

Balance Work with Life

Work-life balance means giving yourself enough time, control and energy to manage work alongside rest, relationships, caring responsibilities, leisure and personal development.



Need help now? | 112 – Emergency Services | 1579 – Mental health helpline | 1770 – Richmond Foundation

Myths and realities

MYTH

The more you work, the more you achieve.

Balance is up to you alone.

Switching off means never thinking about work.

REALITY

Without enough breaks and recovery, focus and performance drop.

Workloads, expectations and support at work matter too. Work-life balance is a shared responsibility.

Work can stay on your mind after you leave, especially when work is flexible or digital. Switching off means giving your mind regular breaks, so work does not take over your free time.

6 ways to protect your balance

Clear boundaries limit how much work spills into your free time.



Set a clear finishing time

Where possible, define and communicate your working and non-working hours.



Create an end-of-work routine

Close work applications, put away equipment and choose a small action that signals work has finished.



Reduce after-hours checking

Silence non-essential notifications and avoid checking work messages during personal time.



Keep separate spaces

Where possible, keep your spaces for work and for relaxing separate.



Protect time for what matters

Block out time for sleep, relationships, caring responsibilities and what restores you, and treat it as seriously as a work commitment.



Take regular pauses

Use short breaks between demanding tasks and at lunchtime to reset, and make full use of your annual leave.

TRY IT

The 3-minute post-work wind down

Before moving into the rest of your day, take three minutes to close, clear and change.



3 minutes

Check in: how are you right now?

1 = low, 5 = high

Stress

1 2 3 4 5

Energy

1 2 3 4 5

Focus

1 2 3 4 5



STEP 1 CLOSE

- ✓ Notice one thing you completed today
- ✓ Write down anything unfinished
- ✓ Choose the first task you will return to tomorrow

This helps you leave unfinished work somewhere other than in your head.



STEP 2 CLEAR

- ✓ Close work programmes
- ✓ Silence non-essential notifications
- ✓ Put away work equipment where possible

Take three slow breaths, letting your shoulders and jaw relax.



STEP 3 CHANGE

- ✓ Change your clothes or wash your face
- ✓ Step outside, stretch or take a short walk
- ✓ Play a favourite song
- ✓ Speak to someone, or move to a different room

Choose one small action that signals the end of your working day.

Check in again: has anything changed, even slightly?

1 = low, 5 = high

Stress

1 2 3 4 5

Energy

1 2 3 4 5

Focus

1 2 3 4 5

**There is no perfect way to unwind.
Choose a transition that feels realistic and restorative for you.**

Set boundaries with others

Boundaries work best when the people you work with know about them. Where possible:



Agree when you are expected to reply

Talk with your manager and team about when you are, and are not, expected to respond.



Use your out-of-office

Switch it on even for short absences, and say who to contact if something is urgent.



Think before you send

Limit non-urgent messages you send outside working hours, or schedule them for the next working day.



Hand over before you go

Before leave, share what others need to know, so work can continue without you.



Let people know when you will respond

Add your working hours to your email signature or status, so others know what to expect.

AFTER HOURS

Still thinking about work?

It is normal for work to stay on your mind after you finish. When it does, you do not need to fight the thought. Try one of these small steps to set it aside for now.

IF YOU NOTICE...

TRY THIS

Replaying events



Notice it, then gently bring your attention back to the present by focusing on what is around you at the moment.

Trying to solve problems



Writing it down tells your brain it won't be forgotten.

Thinking about unfinished tasks



Pick the first task you will return to tomorrow. A clear plan for later makes unfinished tasks less intrusive.

Replaying a difficult conversation



Talk it through with someone you trust, or write down what you would like to say next time.

Worrying about tomorrow



Set aside 10 minutes earlier in the evening to note your worries, then close your notebook.

Feeling guilty for switching off



Remind yourself that rest helps you work well tomorrow.



Give your mind something else to hold on to

Activities that fully absorb you, such as exercise, cooking, music, a hobby or time with others, make it easier to leave work behind.



Try a moment of mindfulness

Mindfulness can help you notice work thoughts without getting caught up in them.

Explore mindfulness on mentalwellbeing.gov.mt

REMEMBER

Recovery is part of working well

Rest is not something you have to earn once everything else is done. Regular chances to pause, disconnect and restore your energy help protect your wellbeing and your ability to work sustainably.

Protecting your time and energy gives your mind and body the chance to recover. Find out when recovery happens, what helps, and the signs that you need more.

Rest and recovery →



Need support?

If something is affecting your wellbeing at work, you do not have to manage it alone. Talk to your manager, HR or occupational health team.

Find more healthy lifestyle resources

hdp.gov.mt