
Kate: Hello, I'm Kate Colin and this is 6 Minute English. Today I'm here with Jackie and we're talking about people who work too much.

Jackie: Hi Kate, yes most of us spend the majority of our lives at work and our working patterns can vary widely. Some people 'clock-watch' all day, waiting for the moment when they can leave and go home, while others voluntarily do unpaid overtime spending many evenings and weekends at work. They find it difficult to stop and can't help thinking about work even when they're supposed to be relaxing at home. It's similar to an addiction and is sometimes called **workaholism**.

Kate: Do you think you're in danger of becoming a **workaholic**?

Jackie: answers

Kate: Before we go any further, here's my question for this week.
In the UK, how many hours are in the standard working week?
a) 20
b) 40
c) 60

Jackie: Answers

Kate: OK – we'll check your answer later on.
We'd all like to have the right **work-life balance**. Can you tell me what this means?

Jackie: Well, a **work-life balance** means to get the right combination of working and enjoying our personal life, spending time with friends, relaxing, playing sport etc. Technology plays a big part in disrupting many people's work-life balance because when we have mobile phones and laptops, we are able to work all the time, wherever we are.

Kate: Now we're going to hear from a former **workaholic** who worked as a lawyer in the City of London and had no **work-life balance**. How many hours would he sometimes be required to work a day, and what were the effects of doing this?

Clip 1

You may have a 2/3 month period where you're working 18-20 hours a day. You spend all of your conscious hours in the office. One is physically tired as in that you're not getting enough sleep. Generally in those periods, eating becomes a secondary issue as well.

Jackie: He said that sometimes he would be required to work up to 20 hours a day! Unsurprisingly, his symptoms were tiredness and the physical effects which come with not eating properly as he said eating becomes a **secondary issue**. This means that it becomes less important than something else.

Kate: Now listen to what else he has to say. He uses the expression **the norm**. This means that something is normal and we use it describe standard behaviour. What does he say is **the norm**.

Clip 2

In that environment the vast majority of your colleagues are working as hard as you, so you're just used to operating in that type of culture, it's seen as **the norm**. You start thinking that late hours or having to work the weekends is standard practice, to be expected - nothing special. Most large city institutions I think expect **burn out**.

Jackie: He said that as most of his colleagues were working as hard as he was, he started to think that working in the evenings and at weekends were **the norm** and to be expected. Doing that was nothing special.

Kate: He also uses the term **burn out**. What does this mean?

Jackie: To **burn out** is term we use to describe the experience of long-term physical and emotional exhaustion, usually work-related. People in certain professions are apparently more likely to experience burn out, such as lawyers, city workers as well as soldiers and emergency service workers.

Kate: In this final clip, he mentions the emotional problems that come from overwork. What does he say they are?

Clip 3

1) frustration – that you literally spend your entire life working 2) anxiety – when you're that busy, it's very hard to switch off. And 3) terrible feelings about where your life is going and whether there's more to life than this.

Jackie: He said the emotional burdens are frustration, when you worry you are spending all your life working, anxiety, when hard to switch off and relax and terrible feelings of wondering if there's more to life than that.

Kate: So it seems there are a lot of physical and emotional problems that come from working too hard. Now we're going to hear from a psychologist called Oliver James. You'll hear the word **productivity** – this means the level of output that you can achieve within a certain time. For example, if you are a productive person you manage to do a lot. He's going to talk about why there are good reasons why we should stop people from working too hard. What are they?

Clip 4

Workaholism definitely doesn't make for higher productivity and many studies have shown that. All that happens is that people spend a lot of time working ineffectually so they get very tired, people become less creative, they become more obsessional, more bogged down.

Jackie: He said that workaholism doesn't actually make for higher productivity. He said that all that happens is that people spend a lot of time working ineffectually so they get very tired, less creative and they become more obsessional, more bogged down.

Kate: When are people most productive?

Clip 5

The most productive work is done when people don't work long hours, when they have Holidays and when they take weekends and have evenings.

Jackie: He said the most productive work is done when people don't work long hours, when they have holidays, take weekends and enjoy evenings.

Kate: So there we have it – it seems that working long hours isn't really worth it at all. We're all much better off taking holidays, weekends, enjoying ourselves in the evenings and have good **work-life balance**/ Let's have a look at the vocabulary we've come across:

workaholism – a condition where someone works all the time and finds it difficult to stop
work-life balance - the right balance between working and our personal life, spending time with friends etc

a secondary issue - this means that something comes second in importance to something else.

the norm - we use it describe standard behaviour

to burn out is term we use to describe the experience of long-term physical and emotional exhaustion, usually work-related.

productivity – this means the rate at which a company or country makes goods. What are the

main reasons

Kate: So finally to the question I asked you earlier – how many hours are in the standard working week.

Jackie: And I said 40.

Kate: You were correct. 40 hours evens out at 8 hours a day, leaving us time to enjoy our evening and weekends....

That's all we have time for today – until next time. Goodbye!

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