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Get a life! 22 execs share their tips

Work-life balance a little out of whack? We asked busy entrepreneurs to give us their best tricks for coping with the daily grind.

Launching a start-up is demanding and takes huge amounts of time, energy, and attention. Is it possible to have a life outside of work? It's not easy, say the founders I talked to, but they do have tips to help you launch and maintain some vestige of work-life balance.

1. Start dancing. It's physical, it's fun, it's social, and you can't check your phone or be working on your laptop while you're out dancing. Find the coolest place wherever you live, and go out dancing once a week. You'll feel completely renewed, energized and ready to tackle the world, or at least your start-up. – Vivian Rosenthal, founder and CEO of [GoldRun](#), an augmented reality iOS application.

2. Call your mother. I make sure to call my mom every Sunday and tell her I love her, even if she doesn't have the slightest idea of what ShareSquare does. – Mattias Galica, founder and CEO of [ShareSquare](#), a mobile platform used by brand and entertainment marketers for incentivizing offline-to-online consumer engagement.

3. Take a sabbatical to think. I work intensively for a few years, then take six months or a year before undertaking something new, to regain perspective and think about what I want to do next. Those interludes find me backpacking around Burma, swimming in a volcanic crater lake in Sumatra, or climbing mountains in the Andes, and taking the time to think about how the world is changing and what my part in it might be. – Aaron Emigh, founder and CEO of [ShopKick](#), a shopping rewards app.

4. Make what time you do spend with family count. Drive the kids to school each day and really talk to them without checking your e-mail. Turn off the cell phone entirely when you're playing with them, or you are watching their games. Don't think about work during that time. High quality time really counts. – Alex Quilici, CEO of [YouMail](#), a visual voice-mail smartphone app.

5. Hire solid talent and trust them to execute on their responsibilities. To me this is the key, because if I have to pick up the pieces in other departments on top of my own responsibilities it would be impossible to have any sort of balance in my life. – Kirk Simpson, cofounder and CEO of [Wave Accounting](#).

6. Don't check e-mail first thing in the morning. The first thing I used to do after waking up was read e-mails and reply to urgent ones on my iPhone. My brain went from sleep to start-up mode in only a few seconds. That was killing, so I forced myself to not read e-mail first thing in the morning. The funny thing is that if you allow yourself to wake up gradually, it feels like you slept better and longer. Now I shower and have breakfast before reading my e-mail. – Ronald Mannak, founder and CEO, [Yobble](#), creator of the Air Guitar Move iPhone appessory.

7. Change your definition of vacation. When on vacation I work eight hours less per day – so I only work four to six hours a day versus 12 to 16 hours normally. I'm able to work those hours early in the morning and late at night and still get to spend quality time with my family. – Dirk Gates, founder and CEO of [Xirrus](#), provider of high-performance wireless networks.

8. Embrace serendipity. Last year I needed to attend a dinner for my husband's work. I happened to be seated next to the company's vice president of engineering. As we talked, I mentioned I was looking for a CTO and he had a friend who was perfect for the job. 'My Life' just supported 'My Work.' On the other side, I was chatting with a friend who was the founder of another company and happened to mention being stressed about finding a good nanny. He spoke to his nanny who recommended her sister-in-law. She turned out to be the perfect nanny for us. 'My Work' just helped make 'My Life' better! – Anishiya Taneja, founder and CEO of [TravelDNA](#), a travel planning site.

9. Be honest with your team about the important things in your life outside of work. My co-founder Sammy Shreibati and I started SaveUp together, and he knew I was planning to have a baby on my own. He was supportive from the beginning. For example, we agreed to locate our new office near my house so that I could walk to the work. Also, be open with your investors prior to launch about any personal challenges or life steps you are taking. I also did this and the reaction that we received was universally positive. Investors more than anything want to know they can trust the executives running the company and by being honest we built trust and respect. – Priya Haji, CEO and cofounder of [SaveUp](#), a free financial rewards program for saving money and reducing debt.

10. Mentor the team both inside and outside of the office. Taking the time to leave your desk and have a personal one-on-one shows your commitment to your employees and encourages them to reciprocate their dedication. Something as simple as a one-hour lunch across the street can keep your employees motivated while they make their way through the peaks and valleys of start-up life. I get creative when mentoring my executive team and even take them auto racing with me, from time to time. – Ajit Gupta, Founder, President and CEO, [Aryaka](#), the world's first cloud-based WAN optimization provider.

11. Don't drop your favorite pastime. "It's important to have a hobby or interest you can be passionate about. For me, it is drumming and cooking. When things heat up in the boardroom, I head to the kitchen or my drum set to keep myself focused and the momentum flowing. – Kevin Brown, CEO of [Coraid](#), a company that creates Ethernet storage networking solutions.

12. Outsource as much as possible. One of the beauties of online marketplaces such as [elance.com](#), [odesk.com](#), and [ExpertBids.com](#) is that they give you access to a wide array of professional service providers and costs. Some of the quotes you get will be relatively cheap. That said, the cheap quote is not always the right person for the job. You might also try swapping skills. As a practicing lawyer, I helped one of my initial developers set up an LLC and looked over a few contracts and he paid me back with a significantly lower bill for the work he did. – Nick Cronin, founder of Chicago-based [ExpertBids.com](#).

13. Untangle yourself from other responsibilities. This is not the time to coach Little League. Hopefully that will come later in life but it can't happen right now. – Kirk Simpson, cofounder and CEO of [Wave Accounting](#).

14. Get your family involved. Have them use the product you're making. When they see it and feel it, they tend to understand more about what it takes to deliver it. – Alex Quilici, CEO of [YouMail](#), a visual voice-mail smartphone app.

15. Communicate constantly with your spouse. Then you will know how to best support each other. Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook, says the biggest decision you'll make in your career is who you decide to marry. I think this has really been true for me. Start-ups are not just physically challenging but also emotionally challenging, with amazing highs and equally strong lows. Having a spouse that you know is in your corner is a huge source of comfort and confidence. – Anishiya Taneja, founder and CEO of [TravelDNA](#), a travel planning site.

16. Be there for your family when it's most important to them. I have two-year-old twins. At this age, it is important for my kids to spend time with their dad each day. So I make sure I do so before their bed time. This will morph into attending their soccer games as they grow bigger. – Navin Bathija, founder and CEO of Silicon Valley start up [Neo](#), which provides auto loans to America's youth.

17. Schedule time with family and friends and stick to it. It creates a deadline that forces you to prioritize your work. – Alex Quilici, CEO of [YouMail](#), a visual voice-mail smartphone app.

18. Take a vacation before you start your next challenge. Take two years off, surf all over South America, and come back tan, rested, and ready. That's what I did and I've been on fire! – Ryan Teixeira, one of the founders of [UB3Rfun](#), a maker of iPhone docks.

19. Be friends with people you work with. I don't believe in creating a wall between work and life. Hire your friends and enjoy your work. It's proven to work for me. – Joel Simkhai, CEO of the social networks [Grindr](#) and [Blendr](#).

20. Be as organized as possible. This is one of the many things that people forget when launching a business, but it leads to a much more efficient and productive day. For example, I manage over 30 different e-mail accounts, which you'd think would be a big draw on time. One tool I use is [Thunderbird by Mozilla](#) which is one of the easiest tools for managing more than one e-mail account.” – Rick Singer, founder and CEO of [GreatApps.com](#), an online media platform that focuses on app marketing and consumer use of apps.

21. Be schedule driven. If someone has not scheduled a meeting with me in advance, including my daughter, it won't happen. We text each other using a free texting program called [Jaxtr](#) that I hope will allow me to soon phase out AT&T texting (I'd save \$360 a year!). I also use Microsoft Outlook with Google Calendar. At mADtivity we also use a [SmartSheet](#) for scheduling, timelines, and project management.” – Stan Weitzman, CEO of mobile ad network [mADtivity](#).

22. Get a different job. It is very difficult to maintain a balanced life with a tech start-up, as it becomes a very demanding mistress, one to whom you quickly become 'married.' I always carry at least an iPad and an iPhone with me, and most of the time a MacBook Pro too. So, I am always connected and there is always more work to be done. I think this is one of the reasons that start-ups generally favor young, 20-something entrepreneurs as they generally don't have a spouse, kids, or other complications and obligations. They are free to be unbalanced.” – Rich Rygg, cofounder and Chief Product Guy for [HipGeo](#), a social platform that lets people to share what they do and where they go using smart phones.