



INNOVEST SME
Accelerating Small Business

Work-Life Balance

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*I've learned that
you can't have everything
and do everything at
the same time.*

OPRAH WINFREY

PREFACE

Work- life balance is essential to combat stress, ensuring both individual and company success. The stress associated with unbalanced lifestyles is costly; it damages productivity and increases individual health risks. Employees who have the tools to balance their professional and personal lives are happier, healthier, and more productive.

In addition to improving performance, many younger employees place a high value on work-life balance. Companies that include work-life balance as part of their culture will be able to better attract qualified candidates.

*Happiness is not a matter
of intensity but of Balance
and Order and Rhythm
and Harmony.*

THOMAS MERTON



BENEFITS OF A HEALTHY BALANCE

Understanding the benefits of a healthy balanced life will motivate anyone to make necessary changes. Balance will improve the lives of individual employees as well as the company culture. Learning the basics of work-life balance will also increase employee productivity, health, and morale.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

A healthy balance between work and home should be a priority for everyone. Implementing proper work-life balance offers many important benefits. There are, however, many hazards linked with an unbalanced work and home life.

Risks

- **Poor health:** Working long hours without taking time to relax will take its toll on health.
- **Unresolved conflict:** A lack of balance can create conflicts at work and at home.
- **Poor performance:** Taking on too much responsibility will lead to exhaustion and cause performance to suffer.

- **Financial loss:** The impact on health and productivity takes a financial toll on both individual employees and organizations.

Benefits

- **Fulfillment:** People who successfully implement work life balance improve their sense of fulfillment at work and at home.
- **Health:** A healthy work life balance decreases the risk of heart disease and other health problems.
- **Greater productivity:** Being relaxed and well rested increases productivity and improves work performance.
- **Stronger relationships:** Personal and professional relationships are strengthened and conflicts are avoided when there is work life balance.

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

While it may seem counterintuitive, work-life balance can actually increase productivity. While it is true that overtime will initially increase production, the surge only lasts a few weeks before taking a destructive toll on productivity. In fact, working long hours for an extended time period will lead to exhaustion and unhealthy habits that decrease productivity.

Shorter work hours will actually increase productivity in the long-term. Additionally, studies show that people who take short, frequent breaks are more productive than people who only take a single break or work all day. Most people recommend taking a few minutes each hour to regroup.

Ways to increase productivity:

Take healthy breaks: You should take time to refresh yourself. Try stretching, walking, or meditating throughout the day. This will also improve your health and overall wellbeing.

Take enjoyable breaks: A recent study by Don J.Q. Chen and Vivien K.G Lim of the National University of Singapore discovered that taking a few moments to surf the internet and mentally change gears actually increases productivity. This fun activity increases productivity by nine percent.

Take time off: Working to the point of burnout is not productive or healthy. Do not lose vacation days, even if you have to spread them out. Studies show that people who take their vacations are much more productive than those who do not.

IMPROVED MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

It is common knowledge that stress is directly linked to different diseases. Numerous surveys have discovered that work is a leading cause of stress related illness and injury, such as stroke, heart disease, and mental breakdowns. A balanced life will improve both physical and mental health.

HOW TO IMPROVE HEALTH

Awareness: A balanced lifestyle increases personal awareness, allow individuals to identify potential health problems early.

Lifestyle: A balanced lifestyle automatically improves health. It encourages healthy choices and helps develop the body and the mind.

INCREASED MORALE

Work life balance is an effective tool to increase morale and improve company culture. Employees seek out companies that support healthy work life balance. The only factor more important than balance to job seekers is compensation. According to several surveys, work-life balance improves happiness and overall job satisfaction. Additionally, employees are more invested in companies that support their work-life balance. Work- life balance typically translates to employees who work harder and are more productive.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Bob was the CEO of a small but growing organization. He worked long hours, but never seemed to accomplish anything. To make matters worse he felt like a failure because neither his work nor personal life was meeting his expectations. He reacted by sleeping less and taking time away from his hobbies, but this did not solve anything. Stressed out and exhausted, Bob had a heart attack at work. His doctor told him to take more time for himself, but Bob said he did not have the time.

*It must be a balance in
everything we do, not too
much of everything...*

ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI



SIGNS OF AN IMBALANCE

The signs of imbalance are unmistakable. We see people suffering from poor health, burnout, and stress every day. For companies, this increases costs in the form of absenteeism, health costs, and turnover. If you recognize these signs in your life or your organization, take action immediately and focus on work-life balance.

HEALTH RISKS

Imbalance promotes poor health. Over time, this can lead to devastating, and possibly life-changing consequences.

Effects on Health:

- **Obesity:** Not taking the time to exercise or eat well can increase obesity, which is connected to heart disease and numerous other health risks.
- **Exhaustion:** Sleeping well can add years to a person's life. Sacrificing sleep for work will have negative effects on health and increase the chances of getting sick.

- **Emotional problems:** Stress and exhaustion will wreak havoc on emotional well-being. This will affect relationships and personal identity.

More companies are taking an interest in the health and fitness of their employees. It is now in an organization's best interest to do so. Healthy employees are productive, absent less, and their health care costs less.

ABSENTEEISM

Poor health increases employee absenteeism and thus is a costly problem for employers. There are hidden and direct costs that must be paid when an employee is absent from work.

COST OF ABSENTEEISM:

Sick pay: Employees with sick days are still paid, which is a direct cost.

Loss of productivity: Even with someone to work the position of the sick employee, the employee familiar with the job will be more productive. This is an indirect cost of sick days.

While most people who take time off are legitimately sick, stressed employees will take days off to catch up with personal obligations, and they usually feel justified doing so.

BURNOUT

Most people know that overworked employees eventually burnout. Burnout is the physical and psychological response to long-term stress.

Signs of Burnout:

- **Loss of interest:** Burned-out employees cannot make themselves care about their work, which is the source of their stress.
- **Lack of emotion:** Emotional responses are abnormal when someone is burned-out.
- **Loss of motivation:** Former motivators no longer are effective.
- **Possible depression:** Burnout is closely linked to depression.

Burnout harms companies by increasing turnover. Consider the following:

When everything is added together, 150 percent of an employee's annual salary is the cost of turnover.

This number is 200 to 250 percent for members of management.

STRESS

Work is the main source of stress for most Americans. Stress' connection to obesity for workers in sedentary jobs is more significant than diet, according to research published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. The effects stress on heart health can be deadly.

Signs of Stress:

- **Overemotional:** People under stress can find it difficult to control their emotions.
- **Lethargy:** The physiological impact of stress can cause lethargy.
- **Restlessness:** Stress can make it difficult to focus, causing hyperactivity and restlessness.
- **Anxiety:** Prolonged stress can cause anxiety disorders.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

The manager of a production company was recognized for the wrong reason, his high turnover. His rate was 35 percent and growing. Since he knew that no one would stay for long, he pushed his employees harder to get the most out of them while he could. At exit interviews, people always said that they simply lost interest and did not think that the job was worth it.

Threatened with his job, the manager was forced to change. He reduced his demands on employees, which he thought would be disastrous. He was surprised when his turnover dropped 10 percent that quarter.

*Control is never achieved
when sought after directly.
It is the surprising result
of letting go.*

JAMES ARTHUR RAY



EMPLOYER RESOURCES

Employers have the opportunity to improve work-life balance for their employees and increase productivity at the same time. Using the resources that employers have at their disposal to change work conditions may seem counterproductive, but they are effective.

OFFER MORE EMPLOYEE CONTROL

Traditionally, employers set all of the parameters concerning jobs. Keeping all of the control, however, augments stress on employees. Simply offering employees more control over their lives and establishing better work life balance will help alleviate this stress. Studies show that employee control actually increases loyalty and productivity. There are many ways to offer employees control, and we will go over some of them in detail in a later chapter.

Ways to offer control:

- Flex time
- Job sharing
- Telecommuting

These are just a few examples of employee control. Anything that empowers an employee to take charge of his or her life offers employee control.

ASK EMPLOYEES FOR SUGGESTIONS

Employees have some of the best ideas on how to improve their jobs and the company as a whole. These ideas, however, are not always communicated. Many employees do not feel that people in management care and most managers do not have the time to sit down with each employee. The best way to hear about new, innovative ideas is to create an employee suggestion program.

Tips:

- **Make it simple:** Create a simple process for giving suggestions; complicated rules do not encourage creativity.
- **Respond:** Let employees know that you have their suggestions and will consider them.
- **Thank:** Thank each employee who gives a suggestion, even if they are suggestions you do not use.
- **Reward:** Employees who come up with useful suggestions need to be rewarded.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

Given the unavoidable stress of life, most people face times when they need assistance. EAPs provide employees access to counseling and

other services. Without the aid of EAP counselors, the effects of stress can spiral out of control. Employee assistance programs give individuals the opportunity to seek help and learn the skills necessary to improve their work life balance.

Typical EAP Topics:

- Personal crisis
- Work stress
- Finances
- Substances

EAPs are useful investments because they prevent turnover and reduce absences as they teach strategies for work life balance.

REWARD YOUR STAFF

This may seem basic, but rewarding your staff is an effective method for promoting work-life balance. Employees who feel appreciated are more confident, and rewards reinforce the behavior you want to see repeated. Rewards can also provide breaks that reduce stress. Rewards do not have to break the bank. There are simple ways to thank your employees for their service.

Useful Rewards:

- Public acknowledgement of service
- Extra time off

- Awards
- Promotions
- Parties

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

The CEO of a large retailer listened to the suggestions from employees who wanted him to create hours that were more flexible. The plan was implemented on a trial basis and would be reviewed periodically. At the first review, productivity increased by 8 percent. By the second review, it improved another 5 percent. Morale was up and turnover was down, so the CEO decided to keep the flexible hours and look into other employee suggestions.

*Control is never achieved
when sought after directly.
It is the surprising result
of letting go.*

JAMES ARTHUR RAY



TIPS IN TIME MANAGEMENT

Most people complain that they do not have enough time. The truth is, however, that most people do not know how to manage time wisely. Time management is crucial to an effective work-life balance. Effectively implementing time management will reduce stress and help bring balance to life in and out of the office.

THE URGENT/IMPORTANT MATRIX

Many people confuse the urgent with the important. Urgent tasks do need to be done quickly, but that does not make them important. We are often stuck completing urgent tasks at the expense of the important ones. Important tasks are the ones that help us meet goals. Often, urgent tasks, such as fixing the copy machine, are distractions from what is important. Learning the difference between urgent and important will better anyone's time management skills.



LEARN TO SAY NO

Managing time requires that people learn to say “no.” This may seem cruel, but it is not possible to meet everyone’s needs. You must learn to say “no” kindly but firmly. Do not allow people to talk you into urgent tasks. You need to stick with a schedule and plan of action. Do not deviate unless it is a true emergency. For example, proofing a colleague’s letter is not an emergency that you must complete at once. Complete your important tasks first.

STAY FLEXIBLE

Flexibility is an important skill. Life cannot be predicted, and inflexible people fall to pieces when change beyond their control comes. Being flexible simply means that you are not resisting the inevitable changes of

life. Flexibility is not passivity. It is being able to embrace change. This will reduce stress and improve work life balance. For example, car trouble will throw off your schedule, so do not try to keep up with your tasks that day.

80/20 RULE

According to the 80 / 20 rule, 80 percent of our success is the result of only 20 percent of our actions. The rule implies that we should place our focus on the 20 percent of activities that are the most successful. This requires that we prioritize goals. When this is done, concentrate on the 20 percent of activities that aggressively move you towards those goals. Give most of your attention to this 20 percent.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Mark always had the best intentions when he went to work, but he always had to stay late. He spent most of his time fixing other people's problems. He made copies for his secretary when the machine was acting up. He trained his partner's mentee, and he met with angry clients. He always said yes when asked to help. His average workweek was 60 hours and he was nowhere near his personal goals. He had to do something.

*A man who suffers
or stresses before it is
necessary, suffers more
than is necessary.*

SENECA



GOAL SETTING

In order to effectively manage time and live a balance life, you must be aware of your goals. It is important that you have goals because they provide direction. Working towards a goal will help focus energy and reduce the stress that comes with not having a purpose.

THE THREE PS

There are three Ps that will help you achieve goals. Approaching your goals incorrectly will only result in failure. The three Ps will motivate you and help keep you from becoming discouraged. When setting goals: you must make sure that they are positive, personal, and present.

Positive: Goals should be phrased positively, so they help you feel good about yourself and what you're trying to accomplish. A better alternative might be this: "Enroll in pre-law classes so I can help people with legal problems someday."

Personal: Goals must be personal. They must reflect your own dreams and values, not those of friends, family, or the media. When crafting your goal statement, always use the word "I" in the sentence to brand it as your own. When your goals are personal, you'll be more motivated to succeed and take greater pride in your accomplishments.

Possible: When setting goals, be sure to consider what's possible and within your control. Getting into an Ivy League university may be possible if you are earning good grades but unrealistic if you're struggling. In the latter case, a more reasonable goal might be to attend a university or trade school that offers courses related to your chosen career. You might also pursue volunteer work that would strengthen your college applications.

SMART GOALS

Goals cannot be achieved if they are impossible. SMART goals make it easier to achieve success because you know that success is within reach.

Aspects of SMART goals:

Specific: Goals must be specific. An example of a specific goal is: workout 30 minutes a day.

Measurable: Measurable goals let you know when you are successful. For example, lose 5 pounds is measurable.

Attainable: All goals, particularly short-term goals, need to be attainable. For example, promoting three times in six months is not attainable.

Relevant: Goals must be relevant to the situation. A goal to find a mentor is not relevant to someone who is established in his or her field.

Timely: Goals require specific timeframes. For example, lose 5 pounds this month is both measurable and timely.

VISUALIZATION

Visualization means coming up with a mental picture of a goal and then believing that the goal will happen. Many successful people use visualization techniques. The process of visualization may seem like a waste of time to some, but visualizing a goal helps the mind to view that goal as a tangible possibility rather than some indistinct desire.

Steps:

- **Choose a goal:** Visualization must be specific. Choose a single goal to visualize. It is easier to start small.
- **Relax:** Carve out the time to relax and focus on visualizing the goal.
- **Visualize:** Picture the goal as achieved in great detail. See it happening in the present.
- **Accept:** Believe that the goal will come true, and affirm it to yourself. Affirmations are useful tools that help win acceptance.

PRIORITIZING YOUR GOALS

All goals need to be prioritized, so you know how to focus your energy. In order to do this, you must consider how SMART goals align with your personal vision and values in life. A goal that does not meet personal values is less likely to be reached. Use these criteria to rank SMART goals. It is important that you balance goals within different areas of your life.

Prioritizing

Goals	Priorities
Earn a bonus this quarter.	B
Learn a new language this year.	C
Finish a project early.	C
Complete the schedule.	A
Sleep 8 hours a night.	A

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Sam had goals but he never seemed to reach them. His dream of owning his own business felt like it was slipping away. He grew discouraged and discussed it with his mentor. Sam learned that he was never able to reach his goals because they were unattainable. They were all vague long-term goals. Sam created SMART goals. After a few months, he was encouraged by his success and felt like he was on track for owning his own business.

*Time is what we
want most, but what
we use worst.*

WILLIAM PENN



OPTIONAL WAYS TO WORK

The traditional methods of work may increase stress and imbalance in life. Each person is unique, and providing different work options will allow people to choose the method that helps them be their most productive and maintain their balance. While it may not be possible to provide every option, allowing for different work styles will improve company culture and promote balance. Each option comes with its own pros and cons, so examine them carefully before choosing a new way to work.

TELECOMMUTING

Given the way we use technology, telecommuting is a popular work option. This allows people to work from home and send their projects in when they are due.

Pros:

- **Cost:** Companies can reduce overhead and other costs by allowing employees to work from home.
- **Productivity:** People who work from home are often more productive.

- **Lowers stress:** Many employees benefit from losing morning commutes and distracting office mates.
- **Personal control:** Employees who work from home are able to take responsibility for their own schedules.

Cons:

- **Communication:** When all communication is electronic, employees may not communicate as well as they can face-to-face. Additionally, a lack of social interaction can isolate employees and stunt company culture.
- **Motivation:** People who are not self-driven are not successful need more accountability than telecommuting offers.
- **Longer hours:** Some people work longer hours when they telecommute because there is no distinction between work and home.

JOB SHARING

Job sharing is a popular option that allows employees to balance their work and home lives. This technique allows two people to share a job, with each one working part-time hours.

Pros:

- **Better attendance:** When people have the time to handle personal matters, they are less likely to miss work.

- **Continuity:** With two people sharing a job, there is always someone to come in and cover for a sick employee.
- **Morale:** Employees who are able to find work life balance have better morale and productivity.

Cons:

- **Conflict:** People who want to be in control may not enjoy having an equal share their responsibilities. This can cause conflicts between job sharers.
- **Inequality:** If one employee is more effective than the other, that employee may shoulder too much responsibility.
- **More paper work:** Employers have to double the paperwork for shared jobs.

JOB REDESIGN

Sometimes it is necessary to redesign a position to alleviate stress. This requires analyzing and changing the scope and responsibilities of a position in a way that will motivate employees and improve their work life balance.

The method:

- **Content:** Discover what information leads to problems at work.
- **Information:** Analyze job information to find inconsistencies.
- **Elements:** Change the elements of the job.

- **Description:** Rewrite the job description.
- **Responsibilities:** Refocus responsibilities based on the description.

FLEX TIME

Flex time does not alter the number of hours employees work, but it does give them the flexibility to choose when they work. For example, an employee may choose to come at 7:00 am and leave at 4:00 pm to spend time with family.

Pros

- **Productivity:** People are more productive when they know that they will be able to take care of their other obligations.
- **Morale:** Everyone's internal clock is different. People are happier when they can work at their optimal times.

Cons

- **Difficult to manage:** Managers may have trouble coordinating meetings when everyone works different hours.
- **Miscommunications:** It is easy to forget to communicate ideas with people who have already left for the day.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

A small business owner had trouble with employee absenteeism. Many of his workers were taking time off to handle family responsibilities. While he could not fault people for leaving to pick up sick children, productivity was down. After careful consideration, he offered his employees the opportunity to telecommute. After six months, productivity improved by 20 percent. Additionally, his overhead cost dropped dramatically. He began looking into other options to his employees.

*What we hope ever to do
with ease, we must learn
first to do with diligence.*

SAMUEL JOHNSON



AT WORK

Keeping balance when at work is difficult. Outside influences always try to creep in and destroy productivity. Becoming sidetracked, however, simply creates job related stress that further increases the level of imbalance you experience. Fortunately, there are a few useful tips that will help you regain your sense of balance while at work.

LEAVE HOME STRESS AT HOME

Everyone has personal problems that create stress and hinder job performance. If these issues are severe, it may be necessary to take a leave of absence. In most cases, however, there are better strategies to help leave the home stress at home.

Strategies:

- **Get up early:** Get up early enough to take a few minutes and prepare for a new day. Focus on what is ahead and not the past.
- **Take advantage of the commute:** View the commute as a chance to enter your “work zone.” That is, mentally gear up for the workday.

- **Communicate appropriately:** Discuss your problems with a friend or confidant outside of work. Do not vent about home stress to your coworkers.
- **Find outlets:** Discover useful ways to alleviate stress, such as exercise. This will help keep you focused throughout the workday.

BREAK UP LARGE TASKS

Projects and deadlines can be overwhelming. If you have a large task ahead of you, you might be tempted to procrastinate. This will only create more stress. A better solution is breaking up the task.

Tips:

- List the steps that are necessary to complete the task.
- Schedule time for each step.
- Complete the easiest step first, and then move on to the next easiest. This will give you a sense of accomplishment.
- Do not look ahead. Focus on the task at hand.

DELEGATE

People can avoid stress by simply delegating responsibility. This sounds simple, but many people, particularly those in management, have problems delegating authority. They do not trust others to do the job. There are a few tips that will help anyone feel more confident about delegating.

Steps:

- **Choose tasks to delegate:** Do not delegate sensitive or difficult tasks.
- **Choose people to help:** Find responsible people you trust to handle the tasks for you.
- **Give instructions:** Make sure that you communicate clear instructions with deadlines.
- **Be available:** Let people know that they can come to you with questions, but do not hover over them.

SET ACCURATE GOALS

Accurate goals decrease stress. This involves estimating the time that it will take to complete something. There are a few steps that will help you set accurate goals.

Steps:

- Familiarize yourself with the requirements.
- List the actions that need to happen.
- Estimate the time necessary for each action you need to take.
- Estimate the total time necessary for a task.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

The CEO of a thriving small business was overworked. He was accused of being a micromanager, but he did not trust other people to manage his company for him. This slowed productivity because he had to personally approve everything.

Finally, a family wedding forced him to take time off. He delegated many of his responsibilities to the VP and other employees. When he returned, he expected to find a mess, but he discovered that productivity improved 25 percent when he did not make people come to him with every decision.

*People who cannot find
time for recreation are
obliged sooner or later to
find time for illness.*

JOHN WANAMAKER



AT HOME

We should be able to relax at home and unwind after a hard day at work. Unfortunately, this does not always happen. Home has stress of its own, and it seems like the stress from work is constantly waiting to spill over into our home lives. To have work life balance, it is important to learn how to effectively manage the stress and obligations at home.

LEAVE WORK STRESS AT WORK

Bringing the stress of work home will ruin your family life. Additionally, not being able to separate from work will destroy your balance, increasing your stress level. Luckily, there are a few strategies that will help keep work separate.

Strategies:

- **Stop on the way home:** On particularly stressful days, you may want to stop somewhere for a few minutes and decompress.
- **Vent in the car or to a friend:** Use the daily traffic jam as a chance to express your frustrations to yourself instead of ranting about them to your family.
- **Enjoy your family:** Do not focus on the downside of family life. Find ways to spend time together that everyone enjoys.

- **Find outlets:** Discover useful ways to alleviate work stress, such as exercise or meditation. Practicing these will help you focus on the present.

TURN YOUR PHONE OFF

Cell phones have made it nearly impossible to escape the pressures of life. Now there is always a way for someone to reach us. Not only are we inundated with phone calls, we have emails and social networks to worry about. There is only one way to fix the problem and alleviate stress: TURN OFF THE PHONE. It is acceptable and healthy to occasionally disconnect. Silencing the phone does not count as disconnecting. It does not matter when you disconnect, just that you do.

TAKE SOME “ME” TIME

“Me time” is essential to a person’s health and well-being. Often, people think that “me time” is a day at the spa or something else extravagant that they cannot afford to do. Actually, “me time” is much simpler. It is anything that you do just for yourself. There is no set expense or time frame that you have to follow when taking “me time.” It can be as simple as taking a walk. The only imperative concerning “me time” is that you actually take it.

MAINTAIN YOUR BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are important in every aspect of life. Without them, people will constantly pull our attention away from what is important. In order to

achieve work life balance, it is necessary to establish boundaries between work and home. This will require you to determine what those boundaries are and communicate them. For example, you may set a boundary that says you do not take calls after 7:00 pm. Each person's boundaries will be different, so think about what works for you.

Once you set your boundaries and communicate them, you need to maintain them. People naturally push boundaries, and they will test you. You need to stay strong. For example, let a call go to voicemail and only return it if the matter is truly an emergency that cannot wait. Odds are that it is not. After some time, other people will learn to respect your boundaries.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

A store manager was overworked. It seemed like every time she had a day off she was flooded with phone calls. The frustrating part was that most of the calls were not important. They were questions like “where is the order sheet?” Finally, she told her employees that she would no longer answer her phone on days off. They could leave a message, and she would call back if it were important. Over time, the number of calls she received diminished drastically. She was more relaxed and productive when she was able to keep work out of her home life.

*A man who suffers
or stresses before it is
necessary, suffers more
than is necessary.*

SENECA

STRESS MANAGEMENT

It is impossible to experience work life balance without stress management. Stress is unavoidable. If we do not handle it well it can cause lasting physical and psychological damage. On the other hand, managing stress can combat its negative effects. Fortunately, stress management is not too complicated; anyone can learn how to manage stress.

EXERCISE

Everyone knows that exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle, but it is also a key aspect to managing stress. Exercise affects people mentally as well as physically. It produces endorphins that will improve your mood and prevent depression. In order to reap the benefits of exercise, however, you must be consistent with it.

Tips for Success:

- **Choose an exercise you enjoy:** You will not repeat an activity that you hate doing.
- **Start slowly:** If you over do it, you will simply become tired and discouraged.
- **Schedule it:** Exercise must be a priority or you will never get to it.

EATING WELL

Diet has a strong impact on our emotions and the way that we handle stress. Eating well is an important factor in stress management. Unfortunately, our bodies crave fatty, salty foods in times of stress. Rather than giving in to fast food cravings, focus on getting healthy.

Tips:

Avoid sugar and caffeine: Their highs may give you more energy, but once you crash, you are left more exhausted than before.

Focus on nutrition: Be sure to include whole grains, lean protein, and leafy green in your diet.

Eat frequently: Increase your focus by eating small healthy snacks throughout the day. This will balance blood sugar and increase energy.

GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP

Many people are sleep deprived. Experts recommend sleeping between seven and nine hours a night. Sleep deprivation increases stress, weakens the immune system, and raises the risk of having an accident. Given the important role that sleep plays in physical and mental health, it only makes sense to do everything in your power to improve sleep.

Ways to Improve Sleep

Avoid electronics before bed: Studies show that the light of the television, phone, or computer may make falling asleep difficult.

Relax: Unwind with a relaxing routine before bed.

Exercise: Exercise will make it easier to fall asleep.

Have a bedtime: A regular bedtime will train your body's internal clock and help you fall asleep.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

We are not always aware of how much stress is affecting our lives. It is possible to believe that you are effectively managing your stress when, in reality, stress is managing you. This is why it is important to step back and assess your stress level. The results of the assessment will reveal any changes that you need to make in order to improve your stress management. You can use the results of the assessment to make the necessary changes to your diet, exercise, and sleep routines.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Shelia worked full-time and attended night classes. To fit everything into her schedule, she slept less and quit going to the gym. Soon, she began to eat more fast food. She came to crave it. To make matters worse, she felt like she was failing as both an employee and a student. She was barely a C student.

A counselor suggested that she focus on eating right, exercising, and getting more sleep. Sheila resisted at first, but she finally gave in. After going back to the gym, she realized that she was sleeping better and able to focus. The diet was difficult, but she soon lost her junk food cravings. After a semester of healthy living, she had a B average.

*Tension is who you think
you should be. Relaxation
is who you are.*

CHINESE PROVERB



WORKING IN A HOME OFFICE

Working from home has its advantages and disadvantages. Working in a home office and maintaining work-life balance requires preparation and regular evaluation of your work practices. If you are not careful, your home office can take over your life. By following a few guidelines, you can avoid burnout as you take advantage of working at home.

SETTING UP A HOME OFFICE

It is important to set up the home office properly in the beginning. A poor work environment will only harm productivity. So, make sure that you are comfortable and have all of the tools that you need to do your job well.

The Set Up:

- **Location:** Choose a separate room or a location that is out of the way. This will help prevent distractions and create a professional work environment. You also need to make sure that it is well lit.
- **Equipment:** Make sure that your equipment is functional and that you have everything you need.
- **Clear out the office:** Remove items from the office that are not work related. It is not a storage shed.

- **Organize:** Organize supplies so that they are accessible, easy to use, and functional.
- **Make it a workspace:** Limit the office use for work. It is not a play area.

SETTING BOUNDARIES

It is difficult to establish boundaries in a home office; people do not view a home the same way they see the work office. Because you do not have company policies to prevent distractions, you need to create your own boundaries. You can base these boundaries on the rules and boundaries of your old workplace. For example, do not take personal calls while you are working. Just like other boundaries, expect people to challenge them. You must stick to your boundaries, however, in order to be effective at your job and keep your work life in balance.

DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS

It is easy to become distracted while working from home. There is no one to supervise, and your family can easily forget that you are working. Fortunately, a few safeguards will help you avoid distractions.

Avoiding Distractions:

Limit access: Ask your family to stay out of the office while you are working. Family, children especially, can be very distracting.

Use a timer: Schedule breaks for activities like social networking. Do not constantly surf the internet.

Turn off the television: Even if you need a television for work, it does not have to be on all the time. Turn it off to avoid distractions.

Set aside time to talk on the phone: You cannot allow yourself to be distracted by every phone call.

MAKE A SCHEDULE AND STICK TO IT

Working from home gives you the chance to create your own schedule, but you do need to create it. If not, you will have trouble accomplishing tasks on time. Most people find a schedule that sets tasks for each hour helpful, but you may use any format or time block you like.

Example:

8:00 am – Breakfast

8:30 am – Return emails

9:00 am – Call clients

10:00 am – Research

No matter how you create your schedule, you must stick with it. It is too easy ignoring your schedule when no one is monitoring your performance.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Sarah was excited about the opportunity to work from home. She was sure she would be happier and more productive. After six months, however, she was miserable. She was constantly running behind. The phone never stopped ringing, and she could not keep people out of her office. To keep up, she stayed up late to work after the children went to sleep, she felt like she never stopped. She did not even have the time to put on clothes in the morning.

Finally, she asked for help. A counselor explained the importance of boundaries and schedules to her. Implementing these tools was not easy because her family was used to her working around their schedules. They pushed at her boundaries constantly. After a month of perseverance, however, Sarah noticed a change. She was working in the day, and her productivity soared. Gone were the months of working at night.

*If you want to live a
happy life, tie it to a goal,
not people or things.*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Catherine Pulsifer:** It is balance; we need it. The sad part is that some people pay more attention to their credit than they do to their own balance in life!
- **Steven R. Covey:** Wisdom is your perspective on life, your sense of balance, your understanding of how the various parts and principles apply and relate to each other
- **Robert A. Heinlein:** I am free because I know that I alone am morally responsible for everything I do.



Rick Chisholm made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of \$300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.



Tala Chisholm is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.



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