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## 5 Signs You Need To Check Your Work/Life Balance

Priorities may change, but taking care of yourself is always important.



How can you tell if things aren't quite balanced and aligned? Here are five signs to look for:

### 1. Your self-care routine has gone out the window.

"Typically the first thing to go is taking care of ourselves," shares [Kristin Kaufman](#), founder of Alignment, Inc., and author of the *Is This Seat Taken?* book series. "Our exercise habits fall off, and we pack on extra pounds and may even get out of breath going through the airport or up a flight of stairs." These sorts of changes can chip away at your quality of life.

### 2. Your personal and professional spaces are a mess.

When something's gotta give, it's usually the less-than-enjoyable tasks that take a hit, like tidying up or doing laundry. Who wants to spend time filing papers when there are five deadlines on the horizon and a holiday dinner party to plan? The thing is, when you're living in a pigpen 24/7, the cluttered atmosphere tends to depress your senses.

### 3. Your brain is out of whack.

"People who are under strain for a long period of time actually experience changes to their frontal lobe," says [Kate Siner](#), PhD, entrepreneurial and personal development mentor. "Prolonged exposure to stress makes this part of the brain less active." That means you're not making the same kinds of decisions you'd be making if you *weren't* stressed. You might be confused, unable to remember things, or find it difficult to concentrate on tasks.

### 4. You can't remember when you last did something you love.

Need help jogging your memory? Kaufman's lending a hand. "Ask yourself: When was the last time you spent time with friends? When was your last date with your husband or significant other? When was the last time you carved out time for yourself, even if this is just a hot bath at night or a brisk walk in the morning?" she says. "If you cannot even remember 'when' to any of these questions, odds are your life is out of alignment."

### 5. You're not the same person.

"Changes in mood—specifically, changes for the worse—are often signs that your work/life balance is off," Siner warns. Are you more negative, self-critical, withdrawn, or unmotivated than usual? If so, try to act now to stave off feeling—and acting—worse down the road.

## Need a tuning? Here's how to start.

It's easy to get stuck on the hamster wheel and push your concerns off to the future. But hop down for a second—our experts recommend at least once a year—and consider where you are now and where you want to be.

To start evaluating your work/life balance, Siner suggests making a list of the most important parts of your life, like work, your significant other, friends, self care, spirituality, and hobbies. Now, do two things with that list. First, number each aspect from one to ten, with one being

the most important and ten being the least important. Second, write down the percentage of time you spend on each aspect on a daily or weekly basis.

"The numbers show two things," Siner tells us. "They reveal which aspects of one's life are being neglected. They also show if there is a mismatch between what is most important and where the most time is spent."

Psychotherapist and [Right Life Project](#) founder Jim Hjort, LCSW also encourages you to look into the future, say one, five, and ten years down the road. He wants you to consider what you'd like to look like "with respect to career, family and other social connections, recreational pursuits, and aspects of physical and mental health," and then think about if your current work/life balance is consistent with making progress toward those goals. If it's not, it's time to make changes.

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