

14 Rules for Better Work-Life Balance

Balance work and life by working smart (not long), setting boundaries, staying healthy and connected, taking real breaks, using flexibility, and building a supportive culture where people disconnect, give input, and lead by example.

1.

Long hours ≠ productivity

Overwork reduces performance; rest boosts output and well-being.

Example

Stop after 8 hours and return refreshed, finishing tasks faster.



2.

Use flexible work options

Adapt schedules and locations to reduce stress and improve balance.

Example

Start earlier to avoid commuting stress and free up your evening.



3.

Set clear boundaries

Separate work from personal time; protect your off-hours.

Example

Turn off email notifications after 6 PM.



4.

Work efficiently

Prioritize, manage time, collaborate, and avoid overcommitting.

Example

Block 2 hours for deep work and decline low-priority meetings.



5.

Plan long-term

Set goals, align tasks, and review progress regularly.

Example

Decline tasks that don't support your career goals.



6.

Prioritize health

Sleep, eat well, exercise, and recharge mentally.

Example

Schedule regular workouts and maintain 7–8 hours of sleep.



7.

Stay socially connected

Maintain relationships to support well-being.

Example

Plan a weekly dinner or call with friends/family.



8.

Do meaningful activities

Engage in volunteering or purposeful commitments.

Example

Volunteer on weekends or take a class you enjoy.



9.

Build support systems

Seek help from peers, mentors, and institutions.

Example

Ask a colleague to cover tasks during a busy period.



10.

Advocate for balance

Promote a healthier work culture and policies.

Example

Suggest flexible hours or wellness initiatives at work.



11.

Encourage time off

Take holidays; breaks reduce stress and improve productivity.

Example

Use all your vacation days instead of carrying them over.



12.

Respect the right to disconnect

Avoid work contact outside hours to fully recharge.

Example

Don't message coworkers after work unless it's urgent.



13.

Ask for (and give) input

Use feedback and collaboration to shape better work practices.

Example

Share preferences in surveys (e.g., flexible start times).



14.

Lead by example

Model healthy boundaries to create a balanced, productive culture.

Example

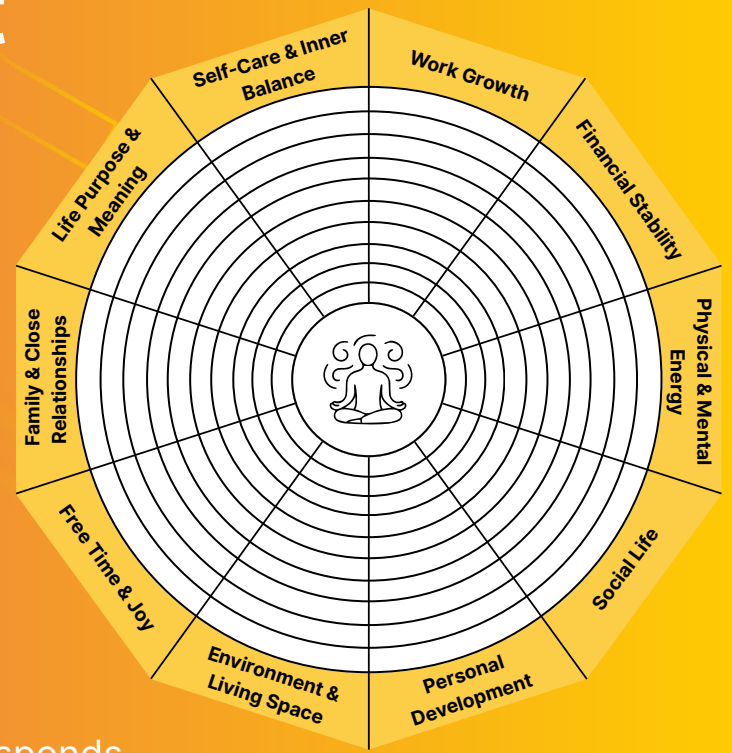
As a manager, log off on time and avoid sending late emails.



Self-assessment tool

Life can feel hectic, and taking a moment to check in on your work-life balance can make a big difference.

The Wheel of Life is a simple visual tool that helps you see how satisfied you are across eight key areas of your life, with ratings from 0 (center) to 10 (outer edge).



Step 1

Mark a point on each area's arc that corresponds to your current level of satisfaction (0–10).

Step 2

Connect the points around the wheel to create an inner shape.

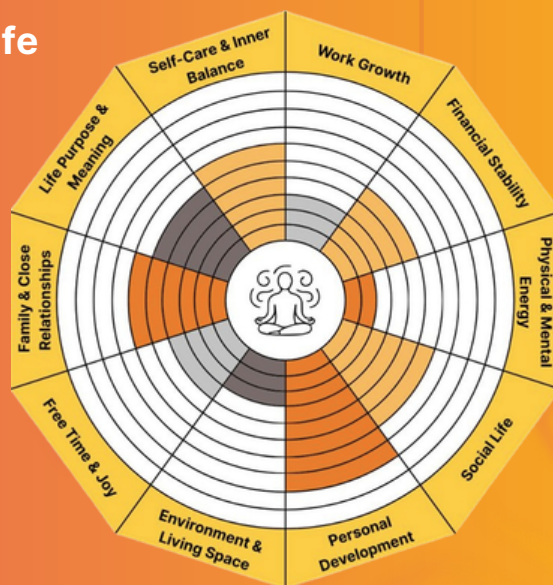
Step 3

This inner shape represents your current "Wheel of Life." Imagine it as an actual wheel — how smooth would your ride be?

Step 4

Keep in mind: the goal isn't to score a perfect 10 in every area, but to work toward a more balanced and smoother journey across all parts of your life.

Sample of Wheel of Life



Sources

- Bartlett MJ, Arslan FN, Bankston A, Sarabipour S. Ten simple rules to improve academic work-life balance. PLoS Comput Biol. 2021 Jul 15;17(7):e1009124. doi: 10.1371/journal.pcbi.1009124. PMID: 34264932; PMCID: PMC8282063.
- https://issuu.com/tusla-2/docs/105357_tusla_-_managing_work_life_balance_leaflet?fr=sNDNjYTgyOTM3Nzl