MERCYONE℠

10 tips to improve your
work-life balance

Work-Life balance is the relationship between your work and the commitments in the rest of your life and how they affect one another. Almost anyone who has a job knows the stress of balancing their work duties and other important areas of their life such as time with friends and family, enjoying recreational and community activities and taking care of their own health.

When things are out of balance – stress and unhappiness result.

Stress increases the level of cortisol in our bodies creating inflammation. This impacts our health and studies show result to many diseases including cancer, heart disease and diabetes. A healthy balance improves quality of life, less stress and better health and well-being. By restoring balance, you also function better at work with a positive outlook, increased focus and greater productivity.

Chronic inflammation in your body puts your health at risk.

If you struggle to juggle the demands of your job and the rest of your life, read on for tips to re-establish balance. Keep in mind there is no "right" balance that works for everyone, no perfect "one size fits all" prescription, and what works today to achieve balance may change at different stages of your life and career.

Put some of these into practice and win back the balance and enjoy life more fully.

- **Step away from your smartphone.** Set clear boundaries so work doesn't interfere with your personal time. Avoid checking work email and voicemail after the workday and on weekends.

- **Build personal time into your schedule.** When you plan your week, pencil in time to truly disconnect from your responsibilities. Allow time for a walk in the park, a relaxing massage or enjoy a round of golf. And respect this personal appointment the same way you would a work meeting.

- **Take your vacation time.** You earned it. Take this time away from the stress of work to refresh and rejuvenate. Chances are you will come back happier, more relaxed and better able to handle your work tasks.

- **Eliminate time-wasters.** Does frequently checking-in on Instagram or catching up on the latest gossip at work bring greater enjoyment to your life? If not, it may be time to change your routine.

- **Learn to say "No."** Realize you can't do it all. No one can. Decide what matters most in life and let your priorities guide you when accepting new, non-essential projects at home and work.

- **Make adequate sleep a habit.** Lack of sleep increases stress. We all

function better, are more alert, more productive and have lower stress levels after a restful sleep.

- **Eat right.** Healthy meals and snacks will give you the energy you need to get through the day. Break the habit of working through your lunch hour. Get away from your desk to enjoy a sandwich and some fresh air. Likely you will return for the second half of the day better able to concentrate on your workload.

- **Take a break.** Taking a break at work, or on any project, will help clear your head, improve your decision making skills and improve your ability to handle stress. Throughout the day get up from your cubicle to move about, to hydrate or eat a snack.

- **Hit the gym.** You may already feel stressed with all the tasks on your To Do List so adding time for the gym seems like it would just make matters worse. But finding time to exercise is not only good for your health, it's also a natural stress buster.

- **Enlist the help of others both at work and at home.** Share your concerns with your employer, and be part of the solution by brainstorming practical ways to solve the problem.

Although maintaining balance in your work and personal life is not a simple task – it is an attainable goal.