

# MONTHLY MENTOR

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*For twenty-seven years, the Monthly Mentor has been a value added service to encourage our employer and candidate clients in their Personal & Professional Development.*



## 5 Non-Workaholic Tips to Get Ahead

*By Joe Hunt*

Much to the detriment of our health and well-being, many societies celebrate obsessive work habits. Being a "workaholic" has become a badge of honor, one that unfortunately describes too many of today's working people.

In 2014, Gallup reported that the average hours worked by full-time U.S. Workers was 47 hours, and 21% of respondents worked 50-59 hours, and 18% worked 60+ hours.

*Average Hours Worked by Full-Time U.S. Workers, Aged 18+*  
Self-reported hours typically worked each week, based on pay structure

	Paid a salary		Paid hourly	
	%		%	
60+ hours	25	9		
50 to 59 hours	25	17		
41 to 49 hours	9	12		
40 hours	37	56		
Less than 40 hours	3	8		
Weekly average	49 hours	44 hours		

Based on Gallup's 2014 Work and Education poll, conducted Aug. 7-10, 2014

GALLUP

Since that survey was conducted, 25% of survey respondents reported working 45 – 59 hours/week, and 17% reported 60+. These figures show that half of people work over 40 hours a week.

But the number of hours worked is not necessarily an indicator of a workaholic. The term is used to refer to a negative behavioral pattern characterized by excessive time working, an inner compulsion to work hard, and a neglect of family and other social relations.

Workaholics often strain their personal relationships. If you're married to your work, how much attention can you give your partner? Instead of quality time with family and friends, workaholics constantly obsess about business, emails, phone calls and reports carried home. They end up not getting enough caring support, recreation, exercise, good meals, and sleep.

Research shows how damaging overworking and obsessing about work is to health. Why, then, do we do it? Is there another way to get the work done, get ahead, and avoid the health risks of heart attacks, anxiety, burnout, weight gain, and cigarette and alcohol consumption?

## From Workaholic to Balanced

*Michael Grothaus* of *FastCompany* writes about Lucy Kirkness, a confessed ex-workaholic and founder of her own SEO and digital marketing consultancy, *Little Digitalist*. Kirkness bought into the typical fears that pervade the entrepreneur and startup worlds, including the myth that you have to work day and night just to get ahead.

Along with three other workaholics, Kirkness decided to shift priorities in order to find a way to thrive in professional life by setting work/life boundaries. Here is some advice from these ex-workaholics on how to work less and still get ahead:



*"My life is finely balanced between my work  
and my work."*

- Don't be afraid to say "no" to clients
- Trust that taking time to switch off completely will ultimately benefit you
- Talk to your friends and family about your feelings regarding work
- Learn to delegate tasks to others

## When the Boss Asks You...

Here is another example. Let's say that you're already doing the work of two – or more – employees. What do you do when your supervisor starts to ask, "Oh, just one more thing..."? Robert DiGiacomo of Monster.com suggests five ways to cope with the extra items on your list, without losing your cool or sense of well-being.

### 1. Ask the Right Questions

Even if your work plate is full already, you want to avoid saying "no" when the boss approaches you with additional duties. Instead, engage in a dialogue about the specifics of the situation, asking questions about how long the new assignment will be and what is expected. Ask which of your other responsibilities should be assigned a lower priority because of the new task.

## 2. Prioritize and Organize

Once you understand the scope of your expanded job description, ask the boss to help prioritize what must get done on a daily basis – and which projects can be deferred – and organize accordingly.

## 3. Be Your Own Publicist

Be sure to speak up as you identify ways to streamline your department's practices or improve the overall efficiency of operations. Do not be shy about how your contributions save time or money.

## 4. Learn from Experiences

Share what you've learned taking on a new task or assignment. Ask for training if certain skills or a specialized certification can ease your ability to complete unfamiliar assignments, thereby demonstrating your commitment. The new skill set will help with job security if there is a round of job cuts.

## 5. Take a Break

As you find yourself logging more hours, you need to take more – not fewer – breaks. Every 90 minutes or so, you should at least get up from your desk and stretch. Or better yet, take a 10-minute walk or grab coffee with a friend.

Ultimately, it is up to you to learn how to cope. You will be challenged to set boundaries, but nothing is more important if you want a career where you can grow and thrive. This is a key reason many people hire a coach as a guide to find the balance that is just right for their goals and purpose. What about you?



Some people live where they work. Others just visit.

Mira Grant

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