

Tips to reclaim work-life balance

The ability to work remotely has opened up different opportunities for the millions of people who work 9 to 5 each day. While the advantages to remote work are too numerous to count, logging hours from the sofa is not necessarily a panacea for all working ills. In fact, many remote workers often lament how much their work-life balance has been adversely affected by their decision to avoid the office.

According to the career resource Zippia, 27 percent of United States employees work remotely as of 2021. There are expected to be 36.2 million American employees working remotely by 2025. In its 2020

Household Pulse Survey, the U.S. Census Bureau found that more than one-third of U.S. households reported working from home more frequently than before the pandemic.

Switching to remote working certainly may have improved flexibility for many workers, but it also has led to them putting in longer hours - something that may affect home life. According to a survey of 2,800 workers by the Los Angeles-based staffing firm Robert Half, 45 percent of respondents said they regularly work more hours during the week than they did before transitioning to remote work. Also, 70 percent of professionals reported

working on weekends.

Americans are not alone in this phenomenon. The business support company NordVPN Teams says the average length of time an employee working from home in the U.K., Canada, Austria, and U.S. is logged on at their computer has increased by more than two hours a day since the coronavirus crisis.

As home offices have become a more common feature, workers admit to taking shorter lunch breaks, working through sickness, and being "available" during times that would normally be devoted to leisure or family. Technology has made it possible to get alerts on mobile phones even

when workers have seemingly logged off for the day.

Mastering control of one's time can take some trial and error. However, there are some tips that can make it easier to achieve:

- Set limits (and stick to them). Don't overschedule yourself. Figure out what you can handle in terms of work and home responsibilities and limit those actions.
- Detach from work. Try to keep work equipment in a separate area from the living room or kitchen. This way you can turn off the computer and call it a day. Turn off alerts on your phone when the work day ends.
- Schedule fun times with the

family. Make it a priority to fill the calendar with plenty of activities to enjoy in your leisure time, which can help to offset the demands of work.

• Prioritize and assess frequently. Everyone has different priorities. Remote work may help you realize those priorities more easily, such as working specific hours to be able to care for an elderly parent or an infant. Don't feel the need to compensate by taking on more work.

Remote work benefits many people. But to benefit fully from such situations, professionals may need to make a concerted effort to achieve a greater work-life balance.

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