

## MANAGING FREE TIME



1

### Warm up

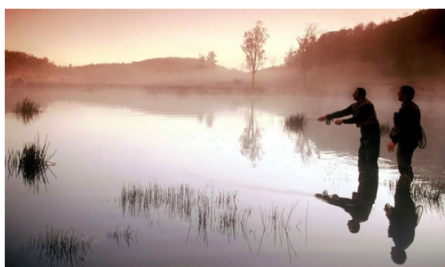
In pairs, look at the pictures and answer the following questions.



picture 1



picture 2



picture 3



picture 4

1. How many hours per week do you typically spend working? Do you think this is above or below average? Why?
2. What is the first thing you usually do when you have finished work at the end of the week?
3. Are you able to stop thinking about work in your free time? Why/Why not?
4. What activities do you usually do to relax?
5. Would you like to have more free time? Why/Why not? What would you do with it if so?

## Understanding the introduction

You are going to listen to a business person talking about managing free time. Number the extracts from the introduction in order from 1-8. The first one has been done for you.

a colleague while on a picnic with your family. We've convinced ourselves that these behaviours are no \_\_\_\_

And this is true even of our days off. Maybe you've taken a call at the beach, texted your boss from the grocery store or emailed \_\_\_\_

big deal. It's just one email. But there's a real cost to these interruptions, and there are smart strategies we can all take to better protect our time. \_\_\_\_

For so many of us, myself included, our days feel filled with a million small interruptions. 1 \_\_\_\_

In one study, researchers recruited parents who were visiting a science museum with their kids. Some parents were told to check their phone as much as possible; \_\_\_\_

others were told to check their phone as little as possible. After the visit, parents who used their phones reported that the experience was significantly less meaningful. \_\_\_\_

These moments seem so small at the time, and yet research suggests they add up to a tremendous loss. The constant creep of work into our personal lives can increase our stress and undermine our happiness. So just what is the cost? \_\_\_\_

They also felt much lonelier. \_\_\_\_



Watch the first section of the video (00:00 - 01:07) to check your answers.

Now, find a word or phrase from the introduction that matches each definition.

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1. \_\_\_\_\_ an event which stops something else happening for a period of time
2. \_\_\_\_\_ not something which is important
3. \_\_\_\_\_ significant or large
4. \_\_\_\_\_ something growing beyond its desired limits
5. \_\_\_\_\_ make something weaker
6. \_\_\_\_\_ get people to join a group or an organisation
7. \_\_\_\_\_ emotionally significant

## 3

**Focus on vocabulary**

Part A: Match the words to the definitions.

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. <u>burnout</u> (n)        | a. a feeling of being completely exhausted and unable to perform physically or mentally, usually because of working too much |
| 2. <u>productive</u> (adj.)  | b. a way of measuring something, often performance   |
| 3. <u>boundary</u> (n)       | c. completing a lot of tasks   |
| 4. <u>uphold</u> (v)         | d. felt very strongly  |
| 5. <u>accountable</u> (adj.) | e. give someone the space or the ability to do something   |
| 6. <u>metric</u> (n)         | f. give the authority to do something  |
| 7. <u>profound</u> (adj.)    | g. responsible for a task or a decision  |
| 8. <u>empower</u> (v)        | h. support something   |
| 9. <u>accommodate</u> (v)    | i. the limit of what is and isn't acceptable behaviour for someone   |

## 4

**Watching for details**

Watch the rest of the video (01:07 - 05:05) and decide which of the following pieces of advice the business person gives.



1. Spend 15 minutes sitting quietly after work to separate work from your free time. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Treat your weekend as if it was a holiday. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Make sure you get some exercise during the workday. \_\_\_\_\_
4. If you are not available, ask colleagues to only contact you in an emergency. \_\_\_\_\_
5. If you are able to, move a Monday deadline to a Tuesday afternoon to protect your weekend.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Create a list of what you need to do the next day before you leave work. \_\_\_\_\_

Watch the rest of the video again (01:07 - 05:05) and answer the following questions.



1. What did the experiment with the tourists who visited the church show?
  - a. It was easier to communicate the experience to others when tourists had their phones with them.
  - b. Recalling specific details of the visit was harder for tourists who had access to their phones during that time.
  - c. Tourists who used their phones had access to greater amounts of information and therefore enjoyed the experience more.
2. What example does the speaker give of how work distractions can take away from personal life?
  - a. She missed her first child's birthday due to working too late.
  - b. She texted a client while her first child was performing in a play.
  - c. She communicated with a client during an examination while she was pregnant.
3. How does the speaker suggest we think about the word "rest"?
  - a. See it as time to proactively enjoy ourselves rather than just seeing it as dead time.
  - b. Look at it as time where you are allowed to do nothing and stay in bed if you need to.
  - c. Make it flexible and break it up with periods of work if it helps.
4. Which of the following suggestions does she make for enjoying yourself?
  - a. Get a bike and cycle around your local area like a tourist to rediscover it.
  - b. Walk a long way with no plan in mind and leave your phone at home.
  - c. Book a weekend trip to Paris to see the Eiffel Tower.
5. What is the second suggestion that the speaker makes?
  - a. Try varying your work hours, for example working ten hours one day and five the next.
  - b. Encourage people to go out for lunch once or twice a week to relax.
  - c. Set limits around your work time so that you are able to enjoy time off.
6. What suggestion does the speaker make to help with the second suggestion?
  - a. Set aims for your free time with your colleagues and hold each other accountable for them.
  - b. Commit to cooking dinner in the evening for your family and honour that commitment.
  - c. Exercise with your colleagues so that you all feel fit and healthier.
7. What is the final suggestion the speaker makes?
  - a. If you feel you're working too much, negotiate for a higher salary to compensate for your time.
  - b. Negotiate for time away from work during the week, such as spending an afternoon having a long lunch with colleagues.
  - c. Try asking for more time to deal with your various tasks so that you are less pressured.
8. What did the speaker's data reveal about the way some employees used their time?
  - a. Employees who asked for more time did better quality work with fewer issues around stress.
  - b. Employers generally value employees who can quickly and efficiently complete tasks.
  - c. Time management was a key factor in whether employees were promoted or not.

**7****Talking point**

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. Why do you think it is that some people work really long hours and have little personal time?
2. In your opinion, are there problems with work/life balance with your workplace? Why/Why not?
3. Does your company do anything which helps its employees address the problems of stress and burnout? What are they?
4. What did you think about the suggestions that were made in the video? Were they useful to you? Why/Why not?
5. What other suggestions can you think of which would help someone have a healthier balance of work and life?

**8****Extended activity/homework**

Read the writing task.

You receive an email from a friend which talks about his work life. Read the following extract and write a reply giving them advice about the situation.

Work, however, is very hard. I like my job, but I work long days, frequently going in before 8 am and often staying until after 6 or 7. I often don't see the kids during the week because they are either too tired, or already in bed when I get home. Vanessa and I haven't been communicating very well. She gets annoyed because I'm always checking my phone for emails at the table, or reading reports in bed. I know I shouldn't do it, but if I leave work alone for too long, I worry that I might be missing something important. I even sometimes get up early at the weekend to do a little work before the family gets up so I can not be stressed when we spend time together. Honestly, I'm exhausted. I don't know how much longer I can keep this up.

**You should:**

- Write at least 250 words.
- Check your grammar, spelling and punctuation