



(<https://www.devx.com>)

[Home \(https://www.devx.com\)](https://www.devx.com) » 18 Expert Work-Life Balance Tips For Small Business Owners

18 Expert Work-Life Balance Tips for Small Business Owners



Why Trust Us

(<https://www.devx.com/publication-guidelines/>)

By Featured(<https://www.devx.com/author/featured/>) |

Last Updated: January 28, 2025(<https://www.devx.com/2025/01/28/>) | 3:21 PM



DevX juggle the demands of a thriving business with your personal
experienced business owners how they set boundaries and
<https://www.devx.com> prioritize their well-being. Here are their helpful work-life balance strategies.

Ad ends in 5

-
- Schedule Personal Time Like Business Commitments
 - Pick A Stopping Time
 - Treat Yourself As Your #1 Customer
 - Protect Morning Routine And 'Me' Time
 - Try The 'Active Unplug' Technique
 - Set Clear Boundaries For Personal Time
 - Make Personal Time Non-Negotiable
 - Be Intentional With Your Time
 - Control What You Can Control
 - Audit Your Energy And Tasks
 - Schedule One Non-Negotiable Activity Daily
 - Plan For Purposeful Work, Not Chaos
 - Check In With Yourself Daily
 - Experiment With Outsourcing
 - Learn To Delegate Effectively



Ability And Strategic Intensity

Emergencies

Planning And Prioritization

(<https://www.devx.com>)

Schedule Personal Time Like Business Commitments

One tip I always share with small business owners is to schedule your personal time with the same importance as your business commitments.

It's easy to think, "I'll take a break once everything is done," but in reality, the work never ends. If you don't set boundaries, your business will take up every bit of your energy and time. The trick is to treat your personal life like a priority—not an afterthought.

Here's how I do it: I block out time in my calendar for non-work activities—whether it's dinner with family, a walk in the park, or simply unwinding with a good book. That time is non-negotiable, just like a client meeting.

To make this work, I also set clear boundaries. For example:

- I turn off work notifications after a set time in the evening.
- I avoid checking emails or taking calls during family time.
- I communicate these boundaries to clients and colleagues upfront, so they know when I'm available and when I'm not.

It wasn't easy at first—I used to feel guilty for stepping away from work. But I've learned that looking after my well-being isn't just good for me; it's good for my business too. When I'm rested and recharged, I'm more focused, creative, and productive.

One simple technique that helps is asking yourself: "If I were advising someone I care about, what would I tell them to do?" Chances are, you'd encourage them to rest, take breaks, and enjoy life outside of work. So, why not follow your own advice?

DevX Business is important, but so is your health and happiness. A
you will always be better for your business in the long run.
just 30 minutes today for yourself. You might be surprised
<https://www.devx.com> how much difference it makes.



Kevin Watson (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kjwatson>)

Award Winning Personal and Professional Coach, My Own Coach Ltd

Pick A Stopping Time

It can be difficult to stop your work from seeping into all aspects of your life as an entrepreneur. In order to set healthy boundaries for myself as an entrepreneur, one of my favorite tips is to pick a “stopping time.” It doesn’t have to be the same time every day, but I’ve found that deciding, in advance, what time I’ll stop working on any given day allows me to fully apply the principle of Parkinson’s Law, which states that work expands to fill the time allotted.

Picking a stopping time ensures that a) my work doesn’t bleed into all aspects of my life and b) that I’m more productive because I’ve given myself a defined period of time to get things done. I have a certain set of things I’m trying to accomplish on any given day, and now I am essentially trying to beat the clock, which kicks me into high gear. As an entrepreneur, the work never ends, so if you don’t pick a stopping time, you may find yourself on the road to burnout very quickly.



Alexis Haselberger (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/alexis-haselberger>)

Time Management and Productivity Coach, Alexis Haselberger Coaching and Consulting, Inc

DevX Your #1 Customer

Successful things a small business owner can do is treat themselves like their #1 customer. Block personal time on your calendar and protect it just like you would a meeting with your most valuable client. It's easy to believe that being constantly available drives success, but real growth happens when you recharge. I set clear start and stop times for work and communicate those boundaries to my team and clients. When I prioritize my well-being, I show up as a better leader—focused, energized, and ready to make an impact.



Allison Dunn (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/allisondunn>)

CEO, Head Business & Executive Coach, Deliberate Directions

Protect Morning Routine And 'Me' Time

In my experience, the idea of perfect work-life balance can be a bit of a myth for small business owners. There will be seasons of intense focus on the business, demanding all your attention.

What keeps me going is my unwavering vision. It fuels my daily drive and motivates me to take the necessary steps towards my goals.

However, I've learned to fiercely protect two things: my morning routine and my "me" time. These are non-negotiable. My family understands and respects these boundaries.

Communicating your needs is crucial. Let your loved ones know when you need time for yourself. Openly discussing your boundaries helps create a supportive environment that prioritizes your well-being.

Fabienne Raphaël (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/fabiennraphael>)

CEO & Founder, Speaking Business Coach & International Speaker

DevX **ive Unplug' Technique**

Consider, I get how tough it is for small business owners to draw a line between work demands and personal well-being.

One boundary-setting technique that's helped me tremendously—and might surprise you—is what I call the “Active Unplug.” It goes beyond just turning off notifications: for 30 minutes each day, you become unreachable on purpose and fill the time with something tactile and grounding. For example, move a few houseplants around, organize a rarely touched bookshelf, or take a short walk without your phone. The trick is intentionally choosing an easy, mindless task that unhooks your brain from work mode but keeps your hands gently occupied, blocking the temptation to scroll or check emails. It sounds paradoxical—doing a “chore” to relax—but it's freeing because it reorients your mental energy and refuels creativity.

If you just sit in silence, you'll be tempted to mentally plan a new marketing campaign or email your team. But focusing on a simple physical task gets you out of your head. I've noticed I actually solve problems more effortlessly after these breaks because my brain has been given the space to wander instead of hyper-focusing on business.

See also [How Companies Use Recognition and Rewards to Reinforce Desired Behaviors](https://www.devx.com/business/how-companies-use-recognition-and-rewards-to-reinforce-desired-behaviors/)

(<https://www.devx.com/business/how-companies-use-recognition-and-rewards-to-reinforce-desired-behaviors/>)

If you protect this “Active Unplug” in your daily schedule, your team will learn to respect that boundary—just as they would for any important meeting. And the best part? You emerge feeling more refreshed, better able to prioritize tasks, and



. Think of it as the most productive 30 minutes you'll spend

(<https://www.devx.com>)

Derek Pankaew (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dpankaew>)



CEO & Founder, Listening.com

Set Clear Boundaries For Personal Time

One tip I always share with small business owners is to set clear, non-negotiable boundaries around your personal time, just as you would for business commitments. As someone who balances running multiple brands alongside being a new parent, I've learned that protecting my personal time is essential for both my well-being and the health of my business. For example, I dedicate mornings, lunches, and evenings to my family and avoid checking emails or taking calls during that time, treating it as sacred as a client meeting.

To ensure this balance, I plan my work week in advance, prioritizing tasks that generate the highest impact during my limited work hours. I also rely on tools like Asana and Google Calendar to allocate focused time blocks for deep work, client projects, and self-care activities like exercise or relaxation. By setting these boundaries and honoring them consistently, I not only avoid burnout but also model a sustainable approach to entrepreneurship for my team and clients. Prioritizing well-being isn't a luxury—it's a strategy that enables me to show up as my best self for both my family and my business.

Kristin Marquet (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kristinmarquet>)



Founder & Creative Director, Marquet Media

Time Non-Negotiable

DevX Personal time on your calendar, just like client meetings. Treat these blocks as seriously as any work-related obligation or deadline consistently. (<https://www.devx.com>)

Whether it's a family dinner or a workout session, prioritize without guilt.

Protecting your personal time ensures you recharge and bring your best self to work.

I schedule weekly reflection time to evaluate workload and emotional well-being deeply. This allows me to recalibrate, identify stressors, and make adjustments proactively. I also set clear expectations with clients regarding response times and availability transparently. Respecting my limits ensures I can deliver better results without sacrificing health.



Jason B. Javaheri (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jasonjavaheri>)

Co-Founder & Co-CEO, J&Y Law

Be Intentional With Your Time

The saying goes, “fail to plan, plan to fail” and although that is the cold hard truth, your plan won't prevail over a poor mindset or unintentional time spent on the plan. As a recovering workaholic, I spent years making schedules, setting reminders and timers yet still found myself at the end of most days feeling overwhelmed and unaccomplished because there were several things left on my list of work to do, I had skipped my self-care practices and had little to no family time. This all shifted the day I had an epiphany; when it comes to work, it doesn't matter how many hours you put in, it would still yield the same result. What matters is how intentional you are with your time.

This mindset shift is a total game-changer. Now when I plan my day I schedule my self-care and family time first, then work as well as scheduling my phone to go into “do not disturb” mode during my self-care and family time. Although I am still

DevX

ing and time blocking techniques, I spend my time more
ow that is my only allotted time to complete that task so it
e intention to get it complete. This shift in mindset has
(<https://www.devx.com>)
allowed me peace of mind, consistent self-care time, less rushing out the door,
quality time being fully present with my family and restful nights. It's given me
balance, boundaries along with feelings of accomplishment and fulfillment.



Pam Rivet (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/pamelarivet>)

Founder, MBS | The Woman Beyond The Cape

Control What You Can Control

Scheduling is my go-to strategy—it's part of my mantra: "Control what you can control." I create a daily schedule that builds in time for personal wellness and family responsibilities, recognizing that unexpected things will inevitably pop up. I use early mornings for tasks that require quiet and focus, like writing blog posts, creating social media content, or researching unfamiliar business practices.

I also schedule time for exercise and grocery shopping, treating them as non-negotiable appointments. Having these details mapped out on my calendar not only ensures that everything gets done, but it also gives me a sense of control over my day. It's not perfect—life is messy, and interruptions happen—but this approach keeps me grounded and organized, even while managing two business partners who aren't as inclined to plan ahead.



Laura Koch (<https://linkedin.com/in/laura-koch-65576a169>)

Co-Founder, Chick Magnets NY LLC

DevX **y And Tasks**

people is to do an audit of your energy, your time, your tasks, what you don't get to and where those intersect (or don't). This has worked for me and I see it work with my clients. For example, do you have a lot of meetings or do you do more independent project work? Do you like the operational work of the business or do you prefer to focus on the future? At home, are you missing taking care of day-to-day things or do you find you just aren't present with your family? What does well-being mean to you and what is the best time of day/week to schedule that in (just like any other commitment).

Then we map out the day or week with both your work and life in mind.

For example, I know that I am my best in the morning, but I need to jump right in because whatever I start with is going to be the thing I focus on for the first few hours. So I start with strategic work first thing. It also motivates me for the rest of the day. Then I know I need a change of energy or scenery late morning, so I like to schedule meetings for that block. I carve out time at lunch to do some personal errands or tasks so I know I made progress for both work and home during the day. After lunch, I'm slower to ramp up so I do my task-oriented work then but by mid-afternoon I get a second wind so I schedule my next block of meetings.

[See also 10 Common Misconceptions About Working in Tech Development](https://www.devx.com/developer/10-common-misconceptions-about-working-in-tech-development/)

[\(https://www.devx.com/developer/10-common-misconceptions-about-working-in-tech-development/\)](https://www.devx.com/developer/10-common-misconceptions-about-working-in-tech-development/)

Finally, going into the evening, especially since I work from home, I need to recreate a commute to allow me to switch mindsets from work to personal, so I end my day with a workout. After dinner I check email or prep for my next day so I don't worry about what is waiting for me while I'm doing that strategic work first



lo that with a strong wind-down bedtime routine so that my
out work as I go to sleep. It's definitely not perfect each day,
o follow.

(<https://www.devx.com>)

We all know we are supposed to put on our own oxygen masks first, but when it comes to prioritizing and setting boundaries, if you take a step back and recognize how best to schedule your day based on your energy flow, the work you need to do versus the work you want to do, schedule time for yourself (as any other non-negotiable) and define what boundaries mean, it will change your perspective as a business owner!



Karen Weeks (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/karen-d-weeks-sphr-ms-5965775>)

Founder & CEO, Shine at Work

Schedule One Non-Negotiable Activity Daily

Running a small business is no joke—it's like a rollercoaster that never quite stops! It's easy to get so caught up in the day-to-day whirlwind that you forget to take care of yourself. But here's the secret: you can't pour from an empty cup. If you're constantly burning the candle at both ends, you'll eventually hit a wall.

My advice? Start small. Schedule one non-negotiable activity each day that has nothing to do with work. It could be a yoga class, a walk in nature, or even just 30 minutes with a good book. Treat this time as sacred, just like you would an important meeting. It might feel strange at first, but trust me, those little moments of recharge will make a world of difference in your overall well-being and your ability to tackle those entrepreneurial challenges with renewed energy.



Cindy Cavoto (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/cindycavoto>)

Founder – Cindycavoto.Com, CindyCavoto.com

DevX **ful Work, Not Chaos**

comes down to a choice: your life and work can be chaotic or purposeful. Chaos happens when you try to get everything done as quickly as possible. Purposeful work begins by letting go of tasks and commitments with little impact.

You'll never have enough time to do everything, but chaos intensifies when something important falls through the cracks. The key is to decide what can fall through—identify low-impact tasks and let them go so the big things stay on track.

The easiest way to eliminate chaos is to set aside time for planning. It might feel uncomfortable if you're used to constant hustle, but shifting from reactive and chaotic to proactive and purposeful always leads to better outcomes.

Don't hesitate to block time on your calendar for what truly matters. It takes practice to be proactive, and the shift might take some time to settle in—but it's worth it.

If it helps, think of your calendar as an infinite parking lot. The closest spots might be taken, but there are always openings a little further out. I'm available for fun, projects, and meetings, but the shorter the notice, the more likely someone will hear a "no." Just because a client wants to meet today doesn't mean you need to rearrange your entire day—especially if there's an opening in a day or two and it's not an emergency.

Karlie Robinson (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/karlierobinson>)



Business Consultant, Sbdc, Michigan Small Business Development Center

Check in with myself Daily

DevX

check in with myself daily to maintain the balance I need in my life. Right after work, I spend about 10 minutes reflecting on my day's achievements and making plans for the next day. This marks a clear end to my work obligations and I can then make room mentally for personal time. Whether it's a quick walk or spending quality time with my family, I make sure I do something that mentally changes me out of work mode. This regular winding down has become an important signal to me and the people around me that I'm now focusing on my personal life. I stick to this simple schedule every day to keep myself fully present, both at work and at home.

Once a month, I also take a step back to take a look at my work-life balance more broadly. I check if I'm giving enough time to my health, like health and family, and decide if my work hours match my energy and business needs. If I find I'm missing out on important personal events or just usually feeling swamped, I know it's time to change my schedule or offload some responsibilities to my team. I always suggest to fellow entrepreneurs to design and stick to a reset schedule that fits their life and to make it a habit to review their schedule regularly. It's all about making small, regular (and manageable) adjustments so you can build a schedule that works for you personally and professionally.



John Gabrielli (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/john-gabrielli-839b97154>)

Owner, Air Temp Solutions

Experiment With Outsourcing

As a corporate headshot photographer with no employees, the work can be non-stop, affecting my sleep and well-being.

I'm always looking for ways to streamline and create better boundaries without compromising quality.



ges have been:

and more with outsourcing to determine which tasks make sense to outsource and which ones don't (it's not always what you think!).
(<https://www.devx.com>)

- I found an up-and-coming professional in my field, and I'm sharing some of my work with them. This helps me, and they also learn from me.
- I decided to deliver later to clients. They are okay with later deadlines if I give them a specific date. Knowing what to expect is more important to them than speed.

See also [Level Up Your Problem-Solving: 7 Tips from Tech Developers](https://www.devx.com/developer/level-up-your-problem-solving-7-tips-from-tech-developers/)

(<https://www.devx.com/developer/level-up-your-problem-solving-7-tips-from-tech-developers/>)

All this has left me feeling less stressed, and I have finally been able to implement a hard stop to work by 6:00 p.m., which has improved my sleep!



Glynn Thomas (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/glynnstomas-headshot-sacramento-photographer>)

Owner/Photographer, Glynn Thomas Headshots

Learn To Delegate Effectively

A lot of small business owners are used to keeping their hands in every project and staying in control of every task, but learning how to effectively delegate is a key strategy to lessen overwhelm and increase work-life balance. Trying to handle everything yourself not only leads to burnout but also decreases efficiency because you spread yourself too thin. By sharing responsibilities with a trusted team member or two, you free up your time to focus on those high-priority projects and tasks that truly require your attention. Be mindful of which ones need your involvement and which ones do not.



r (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/carolineguntur>)

Productivity Coach, The Swedish Organizer LLC

(<https://www.devx.com>)

Focus On Sustainability And Strategic Intensity

In the early stages of building a company, your business often needs to be all-consuming to survive and gain traction. The traditional concept of work/life balance simply isn't realistic.

Rather than boundaries, I'd suggest focusing on sustainability and strategic intensity. The key is identifying the absolute minimum self-maintenance you need to avoid burnout and maintain peak performance for your business. This usually means: Ruthlessly protecting your sleep schedule—not because of "work/life balance" but because sleep deprivation directly impairs your decision-making and productivity. Even 6 solid hours is better than erratic sleep patterns.

Think of it like an elite athlete in training camp—you're in an intensive period where traditional balance isn't the goal. Instead, you're optimizing everything around peak performance for your mission (your business), while doing the bare minimum maintenance required to sustain that performance.

The all-consuming intensity of early-stage entrepreneurship is a phase, not a permanent state. It's like launching a rocket—it requires maximum thrust to escape gravity's pull, but once you're in orbit, you need different systems to sustain flight.

This intense period should be strategically used to build systems and a team that will eventually allow you to step back. Your goal should be to professionalize your business by:

- Documenting processes so others can execute them



ing key team members who can take ownership of critical

ment layers that can operate without your constant presence
(<https://www.devx.com>)

- Creating clear reporting structures and communication channels

The end goal isn't work/life balance—it's building a sustainable business that doesn't rely solely on you. Many entrepreneurs fall into the trap of remaining indispensable, which not only burns them out but also caps their business's growth potential.

Remember: If you can't step away, you haven't built a business—you've built a job. And often a very demanding one. The most successful entrepreneurs eventually transition from "doing everything" to "leading and directing," which requires building and trusting a professional team.



Djordje Petrovic (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/djosa77>)

CEO, Companies Connected Consulting

Define True Emergencies

Get crystal clear about what counts as a true emergency. Most things that feel urgent aren't—ask yourself, is this truly a fire that must be put out right now? Train yourself and your clients about realistic response times. A website being completely down is an emergency. A minor bug that affects one infrequently used feature likely isn't. Save your emergency responses for actual emergencies. For everything else, handle it during normal business hours. Set and stick to boundaries around your time. Put your work hours in writing. Share them widely. Then honor them.

When you treat every request as an emergency, you teach people to expect immediate responses. This creates an unsustainable cycle. Break it by being thoughtful about what truly can't wait. Don't forget your clients in this

DevX may find that some clients are quite reasonable when asked for. Conversely, you may find that some issues which do not seem important to you may be vital to your clients—that way, you can spend your after-hours time wisely, and keep it to a minimum.



David Berube (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/david-berube-48861496>)

President, Durable Programming

Use Time Blocking And Prioritization

Small business owners who want to improve their work-life balance should create a schedule that prioritizes tasks and includes private time. One tip for doing this is time blocking, dividing your day so that there is time for work and personal care.

For example, allocate blocks for client meetings, administrative tasks, and personal activities like exercise or family time. By visually organizing your day, you can prevent work from spilling into personal time and vice versa.

Methods like the Eisenhower Matrix can categorize tasks based on urgency and importance to enhance prioritization. Focus on completing urgent and important tasks first while scheduling time for important but non-urgent tasks to prevent them from becoming crises. Delegate or eliminate tasks that fall into the less critical categories. Combining time-blocking with prioritization ensures that your most important responsibilities are addressed without neglecting your well-being.

For instance, a daily schedule might look like this:

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM: Exercise and breakfast with family (personal well-being block).

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM: Client meetings (urgent and important tasks).



Administrative work (important but not urgent).

Lunch break (personal time).

(<https://www.devx.com>)

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM: Strategic planning for business growth (important but not urgent).

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM: Responding to emails (urgent but less important).

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM: Wrap-up and preparation for the next day.

By treating personal and professional time equally important and adhering to a structured schedule, you can maintain a healthier work-life balance while managing the demands of your business.



[Karl Perera \(https://www.linkedin.com/in/karlperera\)](https://www.linkedin.com/in/karlperera)

Teacher and Astrophotographer, Astroimagery

Related Posts

- **[Kaspi.kz Pursues US IPO, Targeting Global Expansion](https://www.devx.com/daily-news/kaspi-kz-pursues-us-ipo-targeting-global-expansion/)**
(<https://www.devx.com/daily-news/kaspi-kz-pursues-us-ipo-targeting-global-expansion/>)
- **[Microsoft to Open Cloud Computing Centers in Germany](https://www.devx.com/devx-daily-news/microsoft-to-open-cloud-computing-centers-in-germany/)**
(<https://www.devx.com/devx-daily-news/microsoft-to-open-cloud-computing-centers-in-germany/>)
- **[Is anyone faster than Devart? Support for MySQL v8.0 is already in dbForge Studio](https://www.devx.com/upload/is-anyone-faster-than-devart-support-for-mysql-v8.0-is-already-in-dbForge-Studio)** (<https://www.devx.com/upload/is-anyone-faster-than-devart-support-for-mysql-v8-dot0-is-already-in-dbforge-studio-180625051025/>)