

5 signs you're taking work home too often

Hands up if you read your work emails in bed before going to sleep? Or maybe you're catching yourself thinking about your growing 'to do' list while your partner talks about plans for the weekend...

Sound familiar? Read on to uncover the five signs that you're taking work home too often.

Read the signs

There's a fine line between being a highly committed and diligent employee and letting your job interfere with your personal life. Signs that it may be time to review your attitude and approach to work include:

1. Not taking annual leave because you're worried about delegation;
2. Taking two hours to get to sleep each night because you're worrying about deadlines;
3. Beginning your work week exhausted because you didn't rest over the weekend;
4. Missing important events and occasions due to work commitments; or
5. Family and friends frequently joking about your 'workaholic' tendencies.

It's about balance

Even if your key focus right now is to get yourself noticed, snag that promotion or climb the corporate ladder, it's important to 'switch off' from work at the end of the day. In fact, leaving work *at work* and giving yourself adequate down time, may actually improve your efficiency and productivity during work hours.

Switching off can also reduce stress and boost creativity. In fact, when you're relaxed, your subconscious brain works on problems, which is why many people experience light bulb moments when they step away from a problem.

Overworking can lead to burnout, mental fatigue, and general career dissatisfaction. However, maintaining a good work/life balance can leave you happier, healthier, and more focused while at work. Leaving work *at work* is also good for your personal life, since it gives you more opportunity to spend quality time with those who are important to you.

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Small changes to leave work *at work*

Achieving work / life balance doesn't mean you have to make massive changes. In fact, making some small modifications to how you operate at work can result in noticeable improvements.

- **Give yourself end-of-day out-the-door deadlines and stick to them.** Then make them progressively closer to your actual finish time over the course of a few weeks. For example, if you're supposed to finish at 5pm, but you regularly find yourself still at your desk at 6pm, make a plan to leave by 5.45pm one week, then by 5.30pm the next week, until you reach your goal. Of course, there are always going to be occasions when you'll need to stay longer, but make these the exception, rather than the rule.
- **Make your home a work-free zone.** Limit taking anything work-related home with you, except in the case of real emergencies. If you're prone to checking work emails remotely several times a night or over the weekend, try and limit this to once or twice a day.
- **Manage the expectations of your colleagues, and know that's it's okay to say 'no'.** If part of the reason you take work home or work [too much overtime](#) is because you're taking on too much, talk to your manager about your workload, and get used to turning down tasks or suggesting alternatives when your schedule is at capacity.