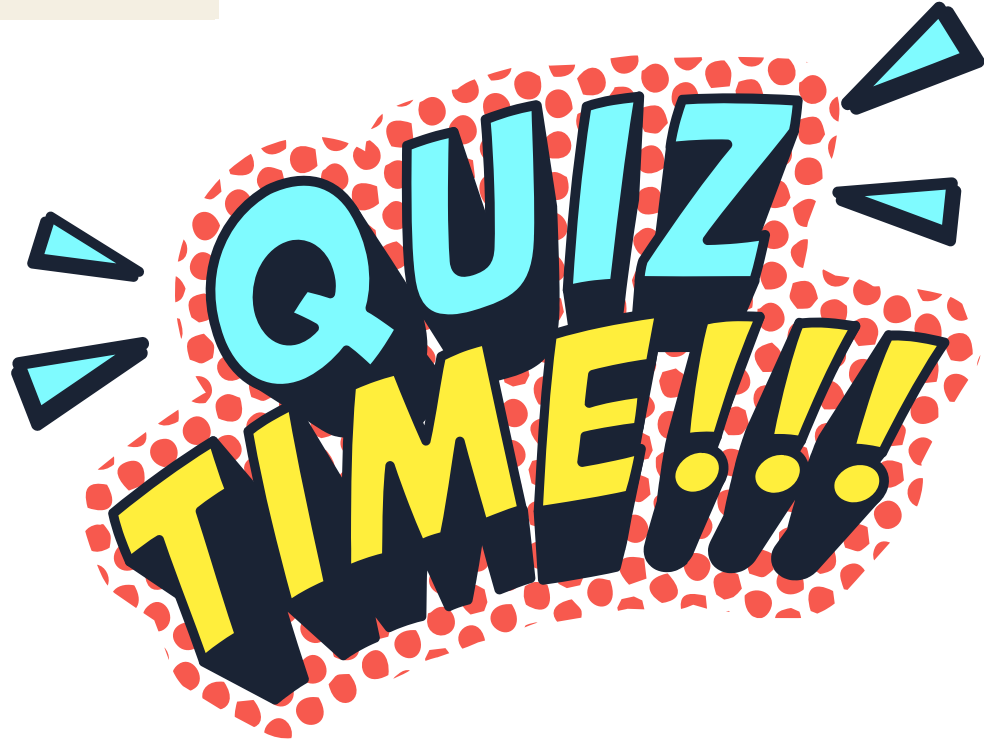
Identifying imbalance

Strategies for achieving work-life balance

Implementing work-life balance in the workplace

Sustaining work-life balance

Summary & key takeaways



1. What % of workers believe work-life balance is essential when choosing a job?

- a) 35%
- b) 57%
- c) 72%

2. What % of employees can effectively balance work and personal commitments?

- a) 80%
- b) 60%
- c) 40%

3. What % of employees have experienced burnout at their current job?

- a) 33%
- b) 66%
- c) 77%



Understanding work-life balance





Defining work-life balance

Work-life balance is our **individual perception** of the harmonious relationship between work responsibilities and personal life activities, including family, leisure, and self-care.



How balanced is your life at present?

- 1 – Not balanced at all
- 2 – Imbalanced
- 3 – Somewhat balanced
- 4 – Balanced
- 5 – Perfectly balanced





Identifying imbalance



Common barriers to work-life balance



High workload



Workplace
culture



Family
responsibilities



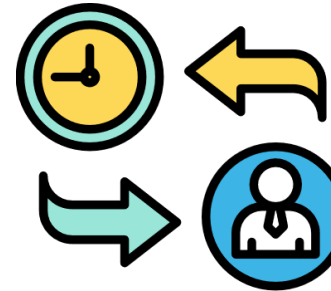
Financial
concerns



Commute
time



Difficulties setting
boundaries



Shift work or irregular
schedules



Health concerns



Lack of support

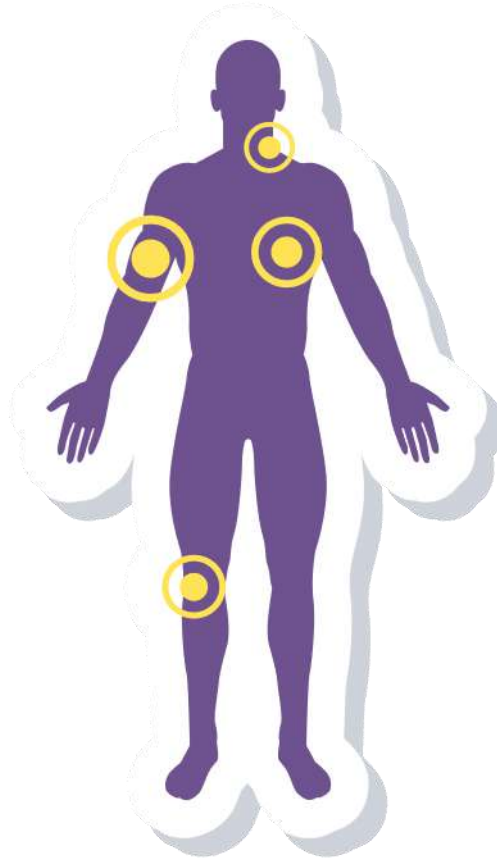
Signs & symptoms of an unhealthy work-life balance

Physical symptoms:

- Headaches
- Digestive issues
- Sleep disturbances/fatigue
- Muscle tension or pain
- Weak immune system
- Weight gain or loss
- Elevated blood pressure
- Increased susceptibility to illness
- Burnout

Behavioural symptoms:

- Procrastination
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased use of substance use
- Social withdrawal
- Increased conflicts
- Reduced communication



Emotional symptoms:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Irritability
- Mood swings

Work-related symptoms:

- Decreased productivity
- Missed deadlines
- Poor work quality
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Difficulty making decisions

Personal life symptoms:

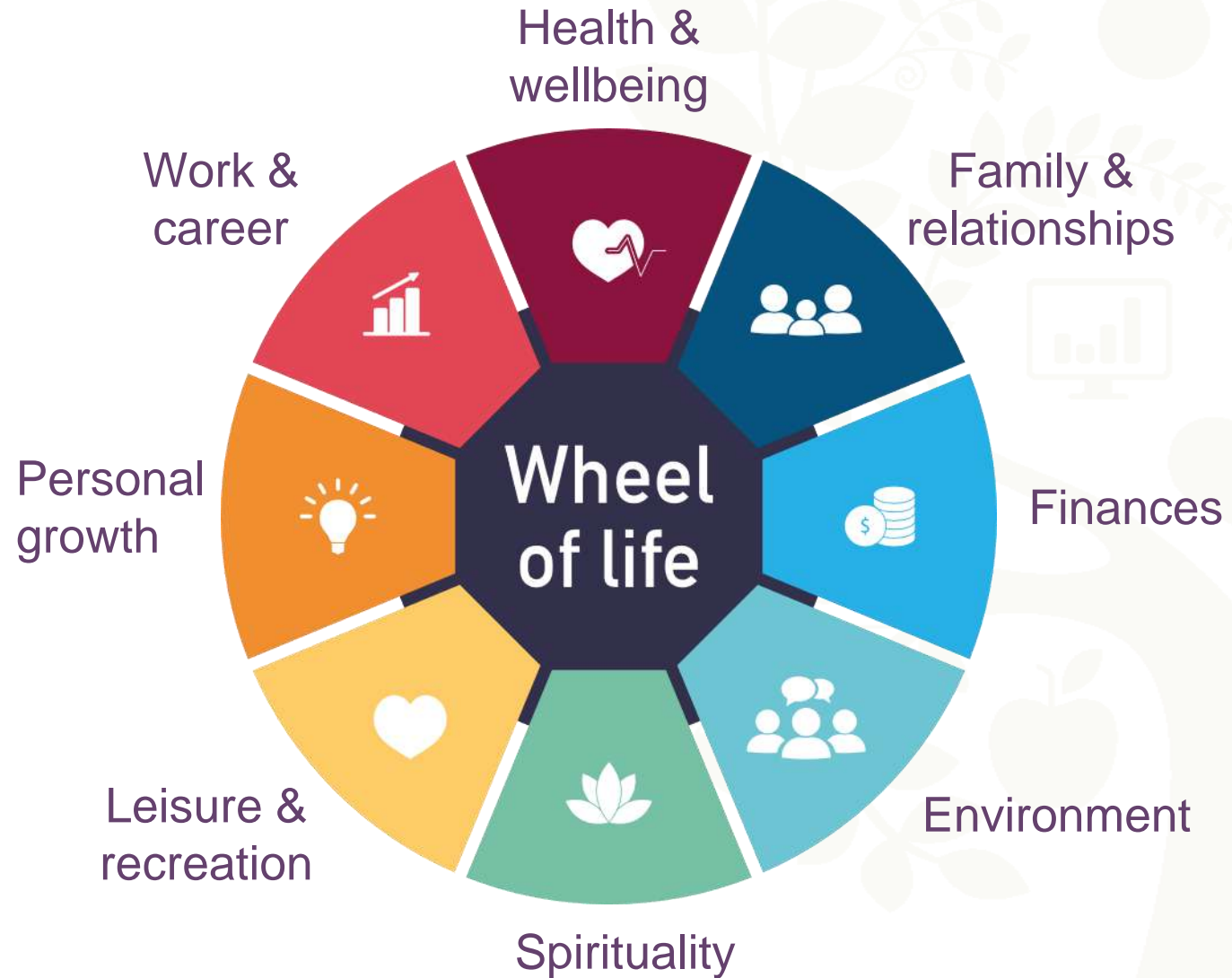
- Neglect family or social relationships
- Reduced participation in hobbies/leisure
- Inability to switch off from work
- Feeling guilty about taking time for self





Balance – ‘wheel of life’ tool

- Use the **wheel of life** tool to rate how satisfied you are with the different areas of your life
- **Rate each one from 1 to 10, 1 being ‘Not satisfied’ and 10 being ‘Very satisfied’.**
- Identify the areas you may need to work on (i.e. which areas have lower scores)





Strategies for Achieving Work-Life Balance



1. Time management techniques

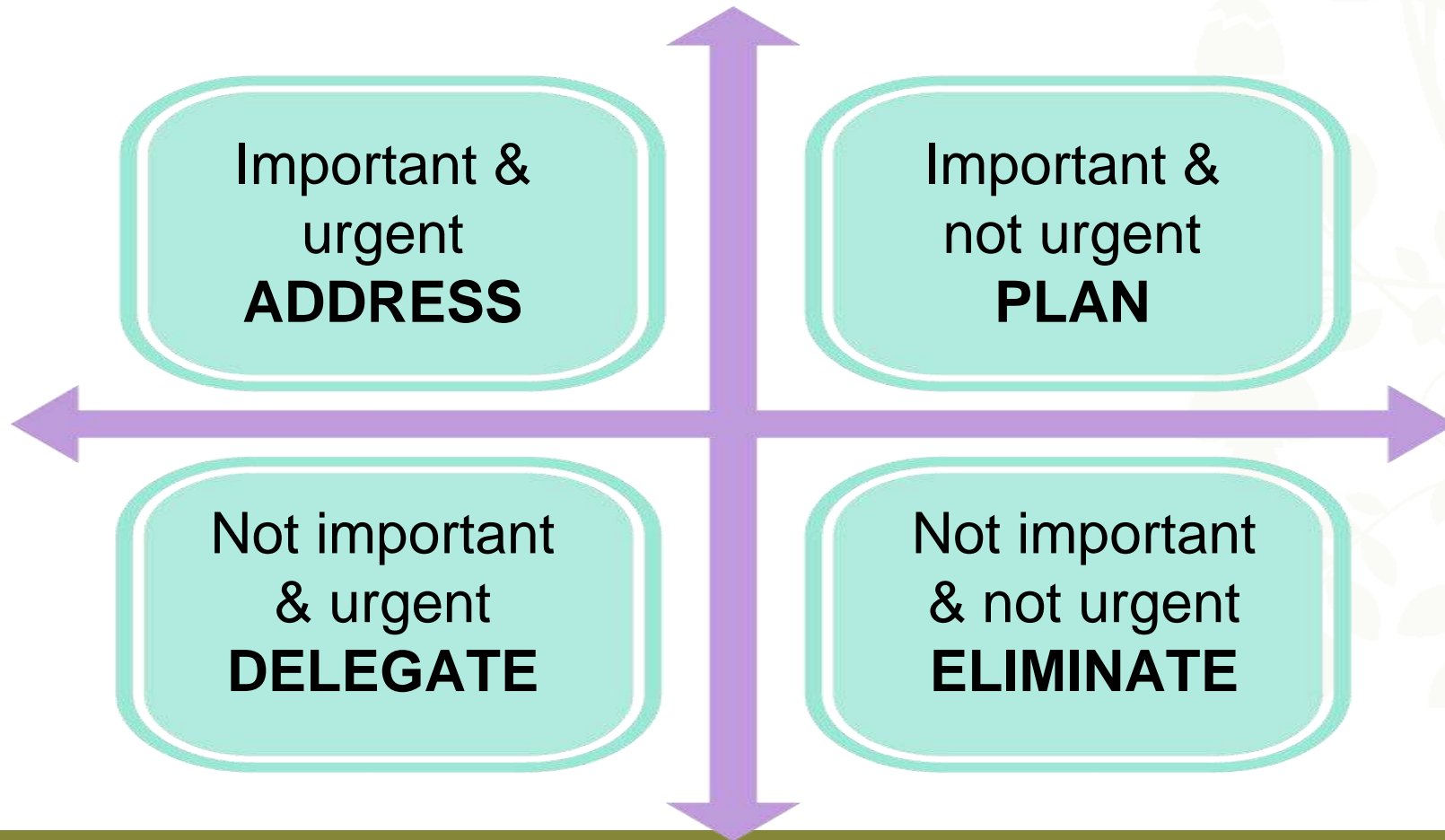
Time management techniques help with work-life balance by allowing individuals to **prioritise tasks effectively, set boundaries, and allocate dedicated time for both work and personal activities**, ensuring a more balanced approach to time management and reducing stress.

- Eisenhower matrix
- Time blocking
- Eat that frog
- The 80/20 rule
- Goal setting
- Parkinson's law
- Weekly reviews
- Time audit
- No meeting days
- Pomodoro technique
- Use calendars or diaries
- Set reminders
- Productivity tools





Time management techniques – Eisenhower Matrix





Goal setting

Using the wheel of life activity we did earlier, **please set yourself one goal for your area of life in which you scored the lowest.**



2. Effective communication

Effective communication plays a crucial role in achieving work-life balance by allowing individuals to express their needs and preferences assertively and negotiate circumstances that work for them.



- Practice assertiveness skills
- Negotiate personal life commitments (where changeable) or work arrangements
- Set clear expectations

Effective communication - Assertiveness



Try DESC framework:

- D – Describe the situation
- E - Express your feelings
- S – Specify the desired outcome
- C – Communication consequences

Effective communication - Negotiation skills



- Learn the basics (BATNA, ZOPA)
- Prepare thoroughly
- Focus on win-win solutions
- Regulate emotions
- Be flexible and adaptable
- Role-play and simulation
- Study successful negotiators
- Keep learning

3. Stress management

Incorporating effective stress management techniques is essential for maintaining work-life balance, as it helps individuals to alleviate stress, promote relaxation, and foster resilience in navigating the challenges of both professional and personal life.

- Practice mindfulness or meditation
- Deep breathing
- Physical activity
- Develop coping mechanisms
- Journalling
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Connect with nature
- Find what works for you!



Progressive muscle relaxation exercise

- 1) Close eyes & take a few deep breaths
- 2) Start by tensing muscles in your feet for a few seconds and then release as you exhale
- 3) Continue the process throughout the body upwards



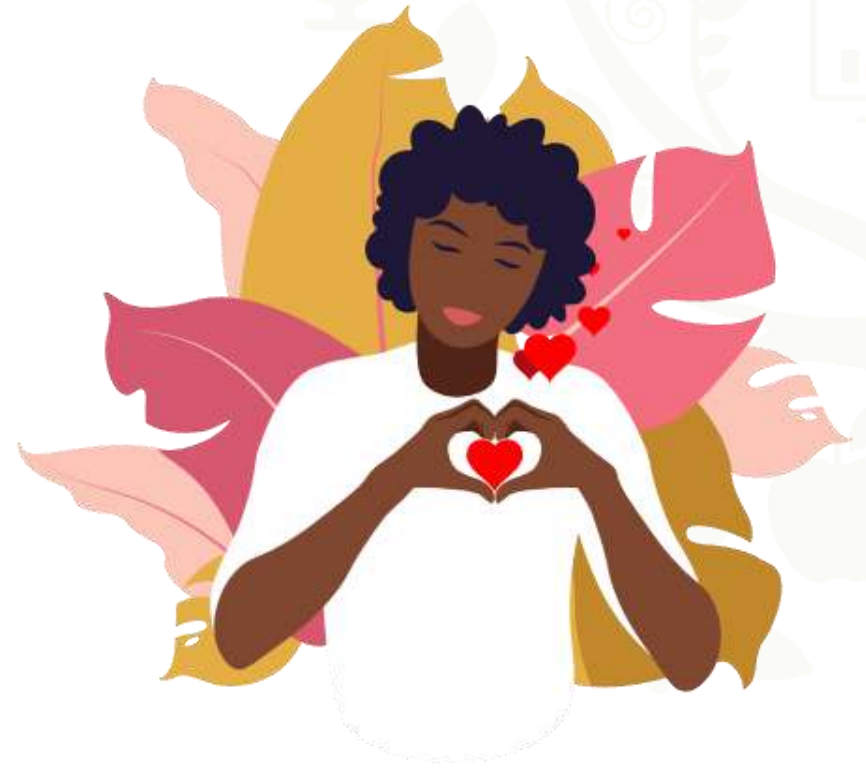


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- A stylized illustration of a peach-colored journal with a white star pattern. The word "Journal" is written in a blue, cursive font on a white, cloud-like background. A blue pen with a silver clip is positioned next to the journal. The background features faint, light green floral patterns.

4. Self-care

Prioritising self-care is crucial for achieving work-life balance, as it allows individuals to recharge, replenish their energy, and maintain overall well-being amidst the demands of both professional and personal responsibilities.

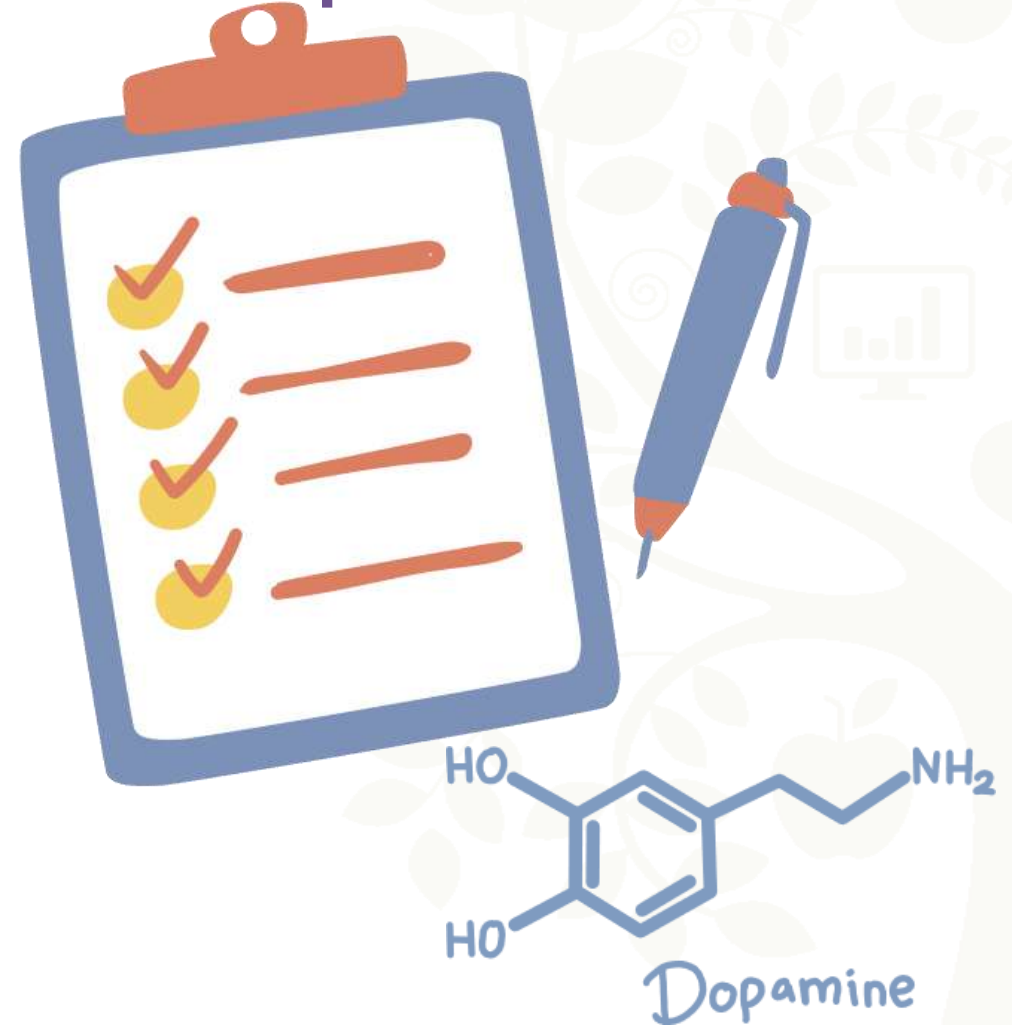
- Adequate rest
- Regular movement
- Eating nutritious food
- Pursue hobbies & interests
- Spend time with loved ones
- Creative expression
- Learning & personal growth
- Gratitude practices
- Aromatherapy or other holistic practices





Self-care – Creating your dopamine menu

- 1) Identify activities that bring you joy
- 2) Make a list of those activities
- 3) Keep your list easily accessible so that you can refer back to it when you need!





Self-care – Gratitude practices

Write down 1 thing you are grateful for now!

E.g.

“I am grateful for my family and friends”

“I am happy I have a roof over my head and access to food”



5. Setting boundaries

Setting boundaries by clearly defining limits between work and personal life helps individuals maintain balance and reduce stress, leading to improved work-life harmony.

- Establish specific work hours
- Designate dedicated spaces
- Limit accessibility
- Communicate boundaries
- Practice self-discipline & routine
- Learn to say 'no'
- Schedule breaks
- Protect personal time
- Evaluate & adjust



How to communicate boundaries

- 1) Identify your boundaries
- 2) Clarify your boundary
- 3) Choose the right time and place
- 4) Use assertive communication
- 5) Provide a reason
- 6) Be firm & respectful
- 7) Offer solutions & compromises
- 8) Set consequences (if necessary)
- 9) Follow up
- 10) Maintain consistency





Develop an end of the workday ritual

- **Mark the end of your workday** with an end of day ritual
- Clear and positive transition from work mode into personal time
 - Change clothes
 - Walk or jog in nature
 - Meditation
 - Yoga, qigong, taichi
 - Swim, gym, workout class, sauna
- Make an 'end of day' list





Implementing Work-Life Balance in the Workplace





How you **personally** can implement work-life balance in the workplace



- **Use the 5 techniques we have gone through:** time management, effective communication, stress management, self-care, and setting boundaries.
- **Have regular healthy breaks at work:** mindfulness, daydream, go for a walk, move, have a chat with a colleague, plan in some you time, get some fresh air.
- **Nutrition and hydration:** drink at least 2L of water, replenish at lunch time, protein rich snacks.
- **Recharge when work is finished:** end of workday ritual, relax, disengage, do something you enjoy, exercise, digital detox



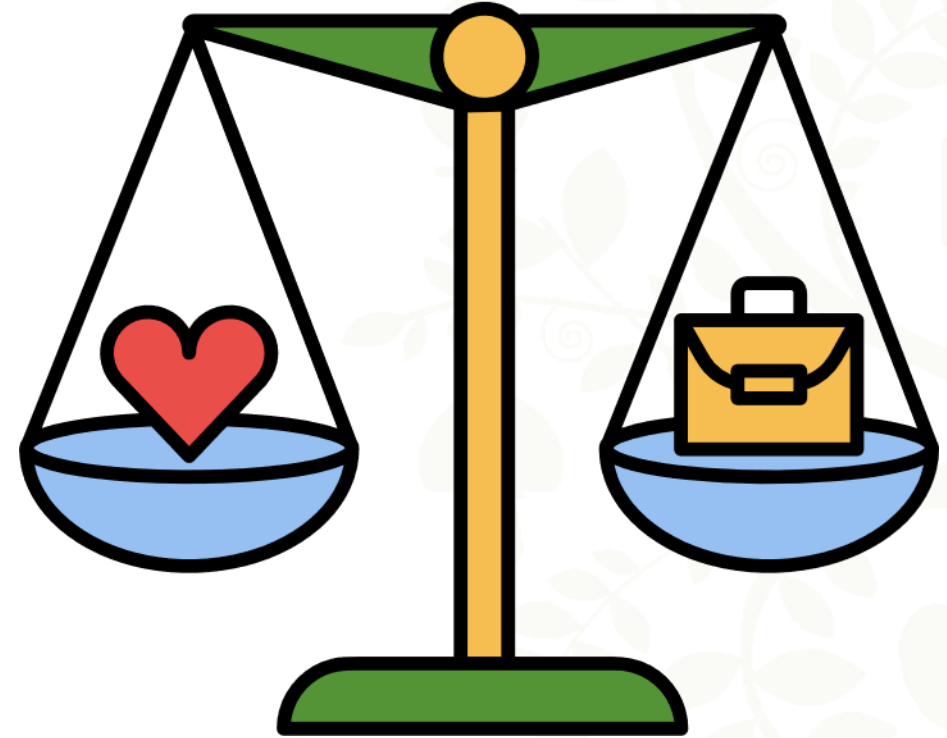
How **organisations** can create a work culture that supports work-life balance

- Leadership support
- Flexible work policies
- Encouraging breaks and vacations
- Utilising technology for work-life integration
- Setting personal and professional boundaries
- Workplace wellbeing support (e.g. EAP's)
- Wellness activities (e.g. workshops, webinars, stress, management)





Sustaining Work-Life Balance



How to sustaining Work-Life Balance

- Regular self-assessment & reflection – use the wheel of life tool!
- Adjust your strategies as needed
- Build resilience to cope with challenges
- Encourage a culture of work-life balance in the organisation





A moment for
reflection...



What new habits could you build to improve YOUR work-life balance?



- What changes could you make to create a more balanced lifestyle?
- What areas of your life need work?
- What are your priorities?
- What makes you happy?
- List the changes you would like to make and take them on **one at a time**



BOOKS

- Happy Mind. Happy Life
- The Stress Solution
Dr Rangan Chatterjee
- Let it Go *Rebecca Dennis*
- Atomic Habits *James Clear*
- The Growth Mindset Coach *Annie Brock*

Mindfulness Apps:

- Calm
- Headspace
- Insight Timer

Breathing Techniques:

Sleep support -

- Abdominal breathing or diaphragmatic breathing
- Body scan technique

Calming / support anxiety -

- Box breathing
- 4-7-8 breathing

Breathwork/Meditation:

- The Breath Guy (*Richie Bostock*)
- The Breathing Tree (*Rebecca Dennis*)
- Reset & other audio bundles (*Nina Stephenson Camps*)

Podcasts:

- Huberman Lab
- Feel Better Live More - *Dr Rangan Chatterjee*
- On Purpose with Jay Shetty



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Additional Resources

Quinoa granola bar



These easy quinoa granola bars are great for keeping energy levels in line during a busy day.

Makes 6 bars

Ingredients

- 1 cup quinoa flakes (not quick cook)
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup almonds, chopped
- 1/2 cup desiccated coconut
- 1/2 cup light flour (or gluten-free flour)
- 1/2 cup protein, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla paste

Method

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C (350°F). Place the quinoa flakes in a bowl, add the white sugar and mix well. Then add the almonds, coconut, and flour. Mix well. Add the protein, oil, salt, and honey. Mix well. Add the coconut oil and vanilla. Mix well. Press the mixture into a 10x10cm tin. Bake for 15 minutes. Let cool. Cut into bars.

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Fish tacos



These easy fish, veg & nut granola bars are great for keeping energy levels in line during a busy day.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 4 x 125g salmon fillets, cut into large chunks (chick'n or fishless works)
- 1/2 cup quinoa flakes (not quick cook)
- 1/2 cup almonds, chopped
- 1/2 cup desiccated coconut
- 1/2 cup light flour (or gluten-free flour)
- 1/2 cup protein, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup honey
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NUTRITION ON THE FLY:

10 QUICK AND NUTRITIOUS RECIPES FOR BUSY DAYS



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Preventing & Overcoming BURNOUT

HOW TO RECOGNISE IT

Physical	Behavioural	Emotional
Feeling tired and drained most of the time	Withdrawing from responsibilities	Sense of failure, self-doubt
Lowered immunity, frequent illnesses	Isolating yourself from others	Feeling helpless
Frequent headaches or muscle pain	Procrastinating	Detachment
Change in appetite or sleep habits	Using food, drugs or alcohol to cope	Loss of motivation
	Taking out frustrations on others	Negative outlook
		Decreased sense of accomplishment

HOW TO ADDRESS IT

Take time off	Be sociable with co-workers	Set boundaries	Nourish your creative side	Find value in your work
Find balance in your life – work, family, friends, hobbies, voluntary work	Reach out to those closest to you. Open up.	Limit contact with negative people and self-talk.	Take regular breaks from technology	Connect with a meaningful cause or community

DIET & LIFESTYLE

Long term stress calls for a diet that supports energy production throughout the day and is rich in nutrients needed to produce our stress hormones.

Minimise sugar and refined carbs to avoid crashes in mood and energy	Reduce caffeine as it triggers our stress response causing further energy dips	Eat regularly and don't skip breakfast – avoid fasting when you're out	Include protein with every meal and snack – helps keep energy levels even
Include fats from natural whole foods as they are a great source of energy <td>Avoid processed foods, trans-fats and chemical additives to reduce the load on the body and minimise empty calories<td>Eat more omega-3 fats shown to reduce inflammation<td>Stay hydrated (dehydration affects cognitive function and triggers fatigue)</td></td></td>	Avoid processed foods, trans-fats and chemical additives to reduce the load on the body and minimise empty calories <td>Eat more omega-3 fats shown to reduce inflammation<td>Stay hydrated (dehydration affects cognitive function and triggers fatigue)</td></td>	Eat more omega-3 fats shown to reduce inflammation <td>Stay hydrated (dehydration affects cognitive function and triggers fatigue)</td>	Stay hydrated (dehydration affects cognitive function and triggers fatigue)
Replenish your gut bacteria <td>Support digestion and nutrient absorption. Eat mindfully and chew well<td>Foods rich in B vitamins, magnesium and zinc which are all depleted by stress<td>Vitamin C rich foods help to produce stress hormones</td></td></td>	Support digestion and nutrient absorption. Eat mindfully and chew well <td>Foods rich in B vitamins, magnesium and zinc which are all depleted by stress<td>Vitamin C rich foods help to produce stress hormones</td></td>	Foods rich in B vitamins, magnesium and zinc which are all depleted by stress <td>Vitamin C rich foods help to produce stress hormones</td>	Vitamin C rich foods help to produce stress hormones
Include easy to digest soups, bone broths, smoothies <td>Include easy to digest soups, bone broths, smoothies<td>Whole food diet: wholegrains, green leafy veg, nuts and seeds<td>Peppers, kale, broccoli, watercress</td></td></td>	Include easy to digest soups, bone broths, smoothies <td>Whole food diet: wholegrains, green leafy veg, nuts and seeds<td>Peppers, kale, broccoli, watercress</td></td>	Whole food diet: wholegrains, green leafy veg, nuts and seeds <td>Peppers, kale, broccoli, watercress</td>	Peppers, kale, broccoli, watercress
Set aside relaxation time <td>Minimise alcohol – it causes anxiety as it wears off<td>Aim for at least 30 mins exercise per day but avoid over-exercising<td>Avoid nicotine – this stimulant can increase anxiety</td></td></td>	Minimise alcohol – it causes anxiety as it wears off <td>Aim for at least 30 mins exercise per day but avoid over-exercising<td>Avoid nicotine – this stimulant can increase anxiety</td></td>	Aim for at least 30 mins exercise per day but avoid over-exercising <td>Avoid nicotine – this stimulant can increase anxiety</td>	Avoid nicotine – this stimulant can increase anxiety

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The World Health Organisation defines self-care as "the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider".

The Self-Care Index

The Self-Care Index is a measure of self-care. It is a scale from 1 to 100. A score of 100 indicates that a person is taking the best possible care of themselves. A score of 1 indicates that a person is not taking any care of themselves.

Six Pillars of Self-Care

- 1. Exercise
- 2. Nutrition
- 3. Sleep
- 4. Stress management
- 5. Social support
- 6. Personal growth

REASONS TO PRACTISE SELF-CARE

- Prevents illness
- Improves health
- Reduces stress
- Increases energy
- Improves mood
- Improves relationships
- Improves self-esteem
- Improves confidence
- Improves resilience
- Improves coping skills
- Improves decision making
- Improves problem solving
- Improves communication
- Improves leadership
- Improves teamwork
- Improves productivity
- Improves quality of life
- Improves overall well-being

HEALTHY HABIT INSPIRATION

Drink a glass of water after your morning alarm.

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TOP TIPS FOR CREATING LONGTERM HEALTHY HABITS

Every day, millions of people want to change their lives. Why do we do this? It's because we have formed a habit. Habit formation means to make an action become automatic.

TIPS FOR MAKING HABITS STICK

- HABIT STACKING**
Add your new habit to an existing habit. For example, if you want to exercise, do it after you brush your teeth.
- GET SPECIFIC**
Be specific about what you want to do. Instead of "I want to exercise", say "I want to go for a 30-minute walk every day after lunch."
- START SMALL**
Start with a small habit. If you want to exercise, start with a 10-minute walk every day. Once you're used to that, increase the time.
- MAKE IT PHYSICAL**
Create a physical cue for your habit. For example, if you want to exercise, put your gym bag by the door every night.
- STAY SMALL**
Keep your habit small. If you want to exercise, start with a 10-minute walk every day. Once you're used to that, increase the time.
- TRAIN YOUR BRAIN**
Use your brain to create a habit. For example, if you want to exercise, think about how good you'll feel after your workout.

HEALTHY HABIT INSPIRATION

Practice deep breathing for 5 minutes after brushing your teeth at night.

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AND BREATHE...

The benefits of incorporating breathing exercises into your daily routine are wide-reaching. Some well-researched advantages include:

- Enhancing listening skills
- Improving focus - helps to reset and spot new solutions
- Supporting resilience
- Enhancing our capacity to embrace change and manage stress
- Shaking us so consider before we react

A simple breathing exercise to get you started...

Get comfortable in your chair, make sure your feet are flat on the floor so you are grounded to the earth and your back is straight but not rigid. You could rest your palms on your lap if that feels relaxing.

Take some normal breaths in and out through your nose and begin to feel relaxed. Try and relax your shoulders and if you feel comfortable you can relax your eyes. Take a few moments to check in with what is going on in your body. Do you feel any sensations or tension anywhere? Consider your chest, belly, legs, hands, feet etc. If you do, bring your awareness to that area and breathe in and out through your nose. Feel that area relax.

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Research

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- Work-Family Conflict Impact on Psychological Safety and Psychological Well-Being: A Job Performance Model (2020) Obrenovic B *Frontiers in Psychology* <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00475/full>
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- Sedentary behaviours and risk of depression: a meta-analysis of prospective studies (2020) Huang et al, *Translational Psychiatry* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7026102/>
- The Acute Effects of Interrupting Prolonged Sitting Time in Adults with Standing and Light-Intensity Walking on Biomarkers of Cardiometabolic Health in Adults: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis (2022) Buffey A et al *Sports Medicine Systematic Review* <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40279-022-01649-4>
- Atomic Habits *James Clear*



Research

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- Wood, J., Oh, J., Park, J., & Kim, W. (2020). The relationship between work engagement and work–life balance in organizations: A review of the empirical research. *Human Resource Development Review*, 19(3), 240-262.



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