

Five Reasons to Quit Overworking (and How to Stop)

- Posted by [Bruce M Hall](#) on May 19, 2014 at 11:12am
- [View Blog](#)

In today's professional climate, getting ahead is hard work. We all have to stay late or work weekends occasionally but, for some people, long hours at the office have become routine. Many take work home with them at night, put in time on the weekends, and even check their smartphones while on vacation. If you're one of these people, it's time to stop. Overworking is less effective and more damaging than you think. Here's why:

1. Your Most Creative Ideas Come When You're Relaxing

Where do you think of your best ideas? In the shower? On your ride home? While jogging? In her new book *Overwhelmed: Work, Love and Play When No One Has the Time*, journalist Brigid Schulte notes that, "...in the breaks, that's where the 'aha moment' comes." It's when you are doing simple tasks that your mind has the time to come up with creative and innovative ideas, allowing you to return to work with a fresh perspective on things. You need to give your mind time to relax.

2. You Are Causing Mental and Physical Damage to Yourself

Working those 60-plus hour weeks will do more than sap your creativity; stress will cause you to burn out. The stress that goes along with working too much has been shown to lead to substance abuse, sleep disorders, anxiety and, ultimately, physical problems such as heart disease.

3. You Are Damaging Your Personal Relationships

Time spent working, including scrolling through your smartphone, is time spent away from those you care about. Relationships need meaningful time together, and children especially need nurturing to develop strong emotional bonds. If the people close to you say they feel neglected by you because of your work, take it seriously. And remember, no one can live solely in the office. You need meaningful interaction with others, too.

4. You Are Hurting Your Company

If you are a manager and are working long hours, ask yourself if you are failing to delegate to your subordinates? Staff development is a key part of management. Effective management requires you to trust your employees to handle important tasks. Working long hours also creates a climate where your subordinates feel that they, too, must overwork. If you are working long hours, your employees will also stay, even if you tell them to go home.

5. You Are Not Necessarily Getting More Done

Many people who overwork are perfectionists who have a need for control. If you work long hours, ask yourself if you are one of those people who are getting lost in the details of each task instead of moving on. Are you are looking for ways to be more efficient or just looking for more work to do?

What to Do If You Overwork

Here are several strategies to take if you overwork or, worse, have become a “workaholic.”

- **Place leisure time on your calendar.** Take you family to a movie, go to a concert with your friends, or spend time helping a charity. Get away from the office and turn off the email on your smartphone.
- **Have a clean cut-off time from work.** Place a hard stop on your calendar at the end of the day and honor it. Commit time to an interest or hobby to take your mind away from the office.
- **Cut out the busy work.** Take a look at your calendar and focus on the tasks that will give you the most value. See which of the rest can be delegated to other employees.
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle.** Start taking an exercise class – power lifting, yoga, tai chi, tennis – whatever you enjoy.

So if you're one of those people who find themselves working long hours week after week, consider if it's time for a change. Ultimately you will be healthier, happier and more productive if you make time for other things in your life.

Sources:

- Why You Need to Stop Bragging About How Busy You Are (<http://www.fastcompany.com/3029294/work-smart/why-you-need-to-stop-...>)
- Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time by Brigid Schulte (<http://www.amazon.com/Overwhelmed-Work-Love-Play-When/dp/0374228442>)
- When Hard Work Becomes Overwork (http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/21/jobs/21career.html?_r=1&;)
- Are You Overworking? 7 Important Steps To Avoid Burnout (<http://www.dumblittleman.com/2010/10/are-you-overworking-7-importan...>)