

Work-life Balance – Additional notes

Slide 1

Welcome to the Work-Life Balance course.

My name is Willem Klopper and I will be your presenter for this course.

Now, achieving and maintaining balance between work and personal life is essential to combat stress, which ensures both individual success and the success of companies, organisations and institutes. When we use the word work, it applies to anything from the work you do in your career, to work at school or even university.

The stress associated with unbalanced lifestyles is costly, as it compromises productivity and increases individual health risks. Persons who have the tools to balance their work and personal lives are happier, healthier, and more productive.

In addition to improving performance, many persons of the younger generation place a high value on balance between work and personal life. Therefore, companies, organisations and institutes that include such a balance as part of their culture will be able to better attract better candidates.

What are we going to discuss in this course?

- **Module One:** The Benefits of Healthy Balance
- **Module Two:** Signs of Imbalance
- **Module Three:** Employer resources
- **Module Four:** Tips in Time Management
- **Module Five:** Goal Setting
- **Module Six:** Optional Ways to Work

- **Module Seven:** Being at the Place of Work
- **Module Eight:** Being at Home
- **Module Nine:** Stress Management
- **Module Ten:** Working in a Home Office
- **Module Eleven:** Wrapping Up

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Slide 2

Welcome to Module One, in which we will discuss the Benefits of a Healthy Balance

In this Lesson of Module One, we'll look at aspects like:

- Why a Healthy Balance is Important
- Increased Productivity
- Improved Mental and Physical Health
- Increased Morale

Here is a short synopsis of what we will take from this Lesson of Module One:

In essence, understanding the benefits of a healthy balanced life will motivate anyone to make necessary changes. Balance will improve the lives of individuals as well as the culture of companies, organisations and institutes.

Learning the basics of work-life balance will also increase productivity, health, and morale.

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Slide 3

Why Is It Important to have a healthy balance between work and personal life?

A healthy balance between work and personal life should be a priority for everyone. Implementing proper work-life balance offers many important benefits. There are, however, many risks associated with unbalanced work and personal life.

Let's discuss some of the risks

- **Poor health:** Working long hours without taking time to relax will take its toll on health.
- **Unresolved conflict:** A lack of balance can create conflicts at the place of work and at home.
- **Poor performance:** Taking on too much responsibility will lead to exhaustion and cause performance to suffer.
- **Financial loss:** In the work environment the impact on health and productivity takes a financial toll on both individual employees and companies.

What are the benefits of a balanced work and personal life?

- **Fulfillment:** People who successfully implement a balance between work and personal life improve their sense of fulfillment both at the place of work and at home.
- **Health:** A healthy work-life balance decreases the risk of heart disease and other health problems.
- **Greater productivity:** Being relaxed and well-rested increases productivity and improves performance. So you deliver better quality and quantity of work.
- **Stronger relationships:** When there is proper balance between work and personal life, relationships are strengthened and conflicts are avoided.

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Slide 4

Let's talk about Increased Productivity:

While it may seem counterintuitive, work-life balance can actually increase productivity. While it is true that putting in extra time will initially increase production, the surge only lasts a few weeks before taking a destructive toll on productivity. In fact, working long hours for an extended period will lead to exhaustion and unhealthy habits that decrease productivity.

Shorter work hours will actually increase productivity in the long-term. Additionally, studies show that people who take short, frequent breaks are more productive than people who only take a single break or work all day. Most people recommend taking a few minutes each hour to regroup.

Here are a couple of examples of how to increase productivity:

- **Take healthy breaks:** You should take time to refresh yourself. Try stretching, walking, or meditating throughout the day. This will also improve your health and overall wellbeing.
- **Take enjoyable breaks:** A recent study in Singapore discovered that even taking a few moments to surf the internet, and in so doing just mentally changing gears, actually increases productivity. This fun activity increases productivity by as much as nine percent.
- **Take time off:** Working to the point of burnout is not productive or healthy. Taking a vacation is very important, even if vacations are short and spread out. Studies show that people who take vacations are much more productive than those who do not.

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Slide 5

How does a proper balance contribute to Improved Mental and Physical Health?

It is common knowledge that stress is directly linked to different diseases. Numerous surveys have discovered that work is a leading cause of stress-related illness and injury, such as stroke, heart disease, and mental breakdowns. A balanced life will improve both physical and mental health.

So, how can Health be Improved?

- **Awareness:** A balanced lifestyle increases personal awareness, which allows individuals to identify potential health problems early.
- **Lifestyle:** A balanced lifestyle automatically improves health. It encourages healthy choices and it helps you develop your body and your mind.

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Another benefit of balance between work and personal life, is Increased Morale

Work-life balance is an effective tool to increase morale and improve the culture in companies, organisations and institutes.

Many people actively seek out places that support a healthy balance between work and personal life. In the work environment, the only factor that is more important than balance to persons who are looking for employment, is compensation.

According to several surveys, work-life balance improves happiness and overall satisfaction, whether that be at work, home, school, or wherever.

Additionally, people are more invested in places that support their work-life balance. Work-life balance typically translates to people who work harder and who are more productive.

That concludes Module 1 of this course.

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Welcome to Module Two, in which we will discuss the Signs of an Imbalance

In this Lesson of Module Two, we'll look at aspects like:

- Health Risks
- Absenteeism
- Burnout
- Stress

Here is a short synopsis of what we will take from this Lesson of Module Two:

The signs of imbalance are unmistakable. Every day we see people suffering from poor health, burnout, and stress. In the work environment, this increases costs for companies, in the form of absenteeism, health costs, and turnover.

If you recognise these signs in your life or your company, organisation, or institute take action immediately and begin to focus on proper work-life balance.

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How does imbalance affect our health?

Imbalance promotes poor health. Over time, this can lead to devastating, and possibly life changing consequences.

Let's look at a few examples of the effects that an imbalance between work and personal life can have on our health:

- **Obesity:** Not taking the time to exercise or eat well can increase obesity, which is connected to heart disease and numerous other health risks.
- **Exhaustion:** Sleeping well can add years to a person's life. Sacrificing sleep for work will have negative effects on health and it will increase the chances of getting sick.
- **Emotional problems:** Stress and exhaustion will wreak havoc on emotional well-being. This will affect relationships and personal identity.

More companies, organisations, and institutes are now taking an interest in the health and fitness of people who are associated with them. After all, it is in their best interest to do so.

People who are healthy are more productive, they are absent less, and their health care costs less.

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So, what are the effects of absenteeism?

In the work environment poor health increases employee absenteeism and thus is a costly problem for employers. There are both hidden and direct costs that must be paid when an employee is absent from work.

Some of those costs of absenteeism can include the following:

- **Sick pay:** Employees with sick days are still paid, which is a direct cost.
- **Loss of productivity:** Even with someone to temporarily fill the position of the sick employee, the employee who is familiar with the job will be more productive. This is an indirect cost of sick days.

For learners and students absenteeism can easily lead to them being far behind, and make it difficult for them to catch up.

While most people who take time off are legitimately sick, people who are stressed will take days off simply to catch up with personal obligations, and they usually feel justified in doing so.

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Another sign that can indicate an imbalance between our work life and personal life is Burnout

Most people know that people who are overworked eventually burnout. Burnout is the physical and psychological response to long-term stress.

Let's look at a couple of Signs of Burnout:

- **Loss of interest:** Burned-out people cannot make themselves care about their work they have to do, which of course, is actually the source of their stress.
- **Lack of emotion:** When someone is burned out, their emotional responses become abnormal.
- **Loss of motivation:** Things that previously motivated people are no longer are effective when people become burned out.
- **Possible depression:** Burnout is very closely linked to depression.

In the work environment, Burnout also harms companies by increasing turnover. Consider the following:

- When everything is added together, 150 percent of an employee's annual salary is the cost of turnover.
- This number increases to 200 to 250 percent for members of management.

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Stress, stress is yet another sign of imbalance between our work life and personal life

Work is one of the main sources of stress around the globe. According to research, the connection between stress and obesity for many people, is more significant than diet. The effects that stress has on heart-health can be deadly.

So, what signs can we look out for that can indicate Stress?

- **Overemotional:** People under stress can find it difficult to control their emotions.
- **Lethargy:** The physiological impact of stress can cause lethargy.
- **Restlessness:** Stress can make it difficult to focus, causing hyperactivity and restlessness.
- **Anxiety:** Prolonged stress can cause anxiety disorders.

That concludes Module 2 of this course.

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Welcome to Module Three, in which we will discuss the Resources

In this Lesson of Module Three, we'll look at aspects like:

- Offering People More Control
- Asking People for Suggestions
- An Assistance Program
- Rewarding Your People

Here is a short synopsis of what we will take from this Lesson of Module Three:

Employers, supervisors, teachers, team leaders, etc., can improve balance for people who report to them, and increase productivity at the same time.

While it may seem counterproductive to use the resources that these people have at their disposal to change work conditions, it actually is quite effective.

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Let's talk about Offering people more Control

Traditionally, persons like employers, supervisors, teachers, etc., set all of the parameters concerning the work that must be done. Now, keeping all of the control, however, augments stress on the people who must do the work.

By offering them more control over their lives and establishing a better balance between work and life, will help alleviate this stress.

Studies show that giving such persons a little more control, actually increases loyalty and productivity. There are many ways to offer such control, basically anything that empowers people to take charge of their lives offers them control.

Here are a few ways to offer control:

- Flex time
- Job sharing
- Telecommuting

We will go over some more ways in detail in a later module.

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How about Asking People for Suggestions

The people who must do the work often have some of the best ideas on how to things can be improved. These ideas, however, are not always communicated.

Many people feel that the people who they report to do not care and that they do not have the time to sit down with each person reporting to them. The best way to hear about new, innovative ideas is to create a program for such suggestions.

Here are a couple of tips to apply for when you set up such a program:

- **Make it simple:** Create a simple process for giving suggestions, because complicated rules do not encourage creativity.

- **Respond:** Let the people who report to you know that you have received their suggestions and that you will consider them.
- **Thank:** Thank each person who gives a suggestion, even if they are suggestions you will not necessarily use.
- **Reward:** People are motivated by reward, therefore, people who come up with useful suggestions need to be rewarded.

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You can even implement Assistance Programs

Given the unavoidable stress of life, most people face times when they need assistance. Assistance Programs provide people access to counseling and other services.

Without the aid of counselors that form part of Assistance Programs, the effects of stress can spiral out of control. Assistance programs give individuals the opportunity to seek help and learn the skills necessary to improve their work-life balance.

Some of the most common Topics for Assistance Programs are as follows:

- Personal crisis
- Work stress
- Finances
- Substances

Because they teach strategies for work-life balance, Assistance Programs are useful investments, because they reduce absence and can even prevent increased turnover for companies in the work environment.

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What about Rewarding Your People?

This may seem basic, but rewarding your people is an effective method for promoting work-life balance. People who feel appreciated are more confident, and rewards reinforce the behavior that you would like to be repeated.

Rewards can also provide breaks that reduce stress. Most of all, rewards do not have to break the bank. There are simple ways to thank your people for their inputs and efforts.

Examples of useful Rewards can include things like:

- Public acknowledgement
- Extra time off
- Awards
- Promotions
- Parties and other events in which people can relax

That concludes module three of this course.

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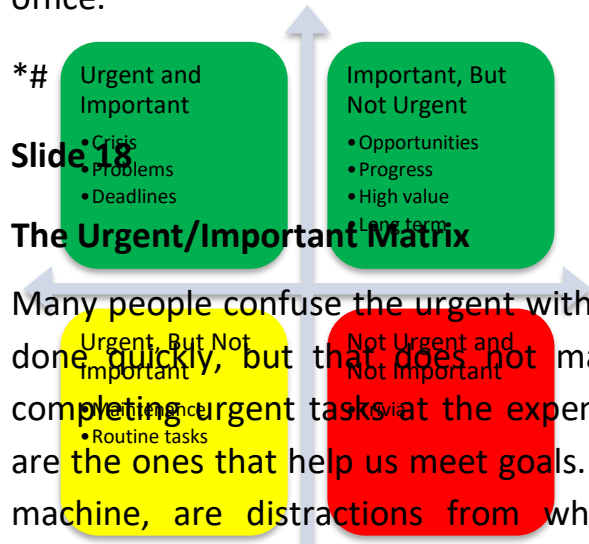
Welcome to Module Four, in which we'll discuss Tips in Time Management

In this lesson of Module Four, we'll look at aspects like:

- A Matrix to Distinguish Between Urgent and Important
- Learning to Say No
- Staying Flexible
- And the 80/20 Rule

Here is a short synopsis of what we'll take from this Lesson of Module Four:

Most people complain that they do not have enough time. The truth, however, is that most people do not know how to manage time wisely. Time management is crucial to an effective work-life balance. Effectively implementing time management will reduce stress and help bring balance to life in and out of the office.



Many people confuse the urgent with the important. Urgent tasks do need to be done quickly, but that does not make them important. We are often stuck completing urgent tasks at the expense of the important ones. Important tasks are the ones that help us meet goals. Often, urgent tasks, such as fixing the copy machine, are distractions from what is important. Learning the difference between urgent and important will better anyone's time management skills.

The Urgent/Important Matrix

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We also have to Learn to Say No

Managing time requires that people learn to say “no.” This may seem cruel, but it is not possible to meet everyone’s needs. You must learn to say “no” kindly but firmly. Do not allow people to talk you into urgent tasks. You need to stick with a schedule and plan of action. Do not deviate unless it is a true emergency. For example, proofing a colleague’s letter is not an emergency that you must complete at once. Complete your important tasks first.

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Another Tip is to Stay Flexible

Flexibility is an important skill. Life cannot be predicted, and inflexible people fall to pieces when change beyond their control comes. Being flexible simply means that you are not resisting the inevitable changes of life. Flexibility is not passivity. It is being able to embrace change. This will reduce stress and improve work-life balance.

For example, car trouble will throw off your schedule, so do not try to keep up with your tasks that day.

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80/20 Rule

According to the 80 / 20 rule, 80 percent of our success is the result of only 20 percent of our actions. The rule implies that we should place our focus on the 20 percent of activities that are the most successful.

This requires that we prioritise goals. When this is done, concentrate on the 20 percent of activities that aggressively move you towards those goals. Give most of your attention to this 20 percent.

That concludes module four of this course.

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Welcome to Module Five, in which we'll discuss Goal Setting

In this Lesson of Module Five, we'll look at aspects like:

- The Three Ps
- SMART Goals
- Visualisation
- Prioritising Your Goals

Here is a short synopsis of what we'll take from this Lesson of Module Five:

In order to effectively manage time and live a balance life, you must be aware of your goals. It is important that you have goals because they provide direction. Working towards a goal will help focus energy and reduce the stress that comes with not having a purpose.

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The Three Ps

There are three Ps that will help you achieve goals. Approaching your goals incorrectly will only result in failure. The three Ps will motivate you and help keep you from becoming discouraged. When setting goals: you must make sure that they are positive, personal, and present.

So what are the three Ps that we are referring to?

- **Positive:** Goals should be phrased positively, so they help you feel good about yourself and what you're trying to accomplish. A better alternative might be this: "Enroll in pre-law classes so I can help people with legal problems someday."

- **Personal:** Goals must be personal. They must reflect your own dreams and values, not those of friends, family, or the media. When crafting your goal statement, always use the word “I” in the sentence to brand it as your own. When your goals are personal, you'll be more motivated to succeed and take greater pride in your accomplishments.
- **Possible:** When setting goals, be sure to consider what's possible and within your control. Getting into an top-rated university may be possible if you are earning good grades but unrealistic if you're struggling financially. In the latter case, a more reasonable goal might be to attend a university or trade school that offers courses related to your chosen career. You might also pursue volunteer work that would strengthen your college applications.

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SMART Goals

Goals cannot be achieved if they are impossible. SMART goals make it easier to achieve success because you know that success is within reach.

Aspects of SMART goals:

- **Specific:** Goals must be specific. An example of a specific goal is: workout 30 minutes a day.
- **Measurable:** Measurable goals let you know when you are successful. For example, lose 5 pounds is measurable.
- **Attainable:** All goals, particularly short-term goals, need to be attainable. For example, getting promoted three times in six months is not attainable.
- **Relevant:** Goals must be relevant to the situation. A goal to find a mentor is not relevant to someone who is established in his or her field.

- **Timely:** Goals require specific timeframes. For example, lose 5 pounds this month is both measurable and timely.

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Visualisation

Visualisation means coming up with a mental picture of a goal and then believing that the goal will happen. Many successful people use visualisation techniques. The process of visualisation may seem like a waste of time to some, but visualising a goal helps the mind to view that goal as a tangible possibility, rather than some indistinct desire.

Steps:

- **Choose a goal:** Visualisation must be specific. Choose a single goal to visualise. It is easier to start small.
- **Relax:** Carve out the time to relax and focus on visualising the goal.
- **Visualize:** Picture, in great detail, the goal as being achieved. See it happening in the present.
- **Accept:** Believe that the goal will come true, and affirm it to yourself. Affirmations are useful tools that help win acceptance.

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Prioritising Your Goals

All goals need to be prioritised, so you that know how to focus your energy. To do this, you must consider how SMART goals align with your personal vision and values in life. A goal that does not meet personal values is less likely to be reached. Use these criteria to rank SMART goals. It is important that you balance goals within different areas of your life.

Prioritising

Goals	Priorities
• Earn a bonus this quarter.	B
• Learn a new language this year.	C
• Finish a project early.	C
• Complete the schedule.	A
• Sleep 8 hours a night.	A

That concludes module five of this course.

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Welcome to Module Six, in which we'll discuss Optional Ways to Work

In this Lesson of Module Six, we'll look at aspects like:

- **Telecommuting**
- **Job Sharing**
- **Job Redesign**
- **Flex Time**

Here is a short synopsis of what we'll take from this Lesson of Module Six

The traditional methods of work may increase stress and imbalance in life. Each person is unique, and providing different work options will allow people to choose the method that helps them be most productive and maintain their balance.

While it may not be possible to provide every option, allowing for different work styles will improve the culture within companies, organisations and institutes, and it will promote balance.. Each option comes with its own pros and cons, so examine them carefully before choosing a new way to work.

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Telecommuting

Given the way we use technology, telecommuting is a popular work option. This allows people to work from home and send their projects in when they are due.

Pros:

- **Cost:** In the work environment, companies can reduce overhead and other costs by allowing employees to work from home.
- **Productivity:** People who work from home are often more productive.
- **Lowers stress:** Many people benefit from not having to commute to the workplace and back, as well as being free from distracting colleagues.
- **Personal control:** People who work from home are able to take responsibility for their own schedules.

Cons:

- **Communication:** When all communication is electronic, people may not communicate as well as they can when they are face-to-face. Additionally, a lack of social interaction can isolate people and stunt the culture within companies, organisations and institutes.
- **Motivation:** People who are not self-driven are not successful, and therefore need more accountability than telecommuting offers.
- **Longer hours:** Some people work longer hours when they telecommute, because there is no distinction between the workplace and the home.

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Job Sharing

In the work environment, job sharing is a popular option that allows people to balance their work and home lives. This technique allows two people to share a job, with each person working part-time hours.

The Pros of this option are:

- **Better attendance:** When people have the time to handle personal matters, they are less likely to miss work.
- **Continuity:** With two people sharing a job, there is always someone to come in and cover for a person who is off sick.
- **Morale:** People who are able to find work-life balance have better morale and productivity.

But there are Cons too:

- **Conflict:** People who want to be in control may not enjoy having an equal share their responsibilities. This can cause conflicts between job sharers.
- **Inequality:** If one employee is more effective than the other, that employee may shoulder too much responsibility.
- **More paper work:** Employers have to double the paperwork for shared jobs.

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Job Redesign

Sometimes it is necessary to redesign a specific role to alleviate stress associated with it. This requires analysing and changing the scope and responsibilities of the role in a way that will motivate people and improve their work-life balance.

The method:

- Content: Discover what information leads to problems at the place of work.
- Information: Analyse information regarding the role to find inconsistencies.
- Elements: Change the elements of the role.
- Description: Rewrite the role's description.
- Responsibilities: Refocus responsibilities based on the description.

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Flex Time

Flex time does not alter the number of hours people must work, but it does give them the flexibility to choose when they work. In the work environment, an employee may choose to come at 7:00 am and leave at 4:00 pm to spend time with family.

What are the Pros associated with this?

- **Productivity:** People are more productive when they know that they will be able to take care of their other obligations.
- **Morale:** Everyone's internal clock is different. People are happier when they can work at their optimal times.

Are there any Cons associated with this?

- **Difficult to manage:** Supervisors, team leaders, teachers, etc., may have trouble coordinating meetings or presenting classes when everyone works different hours.
- **Miscommunications:** It is easy to forget to communicate ideas with people who have already left for the day.

That concludes module six of this course.

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Welcome to Module Seven, in which we'll discuss Being At the Place of Work

In this Lesson of Module Seven, we'll look at aspects like:

- Leaving Stress at Home
- Breaking up Large Tasks
- Delegating
- Setting Accurate Goals

Here is a short synopsis of what we'll take from this Lesson of Module Seven

Keeping balance when at the place of work is difficult. Outside influences always try to creep in and destroy productivity. Becoming sidetracked, however, simply creates work-related stress that further increases the level of imbalance you experience. Fortunately, there are a few useful tips that will help you regain your sense of balance while at the place of work.

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Leave Home Stress at Home

Everyone has personal problems that create stress and hinder their performance at the place of work. If these issues are severe, it may be necessary to take a leave of absence. In most cases, however, there are better strategies to help leave the home stress at home.

Here are a couple of those Strategies that you may apply:

- **Get up early:** Get up early enough to take a few minutes and prepare for a new day. Focus on what is ahead and not the past.

- **Take advantage of the commute:** View the commute as a chance to enter your “work zone.” Meaning, to mentally gear up for the work that you will be doing today.
- **Communicate appropriately:** Discuss your problems with a friend or confidant outside of the place of work. Do not vent about home stress to your colleagues or classmates.
- **Find outlets:** Discover useful ways to alleviate stress, such as exercise. This will help keep you focused throughout the workday.

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Break up Large Tasks

Projects and deadlines can be overwhelming. If you have a large task ahead of you, you might be tempted to procrastinate. This will only create more stress. A better solution is breaking up the tasks.

Tips:

- List the steps that are necessary to complete the task.
- Schedule time for each step.
- Complete the easiest step first, and then move on to the next easiest. This will give you a sense of accomplishment.
- Do not look ahead. Focus on the task at hand.

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Delegate

People can avoid stress by simply delegating responsibility. This sounds simple, but many people, particularly those in managerial, supervisory, or team leader roles, have problems delegating authority.

They do not trust others to get the work done. There are a few tips that will help anyone feel more confident about delegating.

Let's have a look at some of those tips:

- **Choose tasks to delegate:** Do not delegate sensitive or difficult tasks.
- **Choose people to help:** Find responsible people that you trust to handle the tasks for you.
- **Give instructions:** Make sure that you communicate clear instructions with deadlines.
- **Be available:** Let people know that they can come to you with questions, but do not hover over them.

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Set Accurate Goals

Accurate goals decrease stress. This involves estimating the time that it will take to complete something. There are a few steps that will help you set accurate goals.

Here are some steps you can take:

- Familiarise yourself with the requirements.
- List the actions that need to happen.
- Estimate the time necessary for each action you need to take.
- Estimate the total time necessary for a task.

That concludes module seven of this course.

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Welcome to Module Eight, in which we'll discuss Being At Home

In this Lesson of Module Eight, we'll look at aspects like:

- Leaving Work Stress at the Place of Work
- Turning Your Phone Off
- Taking Some Me Time
- Maintaining Boundaries

Here is a short synopsis of what we'll take from this Lesson of Module Eight

We should be able to relax at home and unwind after a hard day at work. Unfortunately, this does not always happen. Home has stress of its own, and it seems like the stress from work is constantly waiting to spill over into our home lives. To have work life balance, it is important to learn how to effectively manage the stress and obligations at home.

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Leave Work Stress at Work

Bringing the stress of work home will ruin your family life. Additionally, not being able to separate from work will destroy your balance, and increase your stress level. Luckily, there are a few strategies that will help keep work separate.

Consider applying these steps:

- **Stop on the way home:** On particularly stressful days, you may want to stop somewhere for a few minutes and decompress.

- **Vent in the car or to a friend:** Use the commute back home as a chance to express your frustrations to yourself instead of ranting about them to your family when you get home.
- **Enjoy your family:** Do not focus on the downside of family life. Find ways to spend time together that everyone enjoys.
- **Find outlets:** Discover useful ways to alleviate work stress, such as exercise or meditation. Practicing these will help you focus on the present.

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Turn Your Phone Off

Cell phones have made it nearly impossible to escape the pressures of life. In today's life there is always a way for someone to reach us. Not only are we inundated with phone calls, but we also have emails and social networks to worry about. There is only one way to fix the problem and alleviate this stress: TURN OFF THE PHONE.

It is acceptable and healthy to occasionally disconnect. Silencing the phone does not count as disconnecting. It does not matter when you disconnect, it only matter that you do it.

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Take Some "Me" Time

"Me time" is essential to a person's health and well-being. Often, people think that "me time" is a day at the spa or something else that is extravagant and that they cannot afford.

But actually, "me time" is much simpler. It is anything that you do just for yourself. There is no set expense or time frame that you must follow when taking

“me time.” It can be as simple as taking a walk. The only imperative thing about “me time”, is that you actually take it.

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Maintain Your Boundaries

Boundaries are important in every aspect of life. Without them, people will constantly pull our attention away from what is important. In order to achieve work-life balance, it is necessary to establish boundaries between work and personal life. To do this, you must determine what those boundaries are and communicate them. For example, you may set a boundary that says you do not take calls or attend to work-related matter after 7:00 pm. Each person’s boundaries will be different, so think about what works for you.

Once you set your boundaries and communicate them, you need to maintain them. People naturally push boundaries, and they will test you. You need to stay strong. For example, let a call go to voicemail and only return it if the matter is truly an emergency that cannot wait. The odds are that will not be an emergency. After some time, other people will learn to respect your boundaries.

That concludes module eight of this course.

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Welcome to Module Nine, in which we’ll discuss Stress Management

In this Lesson of Module Nine, we’ll look at aspects like:

- Exercising
- Eating Well
- Getting Enough Sleep
- Self Assessment

Here is a short synopsis of what we'll take from this Lesson of Module Nine

It is impossible to experience work-life balance without stress management. Stress is unavoidable. If we do not handle it well it can cause lasting physical and psychological damage. On the other hand, managing stress can combat its negative effects. Fortunately, stress management is not too complicated; anyone can learn how to manage stress.

Let's have a look at those.

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Exercise

Everyone knows that exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle, but it is also a key aspect to managing stress. Exercise affects people mentally as well as physically. It produces endorphins that will improve your mood and prevent depression. However, to reap the benefits of exercise, you must be consistent with it.

Here are a few tips for success with exercise:

- **Choose an exercise you enjoy:** You will not repeat an activity that you hate doing.
- **Start slowly:** If you over do it, you will simply become tired and discouraged and stop doing it altogether.
- **Schedule it:** If exercise is not set as a priority, you will never get to it. We'll always find excuses therefor.

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Eating Well

Diet has a strong impact on our emotions and the way that we handle stress. Eating well is an important factor in stress management. Unfortunately, in times of stress, our bodies crave fatty and salty foods. Rather than giving in to fast food cravings, focus on getting healthy.

What can we do to achieve this?

- **Avoid sugar and caffeine:** Their highs may give you more energy, but once you crash, you are left more exhausted than before.
- **Focus on nutrition:** Be sure to include whole grains, lean protein, and leafy green in your diet.
- **Eat frequently:** Increase your focus by eating small healthy snacks throughout the day. This will balance blood sugar and increase energy.

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Slide 45

Getting Enough Sleep

Many people are sleep deprived. Experts recommend sleeping between seven and nine hours a night.

Sleep deprivation increases stress, weakens the immune system, and of course, it raises the risk of having an accident. Given the important role that sleep plays in physical and mental health, it only makes sense to do everything in your power to improve sleep.

Here are a few ways to Improve your Sleep

- **Avoid electronics before bedtime:** Studies show that the light of the television, phone, or computer may make falling asleep difficult.
- **Relax:** Unwind with a relaxing routine before bed.
- **Exercise:** Exercise will make it easier to fall asleep.

- **Have a bedtime:** A regular bedtime will train your body's internal clock and help you fall asleep.

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Slide 52

Self-Assessment

We are not always aware of how much stress is affecting our lives. It is possible to believe that you are effectively managing your stress when, in reality, stress is managing you.

This is why it is important to take a step back and assess your stress level. The results of the assessment will reveal any changes that you need to make to improve your stress management.

For example, you can use the results of the assessment to make the necessary changes to your diet, exercise, and even your sleep routines.

That concludes module nine of this course.

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Slide 47

Welcome to Module Ten, in which we'll discuss Working From Home

In this Lesson of Module Ten, we'll look at aspects like:

- Setting up a Workspace at Home
- Setting Boundaries
- Dealing With Distractions
- Making A Schedule and Sticking to it

Here is a short synopsis of what we'll take from this Lesson of Module Ten

Working from home has its advantages and disadvantages. Working from home and maintaining a balance between the work you are doing and your personal

life requires preparation and regular evaluation of your work practices. If you are not careful, working from home can take over your life. By following a few guidelines, you can avoid burnout as you take advantage of working at home.

Let's have a look at what those guidelines are.

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Slide 48

Setting Up a Workspace at Home

It is important to set up the workspace at home properly from the start. A poor work environment will only harm productivity. So, make sure that you are comfortable and that you have all the tools that you need to get the work done.

What aspects can we consider when Setting Up?

- **Location:** Choose a separate room or a location that is out of the way. This will help prevent distractions and create a better work environment. You also need to make sure that it is well lit.
- **Equipment:** Make sure that your equipment is functional and that you have everything that you need. Examples hereof include a computer, a stable internet connection, stationery, a printer, a microphone and earphone headset for online meetings, etc.
- **Clear out workspace:** Remove items from the workspace that are not related to the work you must do. Remember, you are not setting up a storage shed.
- **Organise:** Organise the supplies in the workspace so that they are accessible, easy to use, and functional.
- **Make it a workspace:** Limit the space to be used for work only. Afterall, it is not a play area.

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Slide 49

Setting Boundaries

It is difficult to establish boundaries in a home workspace. Remember, people do not view a home the same way they see the traditional place of work. Because you do not have policies to prevent distractions, you need to create your own boundaries.

You can base these boundaries on the rules and boundaries of more traditional places of work. For example, do not take calls while you are working, if they are not related to the work you are doing. Just like other boundaries, you can expect people to challenge these boundaries of yours. However, to be effective at you're the work you do and keep a proper balance, you must stick to your boundaries.

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Slide 50

Dealing with Distractions

It is easy to become distracted while working from home. Remember, there is no one to supervise you, and other people at home can easily forget that you are working. Fortunately, a few safeguards will help you avoid distractions.

So, what can we do to avoid distractions?

- **Limit access:** Ask the other people at home to stay out of your workspace while you are working. Spouses, family, children, siblings, etc., can be very distracting.
- **Use a timer:** For example, rather schedule breaks for activities like social networking, instead of constantly surfing the internet.
- **Turn off the television:** Even if you need a television for work purposes, it does not have to be switched on at all the time. Rather turn it off to avoid distractions.

- **Set aside time to talk on the phone:** You cannot allow yourself to be distracted by every phone call. Rather set aside time to return calls that are not related to the work you are doing.

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Slide 51

Make a Schedule and Stick to It

Working from home gives you the chance to create your own schedule, but it is important to actually create it. If you do not, you will have trouble accomplishing tasks on time.

Most people find a schedule that sets tasks for each hour helpful, but you may use any format or roster that you like and that works well for you.

Here is a simplified Example of such a time schedule:

- 8:00 am – Breakfast
- 8:30 am – Return emails that are related to the work you do
- 9:00 am – Make calls that are related to the work you do
- 10:00 am – Conduct research that are related to the work you do

No matter how you create your schedule, you must stick with it. It is way too easy to ignore your schedule when there is no one to monitor your performance.

That concludes module ten of this course.

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Slide 52

Wrapping Up

Thank you for having completed this course.

Although this course is coming to a close, we hope that your journey to improve your skills to balance between your work and personal life, is just beginning.

Why don't you take a moment to review and update your action plan? This will be a key tool to guide your progress in the days, weeks, months, and years to come.

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Slide 53

Just before saying good bye, let's look at a few Words from the Wise

- **Catherine Pulsifer**, a well-known author and poet, said, it is balance that we need. The sad part is that some people pay more attention to their credit than they do to their own balance in life!
- **Betsy Jacobson**, a very successful business woman in America, said that, balance is not better time management, but better boundary management. Balance means making choices and enjoying those choices.
- **Steven R. Covey** was an American educator, author, businessman, and keynote speaker who said that, wisdom is your perspective on life, your sense of balance, your understanding of how the various parts and principles apply and relate to each other.

Remember these words when you work toward achieving a healthy balance between your work life and personal life.

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