

WORKING WELL

Overcoming Workaholism

You are a highly motivated and energetic individual, and you love your work. You love your work so much that you find it difficult to "call it a day." Your home has become a second office; you continue working. You've been called a workaholic, but you've dismissed it as nonsense. However, you sometimes feel a little proud of the label. Other times, when your mate has expressed some concern about your growing obsession, you have even felt threatened and angry.

Workaholism is the addiction most rewarded in our culture. It is socially acceptable, yet can be as destructive to your health and your family as any other addiction. Fortunately, once recognized and owned up to, it can be overcome. But you must want to regain a healthy, balanced life, free of the compulsive addiction to work.

Workaholic Pressures

Workaholism occurs in every profession. Many companies encourage employees to make their work an important part of their family and social life. There is an overall cultural pressure to perform. Competitiveness is a staple of the workplace, praised and rewarded. Competitiveness can also breed compulsive work disorders.

Ultimately, workaholics equate working with living. Work not only becomes essential to life; it becomes life itself. Healthy lifestyles are well-rounded, offering a variety of experiences in a number of roles



Work is an important part of life, but so are social and leisure activities. They can relieve day-to-day stress and increase your personal satisfaction.

and diverse relationships. Consider your own life. To help you get started, look over this abbreviated list of potential areas of involvement:

- Family life
- Parenting
- Social life
- Friendships
- Leisure time
- Close personal relationships

Are there areas in which you feel your participation might be rated unsatisfactory, or with which you've been feeling dissatisfied? To balance your investment in your job, it may be important now to recognize and develop areas of your life that need more of your time and energy.

Curing Workaholism

Workaholism doesn't have to be a lifelong condition. There are steps to be taken which help make work become one facet of a full, enjoyable life.

Several areas of your life need attention. Rest is one of them. Think about how you really feel—not how it would be useful to be feeling. How often have you taken note of the fact that you're tired, and then actually taken the time to meet the need for rest? Workaholics require mandatory rest periods until they can learn to respond willingly to their need.

Your personal interests are another area that need your attention. Think about activities you've enjoyed in the past and which you can enjoy pursuing again. Aim at diversifying your interests. Workaholics need consciously to cultivate their awareness of the diversity of the world around them as a step towards developing their interests and involvement.

Many companies are beginning to invest in programs and workshops that deal with the need for controlling and reducing work-related stress. Your company's employee assistance program or health plan may offer "health and humor" workshops. A balanced life is what you are striving to achieve, and laughter is an important element. Sharing laughter at home with your family and friends may be your most effective step towards overcoming workaholism.