



## Work, Life, Imbalance During COVID-19

WRITTEN BY LEAH ROACH,  
MEMBER RELATIONS COORDINATOR

Work-Life Balance – we have heard the term numerous times which means how one can differentiate and distribute their professional life and personal obligations. Under a regular balance of work-life, one is able to distribute their time in such a way where they ensure they do not overwork and strike that balance where time is found for their social aspect of life (church, family, friends, hobbies).

The role work plays in our lives is gravely significant as we work to ensure our lives can be sustained with the necessities of food, shelter, clothing and accessibility. Working from home created a greater flexibility and convenience as it became a “way of business” allowing technology to make work available at your fingertips with laptops and cell phones. Now, in the wake of this pandemic, we cannot quite say there is much of a work-life balance of sorts as work as been brought into the home completely for some of us, who are working remotely.

COVID-19 has careened its way across the globe and wreaked havoc for all and sundry. Great disruptions and displacements have occurred relative to what was known as the “norm” to business regimes. Some routines consist now of waking up, making breakfast for yourself and the family, feeding the pet(s), shower, set out work for the children for the day and prepare your workstation for the start of the day’s work. Creating your personal workspace or home office can be proven to be a challenge for some especially as it comes with great sacrifice. You now must practice a greater balancing act as you wear multiple hats while at home as you have your duties at home, being an employer or employee and caregiver for whomever you have responsibilities.

An imbalance of your work-life can easily occur under such a circumstance but, there are a few tips that could help you to somewhat find a way to put in place that works.

## **Set a schedule and maintain it**

Setting a schedule and maintaining it is extremely important in aiming to strike that work life balance whilst working remotely. Circumstances sometimes make it unfeasible for you to work on projects that require higher levels of concentration. If you know that you have a project that can be brought to closer completion when your surroundings are quiet, set time to work on projects in that quiet period but still allocating a set time for you to work within. Communication is still crucial at this stage and how you have set out to work on tasks can be communicated with your teams. This can assist them in determining how they too can work on their tasks, prioritizing the “now” from the “works in progress”. Communication of how you are scheduling your work assists your team members in knowing when they can reach out to you and additionally, you can work around how best to integrate your regular personal activities into it all.

## **Get yourself ready for work**

It is business as usual but the twist to it is, you are doing it fully from at home. To place yourself in the frame of mind for work while you are at home, there is nothing wrong with maintaining your usual modus operandi; that being said, get ready for work as though you were going to leave home for work. The upside to this is there is no rush and no rush hour traffic with which to contend therefore you are likely to be calmer and more settled mentally to begin. Have your shower, your breakfast, get dressed and make your to-do list. Doing this reduces the likelihood of you feeling the need to chill on the couch or continue to sleep throughout the day.

## **Take your lunch and take your breaks**

Sitting at the laptop or computer all day, even when in the office, is not a healthy thing to do. Take your breaks away from the laptop or computer and stretch, walk around the house or

just outside the house for a little fresh air. Set your lunch time as you would at work with actual lunch that is nourishing instead of having a snack attack; set a time for exercise as you would to be able to recharge and have a better focus on your tasks.

## **Remember to use your communication channels**

For employers, as mentioned in numerous documents found within our COVID-19 Toolkit and our webinars on our website, we encourage communication amongst yourself and your team members. Numerous avenues were always there but hardly used such as Zoom, GoToMeeting, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams, Skype for Business, and the list continues. Maintaining that connectivity to the workplace is still required. Set your weekly team meetings for you to continue to be aware of the happenings of virtual work and to simply check-in on your team members to ensure they are coping with these uncertain times.

In closing, remembering your employees' work-life balance is also of great importance. Frustrations can build as they seek to understand that they are still working their regular hours unless otherwise agreed upon and where they do not understand how to use the provided technology. You can advise on: how to use the equipment as some may have never accessed a VPN or used any of the mediums mentioned, the use of the equipment provided to them, how to mute themselves if they are not speaking at the time of the online meeting to ensure noise reduction in their background, how to set their availability status, and ensuring they turn the laptop or computer off if they are unavailable. As we set about this new norm, let us continue to determine the most feasible ways in which we can strike that balance in our now unusual lives.

**"...practice a greater balancing act as you wear multiple hats while at home..."**