



Unit 23 A balanced life

Before you read

The article is about workaholics. Think about these questions. Do you think you work too hard? How do you feel when you work too hard?

Read the article

Get a Life!

Tania is a young doctor in training. She works 80 hours a week "just to keep up." Rupesh is a manager at a computer company. He works 60-hour weeks because he wants to retire early.

Tania and Rupesh are working more hours each year, and spending less time with their families. They are workaholics. And they are not alone. Working hours are getting longer these days, and more and more people feel they have to work hard to advance in their careers.

Could you be a workaholic? Answer these questions:

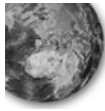
1. Do you get to work or school earlier and leave later than other people?
2. Do you get sick a lot?
3. Do you take short vacations, or none at all?
4. Do you think about work when you're not at work? Do you dream about it?
5. Do you feel that if you don't do something yourself, it won't get done right?
6. Is your career or your schoolwork all you think about?
7. Have you lost your sense of humor?
8. Do you feel restless and irritable when you're not working or studying?
9. Do you wake up feeling tired, even after a full night's sleep?

If you answered "yes" to more than four questions, you may be a workaholic. If you don't stop soon, you could damage your relationships with your family and friends. You might also become so exhausted that you make mistakes, injure yourself, or fall ill.

If you are a workaholic, there are some easy things you can do to change the way you live. At work, don't eat at your desk. Go out for lunch and take short breaks throughout the day. Do something exciting, relaxing, or interesting in the evenings and on weekends. You could exercise, go see a movie, or go out to dinner with your friends. Whatever you decide to do, plan it well in advance, and make sure that you don't cancel your plans because you need to do more work!

Some companies have realized how important it is for people to keep a healthy balance between work and play. They are trying to help employees balance their lives by providing benefits like flexible work schedules, family leave for employees who are new parents, and on-site day care for children. These employers know that a balanced life results in a happier, healthier, more productive employee.

Adapted from *Longman English Interactive 3* by Michael Rost and Marjorie Fuchs, Longman



Check your comprehension

Read the article again. Check (✓) **Workaholic** or **Healthy Balance** for each person in the chart.

	Workaholic	Healthy Balance
1. Ann gets enough sleep.		✓
2. Joe takes at least two vacations every year.		
3. Ted gets a headache almost every day.		
4. Lisa exercises regularly.		
5. Mark always feels tired and unhappy.		
6. Li gets to work on time and leaves on time.		
7. Fumiko is always cheerful.		
8. Maria rarely needs to go to the doctor.		
9. Paulo has no time to go on vacations.		
10. Ben is often in a bad mood.		

Build your reading skills: Comparing and contrasting

Read the descriptions of two employees of a big company, Danny and Patricia. Compare and contrast the employees. Which one of them sounds more like a workaholic to you? Write the name.

Danny is a 45-year-old executive. He really loves his job. His employees love him because he has a great sense of humor. He works at least 65 hours every week. He thinks about his job all the time. Recently, his wife convinced him to take a short vacation. For most of the vacation, they had a wonderful time, resting on the beach. But on the last day, Danny started feeling restless and bored. He started to think about all the things he needed to do at work.

Patricia is a 25-year-old administrative assistant. She doesn't like her job very much. She works about 40 hours a week. She misses quite a few workdays because she gets sick a lot. She feels tired when she gets up, even after a full night's sleep. She hasn't taken a vacation in a while because she doesn't have much money. She looks forward to her weekends because that's when she can relax and have fun with her friends.

_____ Sounds like a workaholic.