

## **A physician's guide to prioritizing well-being during the busy summer months**

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Summer can be challenging for doctors to balance work and leisure, with an influx of patients, extra shifts and personal commitments. During a season where time off and relaxation is the norm, it can be difficult to prioritize work commitments alongside family, friends and meaningful activities. Here are tips to make the most of your summer as a physician and maintain healthy work and life integration.

### **Workload management**

#### **Prioritizing tasks**

When preparing to take time away from your practice, think to yourself:

- What tasks of mine can be done by others?
- Could one of my nurses or other members of the care team do any tasks?

List out the activities you do daily at work. While many hospitals are facing financial pressures not to add more resources, does it allow for you to get crafty with other departments? Consider delegating tasks such as following up with patients about lab work or returning phone calls to other members of your team. This can help free up your time and ensure that patient care is still being attended to while you are away.

#### **Communication with colleagues**

To ensure a stress-free vacation, it's important to communicate with your colleagues early and effectively. Your fellow staff members may also be taking time off, so coordinating schedules and offering mutual support can make all the difference. Remember, a little extra effort before and after your time off can go a long way towards reducing burnout after your time off and achieving a healthy work-life balance.

#### **Setting realistic expectations for patient care**

As a physician, informing your patients about your upcoming absence at least 6-8 weeks in advance is crucial to ensuring quality care while enjoying your time off. This allows you to reaffirm your dedication to their care while also preparing them for any changes that may occur during your absence. It may be necessary to delay some appointments, so it's important to work with your colleagues to determine which patients can be seen by them and which ones will need to make adjustments. Effective communication and planning can help ensure a smooth transition and maintain the trust and confidence of your patients.

### **Achieving optimal work and life integration**

#### **Setting boundaries**

During the summer season, establishing clear boundaries can be immensely helpful in integrating your work and personal life. As a physician, it's important to prioritize your own needs and preferences, while maintaining a professional demeanor. This means being transparent about your availability and communicating your boundaries to colleagues and patients alike. By setting realistic expectations for your workload and personal life, you can create a framework for thriving in all aspects of your life—as well as your coworkers. This includes taking time for self-care, such as exercising, meditating, or spending time with loved ones. Remember, balance is key, and by establishing clear boundaries, you can maintain your well-being and achieve success both at work and in your

personal life. By showing your boundaries, you're making it easier for your colleagues and care team to prioritize their personal lives, too.

### Self-awareness

To achieve a healthy work-life balance during the summer as a physician, assessing your own expectations and needs, as well as those of your practice is key. What steps do you need to take to prioritize your well-being and maintain a fulfilling career? A Physician Peer Coach could be the perfect partner in helping you recognize those steps and taking the leap to find fulfillment in medicine. If your healthcare organization utilizes VITAL WorkLife's Physician Well-Being Resources, call **877.731.3949** or [contact us](#) to be set up with a confidential coach who understands your unique challenges.

## We Can Help

Juggling work and life in the summertime is a delicate balancing act that requires careful planning and prioritization. Thankfully, your Physician Well-Being Resources from VITAL WorkLife can aid you in making the most of your time at home and work during the summer. For counseling, coaching and other resources contact us at **877.731.3949**, through the **VITAL WorkLife App** or [contact us online](#).