

Five Strategies to Cope with Information Overload & its Effect on Work & Life Balance

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In today's rapidly changing digital landscape, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by the sheer amount of information bombarding us both in our work and personal lives. Emails, text messages, social media notifications, news updates—it can all add up to a sense of constant distraction and increased anxiety.

Information overload occurs when the amount of information surpasses an individual's processing capacity, which can lead to various consequences such as anxiety or poor decision making. The average person is exposed to the equivalent of 174 newspapers worth of information every day. That's a staggering amount of data to process, which can lead to cognitive overload, and in turn potentially causes stress, anxiety and decreased productivity. In this post, we'll look at some strategies for coping with information overload and regaining control both personally and professionally.



So, what can we do to cope with information overload? Here are some strategies:

1. Limit your intake.

One of the simplest and most immediate ways to reassess your information overload is to limit the amount you consume. This might mean:

- Unsubscribing from email newsletters or social media accounts that don't provide value;
- Setting limits on your daily news intake;
- Refrain from after-hours emails, phone calls or messages with colleagues;
- Turn on "Do Not Disturb;"
- Or taking breaks from screens altogether.

By being more intentional about what information you allow in, you can free up optimize your mental space and reduce stress.

2. Prioritize your tasks.

When you have a lot on your plate, it's important to prioritize your tasks. Make a list of what needs to be done and rank them by priority level. This can help you stay focused and avoid getting bogged down in minor tasks. This tactic also helps you to avoid multitasking, which can decrease productivity.

3. Use tools to manage your workload.

Staying organized is an effective way to prevent information overload. There are plenty of tools available to help you manage your workload.

- There are numerous project management platforms that are free or may be provided by your company that can help you keep track of tasks and deadlines, such as [Asana](#) or [Trello](#).

- Email anxiety is real! [Constantly checking your email throughout the day can divide your attention, and ultimately lead you to believe there is just too much to do and not enough time.](#) Consider removing your work's email application from your personal phone, unsubscribing from unnecessary newsletters and setting aside certain times of the day to check your inbox.
- Simply keeping a planner on-hand can be a great way to block time and visualize your workload.

4. Take breaks.

Doing a brief digital detox is important for both mental and physical health, and it can help you avoid burnout. Take clarity breaks by taking a walk outside, doing some stretching, rolling your shoulders or simply taking a few deep breaths to clear your mind. This can help you come back to your work with renewed energy and focus.

5. Practice mindfulness.

Mindfulness is a technique that involves being fully present in the moment and aware of your thoughts and surroundings. By practicing mindfulness, you can train your brain to focus on what's important and avoid distractions. You can access mindfulness exercises via the VITAL WorkLife app or [watch our Mindfulness Monday video series](#) to help you build this skill.

Summary

Coping with information overload can seem overwhelming. It requires a combination of self-discipline, organization and self-care. By limiting your intake of information, prioritizing tasks, using tools to manage your workload, taking breaks, and practicing mindfulness, you can stay focused and productive in both your personal and professional life. Remember, it's not about trying to consume every piece of information that comes your way, but about being selective, intentional and mindful about what you let in.

We Can Help

If you feel like information overload is weighing you down both personally and/or professionally, [contact us online](#), at **800.383.1908** (for EAP members) or **877.731.3949** (Physician Well-Being Members), to get started with counseling today. As a part of your VITAL WorkLife resources, you have access to counseling anytime—day or night. [VITAL WorkLife](#) is here to support you in whatever stressors may be impacting you at home or work.