Work-Life Balance

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Today’s objectives

- What is *Work-Life Balance*
- National Trends
- Stress and How to Reduce it
- Simple Habits to Incorporate
- Set Priorities
- Make a Plan
- Online WellConnected Tools
- Take Action
What is work-life balance?

A broad concept including proper prioritizing between **work** and **life**.

- **Work**
  - Career
  - Ambition

- **Life**
  - Health
  - Family
  - Leisure
  - Spiritual Development

*By balancing your career and life, you will live much healthier, happier, and longer!*
Do you have a healthy balance?

*work life balance worksheet

Many Americans are experiencing burnout due to overwork & increased stress.

- Rise in absenteeism
  - (Missing work for no reason)
- Rise in presenteeism
  - Attending work while sick
  - Decrease in productivity
“The workplace has become the single greatest source of stress”

- Almost 50% of employees state that their jobs are "very" or "extremely" stressful
- Stress-related disability claims by American employees have doubled
- Up to 90% of physician visits are related to stress
  - Estimated cost: $ 300 billion/year

Source: National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
Stress:
a normal reaction to the ever increasing demands of life

- Fight or flight response
- Nonstop stress of modern life = your alarm system rarely shuts off
- Stress releases cortisol; which stores as fat
- Why stress management is so important
How to develop a healthy work-life balance

- Decrease & Manage Stress Levels
- Take Active Breaks
- Practice Healthy Behaviors
- Stay Organized
- Unplug
Sounds easy, right?

Most of us know what’s good for us, but only 1 in 20 adults engage in the 4 most basic strategies for healthy living:

✓ Regular exercise
✓ Maintaining a healthy weight
✓ At least 5 servings of fruits & vegetables daily
✓ Tobacco free

TIP: Don’t make a lot of drastic changes all at once. Start by incorporating a few healthy changes and setting some reachable goals.
Take a break... and move!

- Accumulate 30 minutes of exercise throughout your day, without changing into gym clothes
- Schedule workouts for before or after work a few days of the week
- Walk, walk, walk!

![Diagram showing benefits of walking]

- Boosts your mood and energy level
- Increases productivity
- Reduces stress
- Helps you refocus
- Burns calories
- Time to reflect
- Clears your mind
- Helps you refocus
Exercise reduces stress

- Endorphins!
- Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity
- To meet specific fitness goals, aim for 60 minutes/day
- Make regular physical activity part of your lifestyle
- Do what you can do, on most days, for the rest of your life
- Make it fun!
Got stress? Practice mindfulness

- **Focus** only on things in the **present moment**
- Purposefully CHOOSE where to place your attention
- Be aware of:
  - Your surroundings
  - Your emotions
  - Your thoughts
  - How your body feels
- Let go of worry
- Limit self-talk
- Washing dishes example
Benefits of daily mindfulness (study)

- 94% improved overall wellbeing
- 52 more minutes of SLEEP
- 50% decreased cold/flu symptoms
Practicing Mindfulness

• Deep, slow **breathing**
• **Unplug** (re-boot your brain)
  • Technology...we are always at full capacity, which increases stress
  • Turn off screens: phone, TV, computer
• Being in **nature**
• Meditation: **quieting the mind** by focusing on a word or object
• **Yoga**: series of postures emphasizing balance and breathing
• Apps: Headspace, Mindfulness Daily
  • Small tips for quality sleep, better focus, relief from a busy mind
Eat food that promotes health

**Do**

- Eat breakfast
- Pack a healthy lunch & snacks
  - nuts, vegetables, fruit, yogurt, whole-grain breads and lean proteins (turkey, fish or chicken)
- Eat every 3-4 hours
- Drink lots of water
- Enjoy your food
- Eat slowly

**Avoid**

- Drinking sugary drinks, soda, and calorie packed coffees
- Takeout lunches, which tend to be expensive, oversized, high in fat and calories, and lacking in nutrients
- Going too long without fueling your body
Make life easy

Instead of focusing on what you need to eliminate from your diet, look at what you can add to it!

Tips for success:
• Grocery store planning
• Food prep
• Crock-pot meals
• Pack lunch and snacks the night before
• Cook in bulk & freeze
Don’t forget the 'life' in work-life balance

• Make the **boundary** between work and home very clear
  • Leave work behind...don’t check emails or anything work related at home
• Engage and connect with family and/or friends
• Plan time to relax, read and reflect
• It’s ok to say no
• Relax and recharge your batteries at home so you can go back to work with energy, focus and commitment
Set Priorities

Taking time to carefully establish priorities is an effective way to achieve work-life balance.

• If you could only focus on one thing in your life, what would it be?
  • This is your top priority!

• What would you focus on 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 4\textsuperscript{th}, 5\textsuperscript{th}?
  • These are your top 5 priorities

Source: http://www.salary.com/14-steps-to-achieving-work-life-balance/slide/2/
Downtime – you need it!

- Schedule downtime and make it a routine
- **Make downtime something you look forward to**
- Even during a hectic day, take 10 minutes to do something that will recharge your batteries
  - Read a book, go for a walk or listen to music
- **Make a little time for the things that bring you joy!**
Out of balance?

- When your work life and personal life are out of balance, your stress level is likely to soar
- Learn the right way for you to relax and reduce tension
- Reducing your stress should be a top priority in your life
- Don’t forget: You deserve it!
Here's a stress management technique to practice:

1. Close your eyes.
2. Take five slow, deep breaths in through your nose & out through your mouth.
3. Think about all the advantages of a calmer, more relaxed life.
4. Feel good about being here.
5. Repeat
6. When you open your eyes, notice how you feel?
What works for you to reduce stress?

- **Move more**
- **Sleep 7-8 hours/night**
  - Lack of sleep causes increased cortisol
- **Fuel your body with nutritious food & hydrate with H20**
- **Plan your day**
  - ✓ Top 3 tasks
  - ✓ Try the 50/10 rule
  - ✓ Reflect daily & practice gratitude
- **Do more of what makes you HAPPY**
- **Get social support**
  - Foster friendships & family and/or get involved with a group
- **Journal thoughts & feelings**
  - What are you grateful for?
- **Communicate Effectively**
  - Don’t be afraid to say no, and/or ask for help
- **Reduce negativity**
  - Reprogram “self talk”, use positive affirmations, reduce news-watching, spend time with positive people
Make a plan with SMART Goals

• What are you proud of?
  • This will motivate you on a tough day.

• One thing you want to change?

• SMART Goal
  • Specific
  • Measurable
  • Achievable
  • Realistic
  • Time based

• How confident are you that you’ll reach your goal?

“If we wait for the moment when everything, absolutely everything is ready, we shall never begin.”
Achieve your goals & stay on track

• Tiny Habits (BJ Fogg, Stanford Researcher)
  • Anchor (After I hear a phone ring, I will exhale and relax for 2 seconds.)

• Support: Involve the people around you
• Try it out!
• Did it work?
• Identify barriers to change and find solutions
• Modify your environment
• REWARD yourself
• Repeat!

“Goals that are not written down are just wishes.”
WellConnected tools for YOU

How to log-in:

- Visit [http://members.bcidaho.com](http://members.bcidaho.com)
- Log-in to your Blue Cross of Idaho account (or register if new user)
  - After logging in, click on the WellConnected logo:

Don’t miss:

- Wellness Workshops: LIFE BALANCE *highly recommended
- Health Library (videos, articles, decision tools, symptom checker)
- Sync Devices
- Quarterly Wellness Challenges *prizes!
- Be Well Blog
- Daily Tips
- Water Tracker
What are you going to start today?

Questions?

Thank you

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Sources:
Mayo Clinic: Work-Life Balance
mayoclinic.com/health/work-life-balance/WL00056

Web MD: Stress Management Help Center
webmd.com/balance/stress-management/default.htm