

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Promoting Balance at Work and at Home

Creating a balance between work and your home life isn't easy. Despite needing to make your 10 a.m. meeting, trip to the dentist, train ride home and kids' soccer game, you also realize that a workout and time with your spouse are vital to your sanity.

By prioritizing your own needs, a sense of balance will fall in line. Instead of shooting for perfection, develop realistic solutions that help you feel calm and satisfied. Share those solutions. Become a champion for balance at work and home for friends and colleagues.

Put the wheels in motion. Get together with neighbors, co-workers or friends for a movie night or basketball game. Pick activities that can be scheduled on a regular basis so the people involved have something to look forward to. It'll be refreshing to take a stroll with co-workers over your lunch hour or meet neighbors each morning for a jog. Try starting a lunchtime yoga class or setting up a company baseball team. It's a great way to get to know colleagues, share some laughs, relieve stress, and talk about balance tips that have worked for you.

Create a "steady" space. Construct a "balance board" in the lunchroom, beside the water cooler or around your desk that shares information on work/life balance and any opportunities offered by your company. Want to reach more people? Post a virtual balance board on the company intranet. At home, stick articles to the fridge or near the computer that are relevant to family members. Create a "balance book" of articles and information for sharing. Share it with anyone you notice looking overwhelmed.

Be a leader. Whether you're a manager, team leader, or have just started the company, you can show colleagues how important breaks, vacations and other resources are by taking proper lunch breaks, getting involved in sports and volunteer activities and encouraging others to do the same. Studies show that when work/life balance initiatives are promoted, productivity increases. People are less likely to quit and are healthier and happier on the job.

Lead the pack at home and set an example for your kids, spouse and friends. Let them see you relaxing, coming home from work on time and involved in community activities.

Be aware. Seize the opportunity to share what you know the next time you hear others complaining that they don't have time for themselves. Really listen to what people are saying to figure out the root of the problem. Do they want more time for family? Exercise? Offer up any tips that can help or point them toward the right information and resources.

Steer a committee. Promoting work/life balance tips is more fun with a group. Start a committee with others that can host workshops, fundraisers and bring in guest speakers to help colleagues get all areas of their life in check. Dream up family-friendly events like a bowling day or barbeque to promote work/life balance and have a little fun. It'll give everyone a chance to relax, socialize and improve morale at work and home.

Most people feel like they have too many things to do each day and can't slow down to enjoy life. Balance is different for each person. Help the people around you find a positive work/life balance by speaking up, providing information and being a work/life guru wherever you go.

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