



How to improve your **work-life** **balance**

#ThisIsYourBusiness

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To succeed in business, work, rest and play

The traditional 9-5 working pattern is a thing of the past and for many business owners often keeping some sort of balance in their life is hard.

The first thing all business owners should do is stop feeling guilty about the time they spend running their business and accept that work and life are not separate, they are the same – it's all LIFE.

Of course, family, friends, doing things you enjoy, keeping healthy and relaxing are really important, but for many people (business owners and employees) work is the reason they get up in the morning. It's not always the unhealthy side of life, it can be fantastic, enjoyable and rewarding. But, when work no longer feels fantastic, enjoyable or rewarding and you feel that it's all getting too much then it's time to step back and readdress the balance.

So, we've compiled ten top tips to make sure you make time to work, rest and play.



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*You can't be
everything to
everybody all
the time*”

Create a solid support network

As a business owner, it's easy to get carried away when business is booming and the company is soaring, but this fast pace buzz can run outside of business hours and cause things, including your mental health and family life, to spiral out of control. Having a reliable and trusting support network will help manage the pace when it starts to become too much; find the support network that is right for you, both at home and at work, to avoid feeling overwhelmed and lonely.

“No” isn't a dirty word

It's important to know when to draw the line and have the confidence to say 'no'. Identify what's making too much noise in your work life and at home, what's holding you back from taking a moment to yourself, what's stopping you from unwinding and stepping away for a moment. You can't be everything to everybody all the time.

Stop right now, thank you very much

How often do you think 'I have to do everything around here'? Many owners feel better when they are seen to be 'busy' – they feel like they are setting a good example. But what is it you are busy doing? Not letting go of day to day tasks is the single biggest problem we see in business owners as their business grows. Invest in a strong team to help you run the business and accept this may cost you more and you may earn less in the short term. STOP doing the little tasks that keep you busy but achieve the least.



Use tech to save time

Don't waste time driving to a meeting when Skype or a conference call would work just as well. There is plenty of time-saving tech out there that will save you precious minutes to focus on the higher value tasks which will be more profitable overall. There are also many time-tracking tools you can use to monitor everything from the duration of meetings, to chasing and converting leads which will allow you quickly build an understanding of how long a particular task takes.

That way, you can effectively estimate how long your next work task will take.



Know when you are most productive

Are you an early bird or a night owl? If you're at your most productive and creative first thing then assign tough tasks to the mornings, don't try and concentrate on a tricky strategy at the end of the day if that's when you feel most drained and vice versa.

At the end of each working day, look back and see what you have achieved and when. Ask yourself what worked today, what didn't, what went wrong and how you can do it differently tomorrow.

Plan your workload and commitments

There will always be certain things that drop in unexpectedly where you must put in the graft and work out of hours – remember to prioritise and most importantly communicate with your team and your family. Use your diary or an online tool like Trello to try and plan your workload and commitments at the start of the week, this way you can see whether you have the balance right. Colour code work, family and wellness commitments and ask yourself, *have I got the right balance this week?*



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Take time away from the office

Taking time away from the office for a break can feel difficult to a business owner as the overwhelming feeling of guilt or fear that the business will collapse without you can often creep into your thoughts. With the right team and support network in place, your business will be fine without you. Trust us. Take time to unwind and relax in different surroundings and your time in the office will be so much more productive.

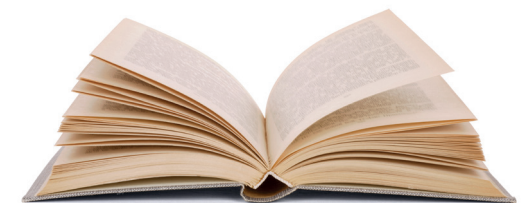


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Take a digital detox

Take a detox from the digital world, this will help you to feel more balanced and less stressed. Having a phone at your fingertips can be harmful, especially when you are on holiday or taking time out. Try turning off your notifications and your email app badge so you don't see the number of emails racking up. Set limits and relax, this way you'll be able to fully unwind and reap the benefits of a detox. Did you know, the blue light emitted by a phone, laptop screen or tablet can keep you feeling awake even if you need to rest. If you like reading before bed, put down the tablet and pick up a book instead.





Motivation keeps you going but **discipline keeps you growing**

Discipline is a key player in helping you to achieve a healthy work-life balance. Set yourself work hours and really try to stick to them. Otherwise, before you know it, you'll be working until midnight every night which isn't sustainable long term. Why not discipline yourself to occasionally leave your laptop in the office.

Learn to how to cope with **stress in a positive way**

Running your own business is stressful, there's no getting away from that and it doesn't matter how much you delegate or how often you take time to unwind, you can't escape it. You just have to learn how to cope in a positive way before it has a negative effect on health and takes over your whole life. Step away from a stressful situation for a moment to collect your thoughts, slow down and get some fresh air to regroup. Turn negative thoughts into positives, for example rather than "I can't do this" think "I'll do the best I can" or switch out "I hate it when this happens" for "I know how to deal with this; I've done it before".



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Conclusion

So, if you don't love what you do right now, if you feel that business is getting on top of you and you don't have balance, try and take a step back and understand why your job isn't allowing balance. Is there an easy fix or change that can be made?



How Haines Watts can help

Is your work-life balancing too much towards work? Does running your business feel like a chore? Have you lost motivation?

If these or any other challenges are affecting you, [contact us](#). We have a huge amount of experience in supporting business owners through the challenges of growing a business. Our support and advice includes people, financials, systems, processes, risk and clear business advice on how to run a better business to help you get the balance back in your life.





About Haines Watts

Haines Watts is a Top 15 firm of chartered accountants and business advisors that specialise in supporting business owners. We support over 35,000 companies and business owners around the UK, which gives our clients access to a huge amount of business expertise and knowledge. We can help you to identify opportunities to grow your business, save money and minimise risk to help you reach your business goals and personal aspirations.

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