



Five Small Ways Physicians can Achieve Better Work-life Balance

August 29, 2014 | Healthcare Careers, Productivity, Work/Life Balance

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Achieving greater work-life balance starts with making small changes. Here are a few to consider:

1. Stick to a goal. Think about how many times per week you leave work at a reasonable hour. Is it once a week? If so, can you try to do this two or three times per week?

2. Enjoy a change of scenery. Consider taking a different route home. This might not sound like a huge deal and different routes might be more time consuming, but when you take a different route home you see different things, have different thoughts, and potentially experience different sensations.

3. Start your day right. Consider how many times per week you awake with ample time, have a nice breakfast, finish what you need to handle in the morning, proceed to work, and actually arrive with relative grace and ease? Does this happen at all? If not, you have the potential for a new and satisfying goal. On mornings when you arrive rested and ready, organized and focused, you tend to have more productive and enjoyable days.

4. Make lunch a priority. Consider how many leisurely lunches you have in the course of a week. What is a leisurely lunch?

The kind where you leave your desk and proceed to a restaurant or lunch counter, a park bench, or a picnic table. Give yourself the chance to eat in peace, to experience the food, to chew thoroughly, to digest well, to linger for a moment, and, when you're ready, head back to work. In the course of a month with 20 or 21 working days, if you can experience five to seven leisurely lunches, the benefits will accrue. You'll return to work less stressed, more energized, and better able to meet the challenges of the afternoon.

5. Make breaks a priority. Consider how often you give yourself short mental breaks during your time at work. Do you allow yourself some momentary pauses throughout the day? You're better off taking 10, one-minute breaks throughout the course of an eight-hour workday than you are working for eight hours straight. That's because a 60-second pause, helps you "recharge your batteries," visualize, meditate, and reflect, and in doing so, increase your effectiveness when you return to the task at hand.