

# Work-life Balance

J. Randall Curtis, MD, MPH  
ATS President  
Professor of Medicine  
University of Washington



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# What is “work-life balance”?

- **What is it not?**
  - Achieving equal or perfect balance between work and non-work
  - One size fits all
- **What is it?**
  - Way to talk about prioritizing non-work activities in our high-pressure lives
  - May include family, exercise, sports, hobbies, arts, meditation, religion...



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# Who should be responsible for work-life balance?

- **Work/School Leadership**
  - Academic or practice leadership
  - Training program leadership
  - Individual mentors
- **Supporting groups**
  - Professional and scientific societies
  - Local support networks
- **Individual clinicians and scientists**



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# What is the rationale for an ATS initiative on work-life balance?

- Healthcare and science have become more time-pressured
  - Less time and resources requires efficiency
  - Unfunded mandates: education, uninsured
- To best achieve our potential, we must care for ourselves: happy & healthy
- Younger generations don't want to work as long hours as their mentors
  - Tool for recruitment and retention



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# What is the ATS Work-life Balance Initiative?

- Compendium of tips from ATS leaders and members
- “How do they do it?” Column
  - Edited by Angela Wang, MD
- “Life Outside” Column
  - Edited by Kristin Riekert, PhD
- ATS Career Development Task Force
  - Lead by Trish Kritek, MD



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# ATS Website

**WORK** *life*

**THE ATS WORK/LIFE BALANCE INITIATIVE**

In this online feature, ATS members offer their tips on how to integrate your career with other aspects of your life—such as family, friends, community involvement, hobbies and creative outlets.

**READ YOUR COLLEAGUES' SUGGESTIONS OR PARTICIPATE**



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# How can you achieve work-life balance?

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- I don't know
- Nobody in this room can answer that for you
- Personal decision about what works best for you
- Talking to others can give you ideas and encouragement



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# How do I strive for work-life balance?

- Remind myself work is not the most important thing in life
- My most important things
  - Family, happiness, health
- My tips
  - Exercise in the morning before work
  - Home for dinner by 6-6:30pm
  - Work at home on Fridays
  - No work or email in the evenings
  - No work or email on Saturday
  - No work or email on vacations
    - Schedule extra day when I get back



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# How do others strive for work-life balance?

- Leave work early to be home with kids and do work/email after bedtime
- Email free zones/times
- Put personal/non-work events on the calendar
- Learn to say “no” in a positive way
  - Frame the reason in terms of your goals
  - Not enough time to do a quality job
- Compartmentalize versus not
- Work as hobby – loving what you do



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# Quotes

- I try to be “present” mentally and physically at home  
–Dan Culver
- Put personal events on the calendar.. if you don’t treat this time as seriously as work, work will encroach on it  
–Brad Glavin
- Define success in terms of happiness or fulfillment, rather than financial gain, promotion, grants, manuscripts  
–Michael Gould



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# Quotes II

- Saying “no” ... if you don’t use this two letter word enough, you’ll end up using certain four letter words more
  - Nick Hill
- I love what I do at work... which makes the balancing part easier
  - Trish Kritek



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# Quotes III

- It is easy for working couples to put their kids first and their relationship last... schedule “dates” every couple of weekends... to connect and relax together
  - Karen Arenberg
- Unfortunately, despite my best efforts, my life remains completely unbalanced...

– Annon



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# Quotes IV

- To the younger generation... I say find the work that you are passionate about, but keep the perspective that some things are more important than your career  
– Lelan Fan
- Focusing on the big picture, not fighting every battle to which I'm invited, and having good daycare close to work



– Dayna Groskreutz

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# Other ideas

- Publish burn-out rates among different specialties
- Increase use of flex time or work-share
- Match promotion criteria to work activities
- Reduce Medicare documentation requirements
- Work-hour limitations for attendings



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# Summary

- Work-life balance is an important issue in medicine and science
- Increase focus on enhancing work-life balance will be important for
  - Recruitment and retention
  - High quality care and science
- Younger generations put more emphasis on work-life balance
  - Important focus for the future



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