FINDING BALANCE: The Value of Work-Life Balance

In a 2010 study, 46 percent of people said their job demands often interfered with their family life, and overall 89 percent said achieving a work-life balance was a problem.\(^1\) According to the Mayo Clinic,\(^2\) letting work outweigh life can have consequences, such as:

- **Fatigue**
  Affects your ability to work productively and think clearly, which may lead to mistakes at work.

- **Poor Health**
  Stress can worsen the symptoms you experience from any existing medical condition.

- **Lost Personal Time**
  You could miss important family events or milestones, which can put a strain on your relationships.

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**Time Is on Your Side**

The demands of a career and a personal life will always be a juggling act. However, if you can learn to set limits and take control of your time, you can create the work-life balance that’s right for you. Below are a few ways that can help:

- **Manage your time**—Create a to-do list, then cut the activities you don’t enjoy or have time for. Delegate when possible.

- **Learn to say no**—It’s ok to say no to extra work or projects so you can focus on activities that are more meaningful to you.

- **Leave work at work**—Technology makes it easy to stay connected to work. Commit to separating work time from personal time.

- **Cut down on email access**—Focus on others’ needs before checking email in the morning, and try not to look at your emails more than three times a day.

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Taking care of yourself and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is essential for successful work-life balance. Below are some tips to help:

- **Eat a healthy diet**—A diet focused on fresh fruits and vegetables helps maintain your stamina and wellbeing.
- **Get enough sleep**—Lack of sleep increases stress levels.
- **Make time for fun**—Each day should include an activity that you enjoy. (Even better if it involves other people!)
- **Take advantage of your support system by leaning on co-workers or family and friends if needed**—If life just seems too chaotic or overwhelming to manage, consider talking to a professional—a counselor or mental health provider through a physician referral or through your employee assistance program (EAP).

Many employers are now offering flexible work options which help achieve a healthier work-life balance. A 2012 report by the Society for Human Management Resources shows that:

- **63%** of employers offer flex place/telecommuting.
- **73%** of employers offer flex time.
- **87%** of employers allow daily time off when important needs arise.
- **93%** of employers offer choices in managing time.

For more information on work-life balance, visit the following resources:

- **Mayo Clinic**
  - [mayoclinic.org](http://mayo Clinic.org)
- **Mental Health America**
  - [mentalhealthamerica.net](http://mentalhealthamerica.net)

Visit [ahealthyme.com](http://ahealthyme.com) and be sure to sign up for an ahealthyme account!
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