Work-life Balance

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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...
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
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
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
ATS Website

WORKlife
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
How can you achieve work-life balance?

- 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
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
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
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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• 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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• 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