

A REVIEW ON UNDERSTANDING WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG EMPLOYEES WORKING FROM HOME WITH RESPECT TO LOCKDOWN**N. Prasanna Laxmi**

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Abstract

A significant global public health crisis began the year 2020. By the first week of March 2020, the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), which is thought to have originated in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, had spread to more than 100 nations. Work-life balance has always been a challenge for the working class, but the COVID-19 pandemic has made it even more difficult because work has moved online and to the home office. Workers' happiness and health are negatively impacted by a lack of work-life balance. This paper aims to determine the nature of the relationship between work-life balance and employees' emotional exhaustion while working from home during India's nationwide lockdown.

Keywords: -Work Life Balance, Lockdown, Employees, Work from home.

Introduction

When you work from home, the lines between work and leisure often start to blur. That's especially true in situations like the current COVID-19 pandemic, which, thanks to social distancing, has made it harder for many of us to feel like we're actually taking a break on weekends. But reclaiming some balance to your days and weeks isn't just good for your mental health—it's good for your productivity, too. Here are our favourite suggestions on how to maintain a healthy work-life balance when both activities take place inside the same space.

On weekdays, it's important to create a routine that helps you minimize distractions and focus on what you need to get done. Here's how:

- Don't get stuck in a WFH rut of waking up and just walking over to your kitchen table to start the day. Instead, hold yourself accountable to at least 30 minutes of movement. This can be anything from going for a walk, run, yoga, stretching, dancing, etc.
- Virtual happy hours are all the rage right now, and your pantry full of quarantine snacks is just a few feet away—but moderation is key. Save the special treats for the weekend to make them more special.
- Actively seek out virtual water-cooler moments with your colleagues. Whether your work is more collaborative or more solitary, it helps to stay connected with your peers and colleagues to swap anecdotes and ideas—and maybe spark a few creative insights.
- Dress for work (and no, we don't mean putting on a new pair of pajamas). Use your wardrobe to differentiate between the parts of your day and week, and you'll be even happier to put those PJs on in the evening and over the weekend.

When the weekend rolls around, it's time to put your work self aside and embrace your weekend warrior. The key here is to make sure these activities differ from your weekday routine. Here's how:

- Do not check your work email on a consistent basis. A simple way to separate work from home is to check your email less frequently, even though we all prefer an empty inbox. In addition, unless a request is truly urgent, respond over the weekend or wait until Monday.
- Engage in enjoyable, calming activities. Find what makes you feel relaxed and put some time into it, whether it's making pancakes with the family, organizing your garage with Marie Kondo, or trying a new face mask.
- Take a more intense online group workout class. Gyms and studios all over the country have made a huge effort to keep their members engaged by offering free online classes as a result of the pandemic. Attend an online group class that is more intense than your usual 30-minute workout to keep your weekend mindset.
- Keeping in touch throughout the quarantine is essential. It's simple to spend time with friends and family by bringing back Sunday dinners (via Zoom or Skype, of course). Try out some game apps like Heads Up for more fun.

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned the working world upside-down, and with it, our work-life balance

That's why now is the perfect time to reflect on how you spend your working days so that you can improve your wellness and find how best to balance working from home.

1. Meetings, meetings, and more meetings

Even when working from home, I would guess that meetings are still a big part of your daily professional life. Different studies by researchers at Harvard and London Business School found that knowledge workers and other senior executives spend between 30-40% of their working days in meetings. And it is often much more for many of us.

The big shift in our post-pandemic world is that most of these meetings have become virtual and home-based, resulting in a toll on our physical and mental health. Many people are suffering through longer working days, filled with back-to-back video conference calls and meetings.

Can you cut the video channel on certain meetings and go for a walk to combat the serious 'sitting disease' caused by a highly sedentary day?

- Can you finish all meetings at 10 or 5 minutes to the hour to take a breather?
- Can you try and have a meeting-free day at least one day a week to gain some space to focus?

2. Take some time to reflect

What other activities fill your workday? Maybe emails? How many daily? Calls, also? We cover the majority of our working time with PowerPoint, maybe some desk research or analysis. But wait a second. How about thought? We think while reading or writing emails during meetings, as well as during calls and PowerPoint presentations. However, the term "dedicated thinking" here refers to extensive work on difficult issues. Tim Armstrong, the former chief executive of AOL, believed that "10 percent thinking time" was the most important metric for his employees. Yes, they were required to formally commit to dedicating 10% of their weekly time to thinking. I'm sure you put in a lot of hours each day, but how much of that time do you actually spend doing deep work? And here is a question that is related: When and where do you think most clearly? The typical responses before the current pandemic included "during the daily commute," "while exercising," "while walking the dog," "just before sleeping," and even "in the shower." In many instances, anywhere and everywhere, excluding the workplace! Our overall work-life balance and well-being begin to suffer now that some of us are working from home because it is all too easy to take many of these challenges beyond working there.

3. Build back the routines and rituals

Therefore, restore the routines and rituals that have been eliminated over the past few months. Even if you don't have to go to the office, could you walk around the block after breakfast to get your mind ready for work? Make an effort to separate the areas where you work from home, eat, and unwind. Even if you have to use the kitchen or living room table for work, try changing your position to face a different direction or even tape off a portion of the table for work and non-work. If you have a spare room that you can use as an office, that's great. To distinguish between personal time and work time at the end of each day, make sure your laptop is closed and all of your work equipment is put away. It pays off to make such minute adjustments that create space. Last but not least, sitting too much also causes emotional and behavioral states of powerlessness, so move around your house as much as possible—even during meetings! to increase optimism. Think about your day-to-day routine and reflect on it. Then, try to make some of that time just for you, and watch your workday improve as a result.

4. 'Done' is better than perfect

It's easy to feel like every single thing we do is just as important as the next. Look at your to-do list – are there some things on there whereby done will be better (or just as good as) perfect? It's likely there will be a few things on there, whether that's doing something for a colleague, putting the washing away, or maybe the meal you're going to cook for yourself tonight.

5. Eat your frogs

Procrastination can be our worst enemy. Putting off tasks can actually give us anxiety around completing them and cause further stress because, well, we still haven't done them!

If you're struggling, try the frog technique. Do your most dreaded task or that thing you've been putting off for ages first (doctor's appointment, creating that report, or having to have that conversation with someone). Doing it at the start of the day will give you a real sense of accomplishment and leave you on a roll, ready to tackle whatever comes next.

6. The fake commute

Even though most of us despise the long drive to work or the possibility of having our face buried in someone's armpit on a crowded train, there is merit to the argument that commuting helps you maintain a healthy work-life balance. It punctuates our workday and provides us with time to unwind and separate our professional lives from one another. Try a fake commute if you have trouble falling asleep at night or getting ready for work. To get the punctuation, space, and definition you need, just walk out your door and around the block at the beginning and end of the day.

7. Socializing

Now, I'm not asking you to participate in yet another Zoom pub quiz, but socializing is good for your mental health. Whether that's a video call, a phone call, a distanced walk with friends, or a proper night out. Social engagement has been found to help with physical wellness, too, by strengthening your immune system.

8. Embrace the abnormal

We were in this predicament a few years ago in a way that no one could have anticipated. Consider it a present. We are bound by time frames less and less as a result of not having to commute. so you can make the most of your day. Are you an early riser? Great! Make use of it to your benefit. Make the first few minutes of your morning a special time when you can accomplish the most important things to prepare you for the day, such as spending time with your kids, exercising, working on a hobby, or even working (if that's your thing!). Likewise for your evenings. If that is the case, you should start your day with meetings and administrative tasks, and end it with focused work or your favorite hobbies if you want to devote more time to them.

9. Saved by the bell

Just because we now have greater flexibility doesn't mean we should be working 24/7. Make your day work for you, but give yourself a 'home time' when you stop work, turn off your emails, get away from your desk and go and do anything but work.

10. It's up to you

What a healthy work-life balance looks like can only be determined by you. What works well for one individual won't necessarily work for another. There are only so many hours in the day, and we all have different things that we need to be present for outside of our working life. Make your day work for you. Supporting your staff working remotely needn't cause you any wellness woes. With access to Tictac your employees will have all the tools they need to feel happier, healthier and connected. Find out more about our Employee Wellness solutions!

Guide To Maintain Work-Life Balance During Lockdown

Work, play, and rest have all been consolidated under one roof as a result of the global coronavirus pandemic. Work-life balance and personal life are increasingly intertwined. Companies of all sizes are moving toward a work-from-home policy right now. Working from home is becoming harder during this trying time. Routine can frequently become stale when working from home. The difficulty is made worse by the fact that leaving the house is nearly impossible.

To keep this work-life balance, we need to adjust to some changes as the line between work and home life blurs. Employees now frequently have the opportunity to work from home once per week, erasing the notion that working from home was a luxury. There are a few things to keep in mind in order to maintain equilibrium and be ready for this sudden change. Additionally, purchase family health insurance online during a crisis.

Follow Routine

The routine words sound boring in itself now but it is important to stick your routine especially during these hard times. All the activities you did before must be given a particular slot in the changed schedule. An attempt should be carried forward the old routine with some minor changes. Changing the sleep schedule is often costing people a lot. The day must be structured in a way that makes life easier to live and less boring.

Office setup

Having a designated workspace affects the mindset of the individual who is working. Get a table-chair setup instead of working 'wherever you find space'. A particular working space keeps you motivated and will keep your personal and work life separate. Also, the people at home will feel like you are working seriously and will often help. Creating this physical divide between the work and personal life is thus important.

Scheduling working hours

Assigning yourselves particular hours to work doesn't keep you busy all day. When particular time is not decided the person ends up working all day with frequent breaks. This gives irritation after some point of time as the person feels they are constantly working. Try maintaining the old working hours. This will also benefit all the employees as if the job is a collaborative effort then all of them would be working at the same hours keeping each other motivated.

Occasion breaks

People at home are often missing the morning drive to office and tea break which they used to have. In-office people often interacted and were never working constantly. Similar kind of routine should be followed at home. There should be occasional breaks for tea or reading newspaper. Also, meals should be taken timely and should not be skipped at all. People in lockdown are often skipping a meal to take them once the work is finished. Instead much like the lunch break at office meals should be done in between work.

Don't get affected by the news

While watching new important, too much consumption could affect the brain negatively. Those who are working from home should be watching the news in a controlled way. If you feel that the news is affecting your mood a lot then avoid watching it.

Keep yourself healthy in these times by following the basic points. Also, consider to buy health insurance for a secure future.

Work life balance disturbances in lockdown

We used to return from work at home; We now work at home. To help stop the spread of the coronavirus, anyone with a role that can be done remotely does it from their bedroom, kitchen table, or Harry Potter cabinet. Even though we are aware that it is only temporary, neither the experts nor anyone else can guarantee how frequently or for how long it will be required in the future. Also, it's fair to say that some people are handling the situation better than others.

After nearly a year of Covid restrictions, many people are feeling the strain of having to follow enforced working practices that they had no idea they would have to. The hidden costs of remote work, both for employees and employers, have been revealed by insurance company Aviva research. Even though none of them are as serious as contracting the virus, they should not be ignored. There is a growing need to examine these negative effects so that they can be fixed or mitigated for employees as well as businesses.

The emotional impact of home working

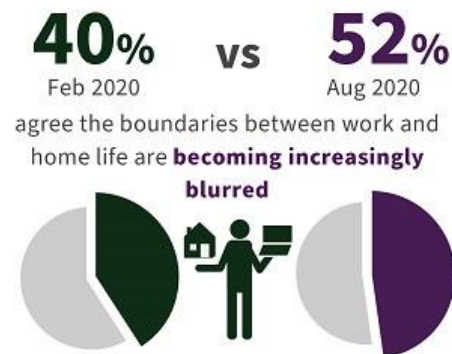
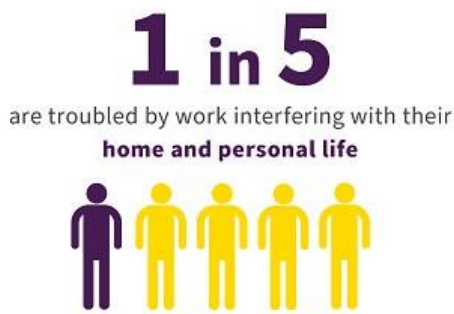
More than half of workers, according to Aviva, believe that the line between work and home life is becoming increasingly blurry. Interestingly, Aviva began their research prior to the pandemic's full impact, and in February 2020, they discovered that 40% of workers already felt that their work was affecting their personal lives. However, this figure had risen to 52% by August, indicating the impact of widespread home work.

This does not imply that working from home is undesirable. On the other hand, more than half of respondents (53%) say they prefer it, and there are undeniable advantages to it, such as a less formal atmosphere and savings on travel expenses. However, this leaves 47% of workers who do not like it, and by August, 44% of workers reported feeling "disconnected" from their coworkers. In parallel, employees' feelings of loyalty to their employers have decreased since February, which is instructive given the current state of the job market. Even though 55% of workers, up from 38% in February, believe their employer is trying to assist them in maintaining their mental health, only 26% believe their employer genuinely cares about this.

Worst of all, employee mental health has significantly deteriorated over this time period. Despite the winter-summer contrast that would normally reverse this trend, by August, 43% rated their mental health as "very bad" or "fair," up from 38% in February.

The unpleasant sensation of being "always on" comes along with this new sense of distance and detachedness. 19% of people now worry that their work is directly interfering with their personal life. Therefore, paradoxically, workers discover that they are unable to escape their employers despite the fact that they feel more distant than ever from them.

A blurred work-life balance



Top priorities for home workers



source:- <https://www.unbiased.co.uk/news/accountant/how-lockdown-upset-the-work-life-balance>

Is anyone still taking time off sick?

The startlingly rapid decline in the number of sick days taken by employees in recent years is one symptom of this "always on" culture. By August 2020, compared to 67% in February, 84% of workers had taken no sick days in the previous three months.

This appears to be a positive development, which may be partially explained by the summer and the lockdown's ability to stop the spread of germs. However, a change of this magnitude suggests that many people who were ill were either working through their illness or pretending to be ill and staying online while doing the bare minimum for their employers. Both of these outcomes are unfavorable because they suggest that employees are hesitant to declare illness or request time off to recuperate. This "presenteeism" is probably caused by

the lack of job security that many people see all around them, which is also bad for workers' mental health.

It's hardest for young workers

Spending more time with their children and relaxing at home are two of the reasons people say they prefer working from home. Naturally, this is a cold comfort for the majority of young workers between the ages of 18 and 25 who are still living at home or with their parents. More than a third of this group is confined to a single room for sleeping and working. In a time when meeting new people and broadening one's horizons are typically prioritized, this has unavoidably had a significant impact. Due to the "last in, first out" principle, junior employees are typically regarded as the most disposable members of the workforce, which raises concerns about job security. This age group is by far the most likely to currently experience work-related anxiety (53%, compared to an average of 34%), and 17% of them describe their mental health as poor (compared to an average of 11%).

Resilience is key – the difference that personality type can make

Your personality type may have a significant impact on how well you have dealt with working from home. However, Aviva's research disproves the widespread belief that "introverts like home working, extraverts don't." 36 percent of introverts say they are still concerned about the lack of face-to-face interaction with their coworkers. Even though 68% of extraverts and 56% of introverts appeared to be missing office life, the majority clearly experience negative effects from a lack of personal interaction.

The report also identified four broad "working personality types" that all have varying degrees of success with remote work. People who are able to combine emotional resilience with a high level of personal organization seem to perform best; this group is known as resilient completers. Individuals who lack emotional resilience and personal organization, or those who have relied on management's professional and social support the most, find it particularly challenging. However, overall, it appears that emotional resilience—the capacity to adapt to change, remain engaged, and endure adversity knowing that it is only temporary—is the most important trait.

What employers can do to support their workforce

When you ask the majority of employees what they think of their managers, the responses are frequently unfavorable. However, employees appear to be even more estranged from their employers than usual. Happiness in the workplace has nearly halved since February 2020, and only 15% of employees believe their bosses are trying to understand what motivates them.

An Oxford University study found that happy employees are 13% more productive, which should make employers nervous. Productivity may decrease as well, which could have a negative impact on the bottom line of the business. The absence of a physical office has made it much more difficult for managers to "kick the tires" and assess the team's mood. During the

lockdown, many businesses may find that their employees' motivation has slowly dwindled, resulting in a significant financial burden and, at best, a sluggish recovery.

Therefore, in order to boost morale, employers would be wise to act immediately rather than wait for the issues to become apparent, which may have been simmering for months. Online group events, small tokens of appreciation given to employees, private messages of encouragement, and a program of employee feedback and consultations where employees can freely express their wishes and concerns are all potential solutions. Employers can also subscribe to organizations that employees can talk to in confidence about any personal issues, like their mental health.

What employees can do to help themselves

Employees can also contribute to the restoration of work-life harmony. Although the ability to work at any time of day or night is often cited as one of the benefits of working from home, it is actually preferable to schedule separate periods of time for work and leisure and to avoid overlaps unless absolutely necessary.

Set clear working hours for yourself as an employee and try to stick to them. This usually means working harder for a shorter amount of time and then signing off as if you had left the office. Don't work weekends if you wouldn't normally be there on the weekend. Schedule leisure activities if necessary to ensure that you clock out on time.

In order to recover to their full potential, the mind and body require extended periods of uninterrupted rest. This indicates that working all hours will result in subpar work, which will benefit neither you nor your employer. In a similar vein, if you are an employer, it is preferable for your employees to be either "on" or "off," as opposed to flickering like a light with the switch halfway pushed.

Everyone hopes that offices will return to their normal state later in 2021. However, it is likely that working from home will continue to be more accepted and popular than it was prior to the pandemic. The realization that neither the office nor the home is the ideal workplace, but that the right combination of the two just might be, may be one of the few positive outcomes of the pandemic.

Conclusion

The mix of work and personal life has dynamically evolved over time. Today's challenges make it hard for people to balance their work and personal and family lives, which has a big effect on both their work and personal lives. People who have a better work-life balance are more productive and can help the company grow, according to recent research. Thus Balance between serious and fun activities is significant from both individual and authoritative level. Finding a healthy balance between family and work life was thought to be the goal of work-life balance. The article's research goal is to learn more about work-life balance by looking at previous studies and connecting them to the current lockdown, when people realized that the very concept of work-life balance is muddled by FUD (Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt).

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