

LOOKING AFTER **YOU**

SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR BUSY TIMES



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Super *friend*[®]

ARE YOU IN BALANCE?

If you're like most working Australians, you probably play many different roles in your life. As well as being an employee, you might be a parent, spouse, caregiver, volunteer, friend — or even tick all of these boxes.

Amongst all of this, you also need to make room in your life for taking care of your own physical and mental wellbeing. Not surprisingly, achieving balance while juggling everything can be difficult.

Work/life “balance” means having equilibrium in all priority areas of your life, but balance means something different to everyone. The following short quiz can help you learn more about your own personal balance. Work out your total by adding the numbers beside your answers:

Work/life balance quiz

	Agree	Disagree
1. I feel like I have little or no control over my work life	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
2. I regularly enjoy hobbies or interests outside of work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
3. I often feel guilty because I can't make time for everything	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
4. I frequently feel anxious or upset about my work	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
5. I usually have enough time to spend with my loved ones	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
6. When I'm at home, I feel relaxed and comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
7. I have time to do something just for me every week	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
8. On most days, I feel overwhelmed and overcommitted	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
9. I rarely lose my temper at work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
10. I never use all my allocated annual leave days	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
11. I often feel exhausted – even early in the week	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
12. Usually, I work through my lunch break	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
13. I rarely miss out on important family events because of work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0
14. I frequently think about work when I'm not working	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
15. My family is upset with me about how much time I spend working	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

Your total:

WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS

11 – 15

You're on the right track! You've been able to achieve work/life balance – now, make sure you protect it.

6 – 10

You're keeping things under control – but only barely. Now is the time to take action before you're knocked off balance.

TIPS FOR STAYING IN BALANCE

Whether you're feeling a little wobbly right now or completely cruisy, you might find some of these tips useful to improve and maintain your work/life balance for optimum mental health.

AT WORK

- ▶ Schedule brief breaks for yourself throughout the day. Your productivity and effectiveness will increase if you take even a ten-minute break every two hours and overall, you will get more accomplished.
- ▶ At the end of each day, set your priorities for the following day. Be realistic about what you can achieve in the time you have available.
- ▶ Only respond to email in scheduled blocks of time throughout the day. Then, shut off your email program to avoid being distracted as messages come in.
- ▶ Make a distinction between work and the rest of your life. Protect your private time by turning off electronic communications. Don't be available 24/7.

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- ▶ Make choices. Social, community and volunteer obligations pull us in many directions. Choose the ones that are most fulfilling and learn to say "no" to the rest.

AT HOME

- ▶ Create a buffer between work and home. After work, take a brief walk, do a crossword puzzle, or listen to some music before beginning the evening's routine. Use your commute to unwind.
- ▶ Decide what chores can be shared or let go. Determine which household chores are critical and which can be done by someone else. Let the rest go.
- ▶ Exercise. Even if it's only for 15 minutes at a time, you'll feel more energised and refreshed.
- ▶ Create and implement a household budget to reduce money worries. Start by setting aside some money from each pay for the future.

0-5

Your life is out of balance – you need to make significant changes to find your equilibrium. But you **can** take control!



HEALTHY BREAKS

Most people are given some break time in their regular workday to help them unwind and refocus. What you do during that break time could have an impact on your mental health at work.

The following activities are no or low-cost and are designed to encourage you and your colleagues to take regular breaks even during the busiest workdays. Try some of these calming, energising and relaxing ideas to find your favourites.

CALMING

Take time to tidy up.
Clear the stress away

Work on a puzzle

Create a gratitude wall
with post-it notes

Get inspired by
collecting and sharing
inspirational thoughts

Find somewhere quiet
and meditate

Post positive messages
on a shared whiteboard

Imagine your ideal
holiday and do some
Internet research

Treat yourself to a
healthy meal or snack

Call a friend

Have a mini spa session
by mindfully applying
hand lotion.

ENERGISING

Tackle the stairs

Go and deliver your
messages in person instead
of emailing

Stretch at your desk. You
can find plenty of free simple
stretching guides online

Take a ball and a work mate
and go for a kick or catch

Form a healthy snack club

Try and beat your personal
best water intake or daily
steps measures

Compliment a colleague

Go for a Purple Walk (or Blue
or Yellow!). Take 10 minutes
to walk around the office or
neighbourhood and count all
the purple things you spot.

RELAXING

Do some yoga, by yourself
or with some friends

Take a nature walk. If you're
in the CBD, look for your
closest park or green space

Set up a game space in your
office and enjoy some fun

Take a 15-minute creativity
break. Sketching and
colouring can be really
soothing

Check out some online
comics or cartoons for
a laugh

Do some breathing exercises

Have a soothing break with
a bit of play dough squishing
and creating

Take a buddy and go for
a walk or a cuppa

Watch something funny
on YouTube.

EXERCISES FOR STRESS REDUCTION & DEEP RELAXATION

Incorporating relaxation into your life can help you reduce the stress levels in the body and improve both your physical and mental health. With 10 minutes and a quiet place, even the busiest day can feel a bit more manageable and calm.

TAKE A VIRTUAL HOLIDAY

How to take this break

1. Find a private calm space and make yourself comfortable.
2. Take a few slow, deep breaths, watching your belly rise and fall to ground yourself in the moment.
3. Close your eyes.
4. Imagine yourself in a beautiful location where everything is lovely. You might think of a beach, a mountain, a forest, or a being in a favourite room curled up on your favourite chair.
5. Imagine yourself becoming calm and relaxed, smiling, feeling happy and having a good time.
6. Focus on the different sensory attributes present in your scene to make it more vivid in your mind. What can you see? Smell? Hear? Feel? For instance, if you are imagining the beach, spend some time vividly imagining the warmth of the sun on your skin, the smell of the ocean, seaweed and salt spray, and the sound of the waves, wind and seagulls. The more you can invoke your senses, the more vivid the entire image will become.
7. Remain within your scene, touring its various sensory aspects for five to ten minutes or until you feel relaxed.
8. Assure yourself that you can return to this place whenever you want or need to relax.
9. Open your eyes again and then re-join your world.

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

How to take this break

Find a quiet space, sit in a chair with feet on the floor, palms on your lap, sitting tall. Close your eyes or soften your gaze and notice how you feel. Focus on your breath, the expansion of your belly as it expands on the inhale and contracts as you exhale. Breathe normally and notice how you feel compared to when you started. When you are ready, take a minute to breathe deeply before re-joining the world.

GRAB YOUR EARBUDS

You can access a range of video resources for stress reduction, deep relaxation and mindfulness from the University Health Network, Canada: www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/employee-resources/Exercises-for-Stress-Reduction-amp-Deep-Relaxation

You can also find some great local resources at www.smilingmind.com.au



CREATE YOUR OWN SELF-CARE PLAN

Grab a cuppa, a pen and 20 minutes to create your own self-care plan. Think about what you've tried in the past and what's worked well (or not). If you're stuck for ideas, who in your life inspires you? What are they doing to take care of themselves?

Capture some ideas, give it a go, and revisit in a few months to check in with yourself. Remember to capture what you're going to do and when you're going to do it.

<p><i>Physical</i></p> <p>Ideas: sleep, diet, exercise, making time to see a doctor, attending to your personal care (i.e. hair cut).</p> <p>My plan:</p>	<p><i>Psychological</i></p> <p>Ideas: mindfulness or meditation, setting healthy boundaries, going to a counsellor, or your GP, journaling.</p> <p>My plan:</p>
<p><i>Work</i></p> <p>Ideas: trying some of the calming, energising or relaxing healthy break suggestions, objectively looking at your role and what's working for you (or not).</p> <p>My plan:</p>	<p><i>Emotional</i></p> <p>Ideas: saying yes to your needs (and no to others) more often, cultivating emotional intelligence, learning what your triggers are, practicing self-compassion.</p> <p>My plan:</p>
<p><i>Personal</i></p> <p>Ideas: catching up with a friend, making a vision board, learning an instrument or taking a class in something new, reading, journaling, hanging out with family.</p> <p>My plan:</p>	<p><i>Spiritual/Energy</i></p> <p>Ideas: making time for what nurtures your soul, connecting to your inner self through reflection and time alone, creating new rituals for any faith, spiritual or energising practices you enjoy.</p> <p>My plan:</p>

ABOUT SUPERFRIEND

SuperFriend was created in 2007 when insurers and super funds came together through the Industry Funds' Forum to coordinate an approach to improving members' mental health.

In only 11 short years, we've gone from an idea to a strong, thriving force for positive change in mental health and wellbeing for super funds, insurers and their members.

We're here because 1 in 5 people still experience a mental illness in any one year, almost half of all Australians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime, and suicide unfortunately remains the leading cause of death for those aged 25-44.

As a society, we've made enormous progress towards *physically safer* workplaces. It's time to give as much focus and commitment to *mentally safer* workplaces as well.

At SuperFriend, we're walking alongside you, while also bringing the financial services and mental health worlds together for lasting, positive change. **Our vision is for an Australia where all workplaces are mentally healthy.**

WHAT WE DO

We provide:

- ▶ **SOLUTIONS:** Market-leading mental health and wellbeing education and training programs, tools and resources for fund and insurer employees—and their participating employers and members.
- ▶ **ADVOCACY:** We work closely with key Government and business stakeholders, the mental health sector, and Australian workers to keep mental health on the agenda.
- ▶ **INSIGHTS:** Our research and insights program captures rich data on the mental health and wellbeing of Australian workers, and we publish regular reports.

You can learn more about us at superfriend.com.au or by calling 03 9615 8600.

Acknowledgment: The tools and resources on pages 2 to 5 of this booklet have been adapted by SuperFriend from resources generously shared by Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace's Workplace Strategies for Mental Health initiative. You can learn more about their work at www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com





NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?

Keep this list on hand, just in case you or someone you know needs support.

Your GP

Lifeline 13 11 14

**Your employer's
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467

Beyond Blue 1300 22 46 36



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