

Seven Ways to Cure Workaholism



Time off is good behavior, especially for people who work, work, work, all the time. When work overpowers all other activity, stress develops. Long hours, with little relief, generally leads to:

- Less productivity or inefficiency.
- Neglected family and social life.
- Distorted concepts of what's important and what's not.

So often, though, a workaholic is the last to realize a problem exists. People who have trouble separating themselves from their jobs may feel that their personal worth is measured by how much they produce at work and little else.

Ask your spouse or a close friend if they think you're a workaholic. If the answer is yes, here are some ways to create a healthier balance between work and play.

Gradually cut down the number of hours you work each day or week. Avoid radical changes, but take measurable steps, like making it a rule not to work on weekends. (If that means you have to cut your workload proportionally by skipping unimportant tasks or delegating some work, so be it.)

Plan time for recreation in your schedule as though it were an important commitment. (It is.) Set aside some time for fun, however brief, every day.

Get some physical exercise every day. Take a walk, do some stretching, or participate in some other nonstressful, noncompetitive activity.

Avoid talking shop over lunch. Go on a picnic or meet an old friend and talk about something unrelated to work.

Choose a hobby that contrasts with the kind of work you do. If you work on highly technical mental problems all day, take up a handicraft hobby like woodworking or needlework. If you stay indoors all day, take up an outdoor activity like gardening or bicycling.

Select leisure activities carefully. You need at least one activity you can share with family or friends.

Refuse to feel guilty when you're not working. This is probably the most important step of all.