

Think

Clearer

Start and end your day well

The decisions we take at the beginning and end of the day can have a major impact on how in control of life and work we feel. By making some practical changes to our daily routine, we can save ourselves valuable time and hassle, which in turn can make us feel calmer and better equipped to enjoy our free time.



Start small

How you start and end your day frames how you feel at work and at home.

By making some small changes to these important bookends to your day, you can really have an impact on how you balance life and work.

Stick to a routine

Routines can be simply the regular things we do or the preparations we make to get ourselves ready for our daily commitments.

While routines don't work for everyone, most of us benefit from ongoing organisation to keep on top of work and life.

For many, staying organised is a vital factor in achieving work-life balance. Being disorganised can lead to avoidable stress and anxiety and can have you start or end your day in a negative state of mind.

That in turn will affect how you feel and perform at work, setting up a cycle of ever-increasing stress.

Start the day on the right foot

Set an alarm

It sounds simple, but don't forget to set a regular alarm on workdays. If you find you're hitting snooze continuously, consider going to bed earlier. You can also use the alarm function on your mobile phone to set yourself reminders during the day.

Leave yourself enough time to get ready

A lot of morning stress comes from feeling like you're running out of time. Get up a little earlier or if you know you're prone to going slow first thing and do your prep before you go to bed. That way, you'll have less to do in the morning and, hopefully, not as much pressure.

Do something calming like yoga or meditation

Whether you carve out ten minutes at the start of the day for gentle stretches, visualisation or your favourite yoga pose, you'll be on your way to a calmer beginning to your day.

Bridge the gap between home and work with something you enjoy

You don't have to start thinking about work until you've arrived there. Use your commuting time to do something you enjoy like listening to a podcast, music or reading a book or listening to an audiobook.

Ways to wind down well

Change your mood

Many of us arrive home stressed from work. Tiredness, transport stress and worry about work can all spill over into our homes life.

Family Lives recommends getting changed or having a bath or shower to change your mood or create calm before you get on with your evening. That way, you can cut down on sharing your work stress with your family as soon as you get in and give them the best of yourself.

If you have children, share something together

Enjoy shared time with your children in the evening. Whether you eat together, share stories of your days or do an activity, your kids will appreciate your undivided attention and it can help you put work behind you.

Prepare what you can

As the saying goes, fail to plan and you plan to fail. By spending a little time organising what you need for tomorrow will save you not just minutes, but peace of mind come morning.

Whether you lay out your clothes the night before, make your lunch or pack your bag, every second you save is worth a lot more when you're up against the clock before work first thing.

Switch off from screens

We know too much screen use is bad for us, but did you know using electronic devices close to bedtime can actually prevent us from falling asleep?

Screens delay our natural circadian rhythm due to the blue light they emit. Our ability to produce the sleep hormone melatonin is reduced, meaning we feel less sleepy and find it harder to relax.

Swapping a screen for a book can make a difference to the quality and amount of sleep we get every night.

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Making some small changes to your daily routine can add up to a big impact on your work-life balance.