



# How to balance life and work

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In this activity you will consider:

- Your priorities in life (what is important to you)
- How priorities vary at different life stages
- Your preferred relationship with work
- What you would like to include in your future work, and what you want to avoid



Image 1. Via Shutterstock.

## Consider your overall priorities

1. What are your priorities? What things are most important for you to do or accomplish?

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2. With respect to family, health, finances, intellectual, social, professional, and leisure time etc., why are these things important?

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3. How does working affect other priorities? Be open to both positive and negative impacts of work, but try to focus on the positive.

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4. How will you balance work with other responsibilities and what can you do towards this now?

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Share your responses with friends and family. What are the similarities and differences?

## Consider your priorities at different life stages

Take a few minutes to think about your priorities at each life stage shown below. Think about such things as your family, friends, leisure, health, finances, etc.

Life stage	Age	Preferred lifestyle	Work and career	Education and training
Adolescence	15 - 20			
Young Adult	20 - 30			
Adult	30 - 40			
	40 - 50			
	50 - 60			
	60 - 70			
	70+			

Share your ideas with friends and family. Does everyone have similar priorities for each life stage? What do you think accounts for the similarities and differences?

## Consider your preferred relationship with work

Our lives are made up of work time, leisure time, and maintenance time (sleeping, eating etc). The more time we spend at work, the more we squeeze the other two. In making choices related to work and career, it is important to be clear about the amount of time we are willing to invest so that we can still achieve a balance.

Which of the following statements do you subscribe to? Write your name in the appropriate box.

Where would your friends, relatives and acquaintances fit on the chart?

My investment in work time:	People this applies to:
I couldn't possibly do something I wasn't interested in. There is no difference for me between work and leisure. My life is my work.	
Work is an important part of my life and although it is not my sole reason for living, it certainly takes precedence over leisure, entertainment, and non-work activities.	
I want to achieve some kind of balance between the energy I devote to work and that which I devote to non-work. Work and leisure are equally important.	
Although I work reasonably hard while I am at work, when it comes to the end of the day I want to switch off. I refuse to take work home. My own time is very precious to me.	
The kind of work I do has very little significance. All I want is the chance to earn enough to have a reasonable social/ leisure/ family life.	

## Functions of work

Work fulfils many functions apart from satisfying basic needs and wants associated with living in a consumer society. Under the following headings, consider the importance of work for you personally. Think about your prior experiences of work as you respond.

1. Social status, social identity and self-esteem. (What others think and what you think about yourself)

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2. Social relationships and social contacts.

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3. Income required to participate in the fun things, such as leisure and sporting activities.

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## Preferred type of work

Thinking about all the aspects above, note down the characteristics of work you would like to have, and those you would like to avoid.

I want to have:	I want to avoid:

## Digital literacy

We use digital technologies in every aspect of our lives, and yet research tells us that overuse of technology has a significant negative impact on our health and wellbeing. What do you need to do to maintain your work-life balance, when technology has allowed you to work from just about anywhere?

## Make it count!

What does this thinking mean for your studies and graduate work? Thinking about the ideal balance, what can you do now to make that possible? Add this to your CV as a statement about what you find important.

This resource was adapted from the [Australian Blueprint for Career Development](#) Competency: 9.3: Link life styles and life stages to career building. The digital literacy components were developed by Jo Coldwell (Deakin University).