

How to be a Healthy Workaholic

By Liz Ashe, M.Ed. Director of Training Affiliated EAP

I can't count the times my husband has said, "You are a workaholic. All you do is work. You're at your computer day and night." I explained that when I am writing, researching, or preparing handouts for training classes, it doesn't feel like work. His assessment is a little exaggerated as I do have "a life" with hobbies, fun activities and down-time but I love what I do. Most workaholics do.

Some of the best research on "workaholism" was done by Marilyn Machlowitz, PhD, author of *Workaholics: Living With Them, Working with Them*. According to Machlowitz, true "workaholics" love to be totally immersed in work. They tend to be intense, energetic and sleep less than most people. They have difficulty taking vacations or time off, spend most of their waking time working, frequently eat while they work, prefer work to play and can work anywhere at anytime.

One of the most surprising findings from Machlowitz's research was that workaholics, as a group, tend to be "remarkably satisfied" with their lives. She found that an individual who works long hours and takes little time off for leisure, but who enjoys the work, is less likely to suffer the symptoms of overstress than someone who doesn't work as hard, but dislikes the work.

HAZARDS OF BEING A WORKAHOLIC

Workaholics do have to be aware of the hazards; heart disease, burnout and exhaustion, and family problems.

Heart Disease: Problem workaholics are those with "Type A" personalities; that is, they are excessively competitive, impatient, and are plagued by an ever-present sense of rushing and "time urgency." These folks have been shown to have a much higher rate of heart attacks than "Type B" relatively easygoing personalities. It is important to note that not all workaholics are "Type A" (Meyer Friedman & Ray Rosenman).

Burn-out and exhaustion may occur due to a lack of the rest and relaxation necessary to give the body, mind, and soul a "breather" from daily routine and pressures. Rest is also needed to recharge the body's vital organs.

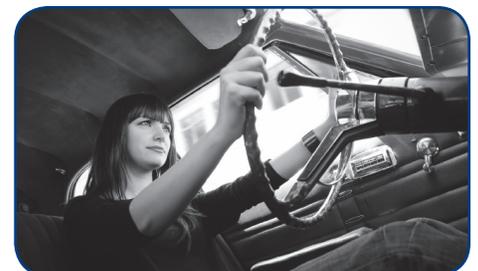
Family members may feel like second fiddles because workaholics tend to spend less time at home, miss or cancel out on family gatherings, and operate from a sense of "all work and no play." On a day to day basis, the family unit may suffer especially if loved ones believe that the workaholic's work is more important than they are.

Continued on back

Safety Tips When Out and About

From Shannon La Forge Courtroom Deputy to Judge Robert Junell, US District Court, Western District of Texas

1. Lock your car when you leave it, even if for a few minutes. Look in front and back before re-entering it.
2. If asked for your wallet or purse, toss it away from you. When the robber goes after it, run like mad in the other direction.
3. As soon as you get in your car, lock the doors. Predators watch for people, especially women, who sit in cars making lists, reading, or talking on the cell phone.
4. Be aware of your surroundings day or night. Look around you before leaving a building or mall.
5. If a van is parked next to your driver's door, enter from the other side. Most serial killers or kidnappers attack victims by pulling them into their vans.
6. If a predator has a gun and you aren't under his/her control, always run. A moving target will be hit only 4 in 100 times. Zigzag if you can. Even if hit, it probably won't be a vital organ.
7. If ever put in a trunk of a car, try to kick out a back taillight. Stick your arm out the hole and wave like crazy. The driver won't see you, but someone else may. This has saved lives.
8. If you hear a crying baby just outside your house, DON'T OPEN YOUR DOOR. Do not assume someone left a baby at your doorstep. Robbers and predators have recorded a baby's cry and used it to coax people to open the door. Call the police.
9. Always take an elevator instead of the stairs. Stairwells are horrible places to be alone and are the perfect crime spot.



Healthy Workaholic (continued from front)

TIPS TO PROTECT THE HEART AND AVOID BURNOUT

- Be alert to signs of emotional, mental, or physical distress. Make changes before serious problems arise.
- If you are “Type A”, slow down. Try to sit, do nothing and enjoy the quiet; take more breaks and walks; deep breathe when waiting or if stressed; don’t work while eating. Make time for regular exercise, get more rest.
- Analyze why you’re working so hard. Do you simply enjoy work or are you not delegating? Are you trying to prove something to somebody or escape from something?

PROTECT YOUR FAMILY AND HONOR THOSE YOU LOVE WITH YOUR TIME

- Come home for family meals.
- Take part in family members’ activities.
- Don’t work at all at least one weekend a month. Leave work at the office at least one day a week. Strive for more days per week.
- Schedule quality time with your loved ones. Don’t cancel unless there’s an emergency. Give 100% of yourself during this time.
- Take vacations or long weekends away. Don’t bring work or check email and phone messages.

- When at home, help out around the house and/or with the kids.
- Be sensitive to your family’s or friends’ needs. Be alert for signs of discontent and make changes, if needed.
- Ask yourself - If I was on my death-bed, who would I want with me - work associates or my loved ones? If you answer “loved ones,” make time for what really matters. Life is short and can’t be rewound.

MACHLOWITZ’S TIPS IF LIVING WITH A WORKAHOLIC

1. Few workaholics can be “cured” completely; it’s in their blood. Don’t take their wanting to work personally. But be sure to state your needs.
2. Write yourself in their appointment calendar before it fills up and/or arrange social activities well in advance and make them difficult to cancel i.e. season tickets.
3. Set limits i.e. no business calls or working after 9 pm, dinner with the family on Sundays, etc.
4. Negotiate a pre-set penalty your workaholic must pay if he or she breaks dates.
5. Insist on vacations and plan for them well in advance. Agree on a limit to the number of phone calls your workaholic can make to the “office” during vacation.

Be Nutty About Nuts

They are good for you. Nuts have the right kind of fat and no cholesterol. Some studies suggest eating nuts dry roasted or raw without salt can lower bad cholesterol and is heart healthy when replacing unhealthy snacks. Nuts also are a good source of protein, minerals, antioxidants, and vitamins. They also make a filling snack. Keep your servings to an ounce of nuts (a palm full) per day; calories between 160-190.

An ounce is about:

22 Almonds	6-8 Brazil nuts	157 Pine nuts
47 Pistachios	14 Walnut halves	18 Cashews
10-12 Macadamias	20 Pecan halves	18 Hazelnuts
28 Peanuts (a legume, not a nut)		

NOTE: This information is not to be used in place of your doctor’s advice. Also some people have nut allergies. Source: MayoClinic.com. For more details link to: www.mayoclinic.com/health/nuts/HB00085.

EAP Can Help!

Your EAP is a confidential, assessment, short-term counseling and referral program for you and your family members. It is a free benefit provided to you by your organization.

1-800-769-9819 ~ TTY dial 711 for TRS then dial 800-769-9819

Work Life Services

If your organization subscribes, this is an online 24 hour a day internet resource for information, advice and support on a wide variety of issues. Contact your human resources department for a company code then check our Work/Life Services at www.affiliatedeap.com

