# The Importance Of Optimising Your Life For Work And Play

Time is your most valuable and your most scarce resource. Effectively managing your time can often mean the difference between succeeding and failing.

The working environment of today poses many challenges to employees. While some employers allow for a relaxed relationship between both work and private lives, there are still many others in the majority who constantly demand significant reductions in areas outside of work such as leisure time with family.

That's why achieving the seemingly elusive goal of work-life balance often feels like such an impossible task, especially for goal-oriented people who consistently strive to put their all into everything they do. Finding that balance between a demanding career and a quality personal life is an ongoing daily challenge for so many. Especially at a time when there are companies out there reducing staff, while also expecting increased productivity from those who remain.

It can be seriously difficult to meet the demand of your workplace while also being there as much as possible for family and friends, while also making time for personal growth, self-care, community involvement, spirituality, as well as any hobbies you may have. There are just not enough hours in the day, or days in the week.

So, in the 'do more with less' competitive mentality of today, how are you expected to manage time for both your career and your family, and honestly feel satisfied with both? Maintaining a work-life balance is about separating your personal and professional lives without allowing one to encroach upon the other. Both are important, neither should be neglected.

The internet and especially social media have changed how we all live and work in ways that were unimaginable only a decade ago. Obviously, many of these digital advances have improved every aspect of our lives in so many ways, but there being constantly plugged in creates so much pressure. In order to combat digital technology's potential to zap the vitality out of our minds and bodies, we need to be proactive in this digital whirlwind.

Experts who conduct studies of workplace culture have emphasized that everyone's individual balance between work and life will always vary over time. A perfect example of this would be how the balance between the two will surely be vastly different when you're young and single compared to when you get married, and again which each child you have.

The work-life balance has become much more than simply an alluring concept. So much so that an increasing number of businesses are relying on employees to have more balance in their lifestyle, because it has been proven by countless studies that employees with balanced lives are happier during work hours, ultimately making them more motivated and productive.

When companies consciously or unconsciously limit an employee's access to a quality private life due to an extreme amount of overtime or constant pressure, it results in higher levels of dissatisfaction and stress. This inevitably leads to decreased productivity, while increasing the probability of future health problems, and the eventual alienation from the business.

To maintain a healthy work-life balance, there are a few interdependent factors, and a number of small steps that can be followed, which go a long way toward ensuring you stay sane whether you are at work or at home. Establishing the right balance requires implementation of these factors in all areas of life without causing any damage elsewhere. Therefore, it is imperative to understand how these elements are connected, and what exactly keeping a healthy working and private life entails.

When searching for the best healthy living methods of today, we simply need to look back at the wisdom of our ancestors and the evolution of our biology. There is a definitive link in the history of our evolution between our body's physical well-being and or psychological health.

There's no better example that the old adage of healthy body, healthy mind. That was the credo of the ancient Greek civilization, who understood all too well the importance of a having a sound mind inside a sound body.

Taking cues from them for help today, the best method of maintaining your mental health is to look after your physical health. This can be achieved with the three keys of eating healthy, exercising regularly, getting quality sleep each night, while also doing your best not to overwork.

**Nutrition**

While it is true that people in more developed countries are eating a much wider variety of food than ever before, that doesn't automatically mean that everyone is getting enough of the right nutrition. In fact, there are still many people with diets of heavily processed food full of sugar and artificial additives, so they are not getting enough of the good nutrients essential for better brain health.

Most of us likely think of our health and physical appearance whenever we make food choices, but we should also consider another factor when we choose our snacks and meals. We should think of how they impact our brain function and mental health.

There is an increasing amount of studies that show food doesn't only influence our waistlines, but it can also have an impact on our emotions, moods, and even mental conditions such as depression. Which does makes sense, considering our brains are also physical entities which utilize the energy we put inside our bodies to run, so they too can be affected by blood sugar levels, hormone shifts, as well as a range of other biological processes.

The link between nutritional deficiencies and poor brain health has been recognised by nutritionists for a long time now. That being said, psychiatrists have only recently begun to understand the benefits of nutritional approaches for mental health, supporting further research in this relatively new treatment.

This research has shown that supplements can help improve people's mood, relieve anxiety and depression and improve mental capacity. Omega-3 fatty acids are one of most important minerals for optimal health, critical for the function and development of the central nervous system, yet some people have low levels of it.

On a molecular level, our neurotransmitters that release chemicals in the brain are affected by the kind of food we eat. Glucose for example, found in carbohydrate-rich food from potatoes to grains, is partly responsible for producing of serotonin which helps balance mood and anxiety.

While nutrition is a vital part of living a healthy life, it's important not to remember that worrying too much about what and when you are eating is also not ideal. What you should be doing instead is simply listening to your body for a healthy relationship with food and eating.

**Sleep**

If you aren't getting between 7 to 9 hours of good quality sleep that you need each night, not only will it have an affect your physical health, but it will likely also impact your mental health as well. Excessive sleepiness can heavily influence your motivation, energy level, emotional wellbeing, and basically your entire outlook on life.

Have you ever been stressed about the next day when you've gone to bed, and instead of falling asleep and waking up well rested, you spent all night tossing and turning or lying wide awake? It doesn't matter how tired, weary, and exhausted your body feels, for some reason your mind just will not shut up and let you sleep.

We've all experienced those occasional restless night nights, but restlessness isn't an isolated incident for many people. There are millions of people around the world who suffer from chronic sleeping disorder, and because there is a close connection between sleep and mental health, there's an undeniable association taking place.

When we are asleep, our brain cycles through the different rest stages from REM to non-REM sleep. Research has proven that the deeper REM sleep is where our brains recharge for the day ahead, while improving our memory, learning skills, and emotional health overall. If we can't have this type of sleep each night or it is constantly interrupted, the neurotransmitters in our brains as well as our stress hormones are disrupted too. This can therefore exacerbate many different symptoms of mental health conditions that are already present and vice versa.

Scientists still are yet to understand exactly why it is that our bodies need to sleep each night, mainly because it's quite difficult to study accurately. Studies continue to uncover the costs of not getting enough sleep in regular healthy amounts as well as potential drawbacks of getting too much sleep. While the research has begun to support the theory of sleep being especially important for the health of our brains as well as in many other biological systems.


**Exercise**

Exercise is important for your physical health and your muscle strength, while toning your physique, trimming your waistline, and even improving your sex life, as well as adding years to your life. But that's not all. Exercise can also provide you with a real sense of well-being. People who exercise regularly are more energetic, they sleep better, with sharper memories, while also feeling more relaxed in their lives and more positive about themselves.

Regular exercise will have an overwhelmingly positive impact on all aspects of your body and mind, and the best part is, you don't even need to be a complete fitness fanatic to be able to reap the benefits. Research has indicated that even a modest amount of working out to keep fit can make a noticeable difference to your brain health. It doesn't matter how old you are or you're your fitness level is, everyone can learn how to utilise exercise to feel their best.

Exercising regularly can boost your overall mood, alleviate stress or anxiety, reduce any cognitive issues, and help to manage symptoms of depression, along with a wide variety of other mental benefits. Physical activity like exercise directly affects the brain by increasing blood circulation as well as the production of proteins that aid thinking, learning, and memory.

While vigorous exercise does seem to have a greater impact than physical activity that's considered lighter or more moderate, people who work out 3 to 5 times each week for around 30 to 60 minutes seem to have attained the lowest brain health burden. So, you don't need to go out and run a marathon every day in order to provide a boost for your overall mental health and emotional wellbeing, because a 45-minute workout session seems to be by far the most effective.

If exercising for any other reasons such as weight loss or physical strength isn't enough motivation for you, maybe you'd be more interested in exercising to keep your mind healthy.

## *Taking Care Of The Mind*

We all lead busy lives, and It can be difficult finding enough time to take good care of yourself. But if you don't put yourself first and take some time out when you need, it won't be long before you become exhausted and stuck in kind of mental fog where it's hard to get anything done.

It's not always easy to make that time for yourself, because it can feel like it's just one more thing on your seemingly endless to-do list. That's why it often seems easier to just postpone that time for yourself, and suddenly you'll go through weeks without ever doing something even remotely resembling self-care.

But what exactly is self-care? Basically, it's like what fuel is to cars, in that it's what enables us to keep on going. And it feels like we're getting somewhere driving down the highway of life, but the more off ramps to self-care service stations that we decide to pass, the closer we are to running out. Eventually we'll completely run and stall right there on the highway. Then we're stuck on foot, having to backtrack to find that self-care fuel we desperately need to get started and move forward again. In the long run, it's always best to fill up when you can before you crash and burn.

Self-care isn't something that you only ever need to do once and then you simply tick it off the list. But rather taking 20 minutes each day to devote to spending time with yourself. To clear your mind, and work on becoming centred and internally in-tune. To reflect on each day and where you are at in your life. To check in with your emotional well-being.

Focusing your attention with meditation is an excellent way to begin this solo activity each day. The common focus point for different kinds of meditation is breathing slowly and deeply, because it calms the mind while removing any worries, distractions, and restlessness. Research shows that meditation offers not only calmness with lower levels of stress and improved focus, but also helps with anxiety, asthma, depression, and high blood pressure.

This time is about finding more time in your daily life to nurture some soundness and some peace of mind in whichever way you like. Find out what works for you that aren't going to feel like work or a chore, that isn't overwhelming for you in any way at all. By taking care of our emotional, mental, and spiritual health, we get the fuel we need for happy and productive lives, which has a direct impact on our physical health too.

## *Enhancing Your Cognition*

Considered to be the highest function of your brain, cognition refers to mental faculties involved in the process of perceiving our world around you, including perceptions, recognizing, conceiving, and realizations. Cognition provides you with the mechanisms you need for learning as well as the functions allowing you to utilize and improve your intelligence.

Cognition affects every single area of your life, from day to day business practices, to life at home with family, and even to your sex life. So, enhancing your cognition is extremely valuable

for anyone who hopes to succeed in life or enjoy it to the fullest. Nootropics are significant in this area as they can enhance your abilities when it comes to utilizing and enhancing functions of the mind like cognition.

Nootropic is a blanket term that is used to describe a range of synthetic and natural compounds which are utilised to enhance human cognition. While many of the more popular nootropics that are used these days are synthetic, they're found all throughout nature too. In fact, it's highly likely that you already use nootropics and you don't even realise it.

For example, green tea and coffee are both considered to be nootropics because they provide energy and enhance focus. You've also most likely already heard of a few of the other natural nootropics, especially for anyone with a chronic illness, such as magnesium, St. John's wort, and omega 3.

Although they may not be as mainstream as anti-inflammatories or antioxidants, nootropics can enhance overworked brains. Some of these nootropic smart drugs have been consistently researched for the last 50 years, so there's a lot of evidence out there that shows how effective they really are. The mechanisms are different for each nootropic is different, and research is still in the works for many of them.

There are both short-term and long-term benefits of using Nootropics to enhance your cognition. The more immediate edge which you can gain include increased productivity, resistance to stressors, short-term memory enhancement, and much improved focus. Alternatively, nootropics has shown that it can promote long-term mental clarity, improved memory, and better moods.

While many people assume that they are more suited for students, engineers, programmers, or entrepreneurs who are all focused on the results of productivity, nootropics are full of potential for everyone. The main reason people use nootropics is because they want to improve some their cognition and intelligence. We all know that there are many different forms of intelligence, but the good news is that all of them can be improved by using nootropics.

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*It's Not Just About Finding Balance*

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Even though it's very important, the key isn't limited to only finding balance between how much time we spend at work and play. We should also be focusing on how we utilise the time we spend while doing these two things. If we can also think about what we do when we are at work and home, we'll become much better equipped to make the necessary changes to truly enhance the value and quality of our lives.

Most of us tend to focus on how we can maximize our leisure time, instead of working out how we can improve and optimize the time we spend at work. But by only concentrating on working less hours, you'll most likely not be thinking about what it is exactly that is draining all of your energy and spirt while you're at work. It's easy to assume that you're feeling drained because of all the tight deadlines, constant meetings, or the boss constantly on your back, but it could be something else entirely.

The problem could be that you aren't working at your best each because your mental and physical health simply can't keep up with the demands of your job. And if something as significant as cognitive functioning is holding you back, reducing how much time you spend in the office each week surely isn't going to make much of a difference at all. You are still going to be in the wrong state of mind and struggling to keep on top of everything for at least 38 hours every week.

Yes, how we choose to spend our time out-of-office is always important to take under consideration, however focusing on optimizing our in-office time is also equally important. So instead of simply working less, we should be identifying why we aren't working at our optimal ability for who we are and how we work. When you are working at your full capacity every day, you're always going to be more motivated and energized. This will ultimately lead to feeling more accomplished about your work and increasing the quality of the time you spend out of the office.