

# TIP SHEET:

## 24 TIPS FOR 24/7 LIVES



BOSTON COLLEGE  
Center for Work & Family  
CARROLL SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Employees in 24/7 manufacturing or global roles have special schedule constraints which impact their ability to integrate their work and their life responsibilities. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. **Work hard but not “24/7”:** You need to switch-off periodically when you leave the office to allow some time for you, your family and your friends.
2. **Set your priorities:** Figure out what you want your priorities to be, not what you think they should be. Ask yourself, "If I could only focus on one thing in my life, what would it be?" That answer is your top priority. What would you focus on second? Third? Fourth? Fifth? You've now identified your top five priorities.
3. **Align your time with your priorities:** How much time do you spend doing things that don't matter to you? Or that don't align with your priorities? Eliminate these things from your life, or delegate them.
4. **Leverage workplace flexibility:** Employees with greater control over when and where they work, are more satisfied with their work-life integration AND are more productive at work.
5. **Concentrate on one thing at a time:** Forget multi-tasking. It's not possible to focus on two things at the same time. Instead, devote your full attention to the task at hand. When you are working, work. When you are spending time with your family, focus solely on them.
6. **Get plenty of sleep and exercise:** It may feel counterintuitive to add another activity to your life, but exercise relieves stress, clears your mind, and ultimately makes you more productive. Don't skip it. You'll find that you greet work, family, and personal commitments with renewed vigor.
7. **Set boundaries:** Today's technology can make the line between your work life and personal life quite blurry. Turn off your email or laptop at times that are important to family and communicate your plans with key people in your life, including your work team and family.
8. **Evaluate your work-life integration on a regular basis:** Achieving work-life integration is a never-ending journey, and your needs will be different at different times in your life. Set aside some time once every other month or so to reflect on your quality of life, what you would like it to be, and what the plan is for arriving there. Check-in with important people in your life to help you evaluate.
9. **Request input into scheduling:** For those on more of a fixed or rotating work schedules, work with your manager and your team to offer input on scheduling so as many work and life needs can be met. Priority is given for coverage, productivity, safety, and life events. Options are endless but may include, part-time, customized schedules, compressed work week, follow-the-sun scheduling...
10. **Swap schedules:** with manager approval, swapping a similar shift with a colleague is a great way to address last minute issues that emerge and ensure that work and life responsibilities are met.
11. **Explore “just-in-time” time off options:** By using “time off” coupons, floaters, or other metric to gauge down time, employees can plan time off in one-hour increments with limited disruption to the organizational schedule.
12. **Be mindful of global time zone demands:** In a global environment, don't schedule late night or early morning calls on same or consecutive days. When planning global meetings, rotate the time to limit the burden on any one person.

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13. **In case of overtime:** if frequent, mandatory overtime is an issue, consider dividing employees in to teams of 4, with each team being “on-call during one week a month for overtime. Rotate on-call opportunities to each of the groups each week.
14. **Work as a team:** many work and life issues can be addressed by the team coming together to discuss options. This approach promotes trust, teamwork, collaboration, cross-training, and often improved efficiency.
15. **Recognize that work-Life is personal:** Every situation is different and a strategy that works for you may be different than a strategy that works for someone else. However, everyone needs work-life supports.
16. **Consider necessity of each opportunity for business travel carefully:** Leverage virtual technology or other alternatives to travel if possible.
17. **Preserve your nights and weekends:** Unless a business critical issue requires it, you should not be expected to participate in teleconferences and/or meetings at night or during the weekends.
18. **Meeting-free Friday afternoons:** Try to avoid meetings on Friday afternoons. Reserve this time, to the extent possible, to complete assignments, or for creative and innovative projects.
19. **Take your holidays and do not work during your holidays:** While you are away on holiday, delegate responsibilities to others on your team who can respond to work-related issues until you return from vacation.
20. **Use e-mail effectively:** Communicating by e-mail is very effective in most situations; however, it is not always ideal. E-mail should be used to succinctly share information. Do not use “Reply All” if everyone who was copied on the incoming message does not need to see your response.
21. **Take advantage of the Mid-year Performance Connections review:** Discuss the issue of Work-Life integration with your manager and make commitments to each other about what you will do to improve it.
22. **Celebrate successes within the Company:** Take the time to recognize extraordinary accomplishments by utilizing the different Recognition Awards or occasionally having a celebratory lunch or after-work beverage with colleagues.
23. **Be efficient in scheduling meetings:** Ensure routine meetings are really needed. If it’s not needed, cancel it.
24. **Take advantage of organizational and community offerings to support dependent care needs:** child care centers, scholarships, summer enrichment programs, resources and referral, and concierge services are some of the supports that may be available to you. Make sure you are aware of all of the services and resources that are available to you.