

Creating a work-life balance



How to improve your work-life balance

People who work in the licensed trade are used to working long and often unsociable hours. Juggling work, home, family, friends, and everything else we must fit in is a challenge. You may not be able to change how many hours you work, but there are some things you can do to make your work-life balance better.

Is your work-life balance unhealthy?

Ask yourself these questions to check out your work-life balance:

- Do you find it hard to relax when you're not working?
- Do you frequently neglect other aspects of your life such as family, hobbies, or other interests?
- Has your physical or mental health suffered because of your job?
- Do your friends and family say they hardly ever see you?
- Do you feel your personal relationships are suffering because of the work you do?
- When at work, do you rarely take breaks?

If you've answered 'yes' to one or more of these questions, there's a good chance your work-life balance could do with some improvement.

Taking time off

Almost all workers in this country who work a five-day week are legally entitled to paid holiday per year (bank holidays may or may not be included, it depends on your employer).

Part-time workers are also entitled to paid holiday, based on the number of days they work.

- Find out what agreement is in place with your employer about how much notice you must give before taking a holiday
- Use your holiday wisely. If you are able to spread, it out during the year.
- An employer can't refuse to let you take your holiday at all
- Plan your time off. Be as organised with your social life, and holidays as you need to be in your job. This can be hugely energising and motivating

Taking breaks at work

Take breaks when you're at work too. Aim to take at least 20 minutes for your main break and get out of the workplace if you can. This allows you to eat properly and get some fresh air. It could also improve your focus and productivity for the rest of the day.

How to cope with work overload

Most working people have an increasingly high work load these days. Take personal responsibility for your work-life balance. Speak to your manager when work demands are too high rather than hoping nobody will notice how overwhelmed you are.

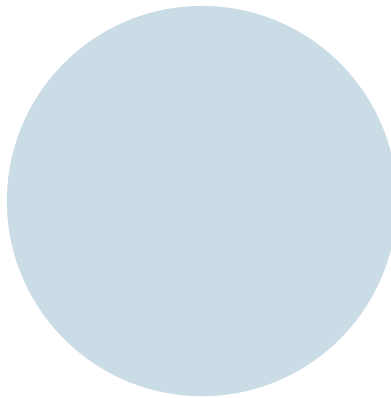
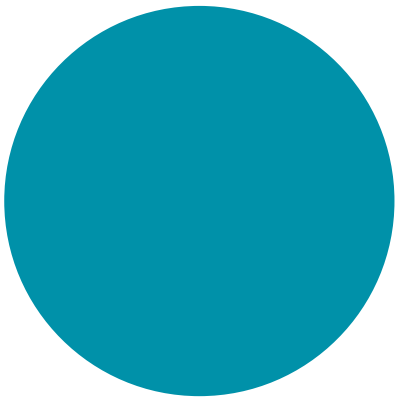
Managing your time

Good time management can improve work-life balance in just about any job. Reducing stress during work hours will make you happier when you're not working too:

- Avoid putting things off
- Tackle things you'd rather avoid first thing in the day, rather than leaving them until the last minute.
- Divide tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks.
- Make a list and prioritise things as High, Medium, and Low

Stay healthy

If you work long hours, it's important to stay as healthy as you can including eating a healthy diet. Physical activity helps relieve stress because it releases feel-good hormones called endorphins in the brain.



Relaxing with mindfulness

Relaxation relieves stress levels. There are lots of relaxing things you can do, from having a bath, listening to music to practising yoga.

An increasingly popular way of managing stress is mindfulness. Mindfulness helps protect against anxiety and depression. It is to be aware of your thoughts, feelings, and surroundings, in the present moment.

You can practice mindfulness wherever you are. The result could be lower stress levels in and out of work.



0808 801 0550



enquiries@ltcharity.org.uk



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Eat with mindfulness

The next time you sit down to a meal, spend some time thinking about your food. What does your food smell like? How does it taste? What are the textures like?

Walk with mindfulness

After a long day at work, go for a quick walk concentrate on your environment - the sights, sounds, sensations and smells around you. Take in everything! Just five minutes may be enough to make you feel calm, centered and less stressed.

Other sources of information

Mind

Information about mental health issues, including how to manage stress.

www.mind.org.uk

Change4Life

Lots of help and suggestions for eating healthily and staying physically active.

www.nhs.uk/change4life



The Licensed Trade Charity are available 24/7, if you'd like to talk about your situation, we can help you. Contact us for confidential, free of charge support. If you are experiencing any of the issues covered in this fact sheet, in the first instance call our helpline on:

0808 801 0550

Our Helpline Team will listen without judging and will work with you as best they can to achieve a positive outcome. If you prefer, you can email: enquiries@ltcharity.org.uk or visit our website at www.licensedtradecharity.org.uk, it's full of useful information about the kind of issues we know people who work in the licensed trade face.

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Note: This guide is not exhaustive. It has been produced by the Licensed Trade Charity to provide you with an overview of the issue in question. We are grateful to all specialist organisations who support our charity and are available to you should you be experiencing this particular issue.
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