



Work Life Balance – August 2022

Our physical and mental wellbeing may be greatly affected by whether or not we strike a healthy work-life balance. The same thing can be said of our performance in the workplace.

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland describes a good work-life balance as a series of adjusted working patterns, which allow employees to combine work with their other responsibilities.¹

Over the course of the last two years, our lives, and the world in general, have changed. In many cases, people's views of how and when they work were altered by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As we all tried to navigate a global public health crisis, we weighed professional and personal priorities. We adapted to our new realities and did the best we could in trying circumstances.

This is not always an easy task. According to a CIPD report published in November, nearly a third (31%) of all employees say they find it hard to relax in their personal time because of their job.²

For lots of us, a hybrid model of remote and in-the-office working is, increasingly, the norm. Findings from the third annual National Remote Working Survey show that 95% of people polled believe working remotely makes life easier.³ In this context, many employees have an opportunity to properly balance life and work.



1. Work-Life Balance, Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland, <https://www.hseni.gov.uk/work-life-balance>
2. Working Lives Northern Ireland: A framework for measuring job quality, CIPD, November 2021, https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/working-lives-northern-ireland_tcm18-103059.pdf
3. Remote Working in Ireland: 2022 National Survey Findings, Whitaker Institute for Innovation and Societal Change, <http://whitakerinstitute.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Remote-Working-Survey-Report-2022-final-updated.pdf>

This will look different to everyone and it's important, therefore, to discover what works for each of us. In 2022, with the era of lockdowns (hopefully) behind us, a positive work-life balance is something we can all build.

In order to assist with this, we've set out a series of **productivity hacks** to help maintain harmony between your work and your life.

Schedule your time, on and off

Make the most of your free time by planning your week. If you have plans, you are likely to stick to them, starting and finishing work when required. This should help you on the job and off it. You can concentrate on what needs to be done while working towards a 'hard stop'. If things are particularly busy, scheduling 15 minutes per day to take a break, go for a walk, de-clutter your desk or deal with small but pressing personal tasks prevents you from feeling dominated by professional demands.

Close it down, shut it off

Technology is everywhere and it allows us to be connected to work, colleagues, friends and the world at large all day, every day. On the one hand, that's really useful. On the other hand, such accessibility can create unsociable working hours. Once you clock off, that's your time. Close your laptop, put the work phone away and switch off.



Prioritise the big stuff

We're all busy at work. Customer needs, colleague requests and organisational targets are competing for our attention. Less urgent tasks can actually spiral into complicated and drawn-out jobs, which encroach on the time and resources we commit to more important ones. This may cause confusion and stress, impacting your ability to switch off at the end of the day. Identify and separate the non-negotiables from the things that can wait – don't feel pressured to get everything sorted out in one afternoon.

Stick, don't twist

It's easy to make plans but harder to keep them, particularly when the demands of a job throw up new deadlines and objectives. Nevertheless, even if you've discussed your work-life limits with your manager before now, don't be afraid to remind them from time to time. If you're still getting weekend assignments, don't be afraid to politely point out prior commitments and protect your personal space.

