RESEARCH TO
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WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance (WLB) may seem challenging to achieve within athletic training, but research shows that it is possible, especially when an athletic trainer can implement strategies that allow them to find harmony in their work and life roles.[1,2] The National Athletic Trainers' Association states that WLB is "viewed as a positive relationship in which an individual can be engaged in various roles (eg, parent, employee, spouse, caregiver, runner) and relatively satisfied with the time spent in each role."[3] It is important for the athletic trainer to prioritize their WLB because imbalance can lead to burnout; which has contributed to attrition within the profession as well as led to physical, emotional, and behavioral concerns. Athletic trainers should prioritize self-care practices, engage in stress-relieving activities, rely on support networks (eg, peers, co-workers, spouse), and be a self-advocate around their WLB needs.[2,4] Athletic trainers can contribute to furthering the work pertaining to WLB by contributing to research expanding upon the definition of nonwork domains, examining the effects of professional development, and extending duration to longitudinal studies.[1]

from RECENT ARTICLES

"Post-Pandemic Changes to Employment and Employment Satisfaction in Early Career and Career Advancing Athletic Trainers" *Harris et al, 2024.* The COVID-19 pandemic heightened young professional ATs (YPATs) previously known vulnerability to attrition through decreased job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and optimism about professional longevity. Furthermore, YPATs migrated from traditional career settings to clinic, industrial, and sales settings. Administrators must promote well-being and satisfaction and professional optimism in YPATs to reduce turnover and attrition.

"Multistakeholder Perceptions of Young Professionals' Integration During Role Transition" *Bowman et al, 2024.* Early professional ATs (EPs) can take 1-3 years to be fully integrated into autonomous practice and understand all aspects of their role. Being new to the profession, EPs feel obligated to exceed coverage expectations instead of focusing on the quality of care delivered and are, therefore, susceptible to burnout. EPs and employers can be cognizant of these tendencies and work proactively to establish clear expectations and avenues for support that will allow the EP to successfully integrate into their role in a graduated manner.

"Formal and Informal Work-life Balance Practices of Athletic Trainers in Collegiate and University Settings" *Eberman et al, 2019.* ATs who experience a formal human resources orientation or ATs who have children have greater confidence in knowing about and greater satisfaction with workplace policies and benefits. Employers should ensure ATs undergo a formal orientation to help increase familiarity with and satisfaction in resources that can help improve work-life balance and mitigate work-life conflict.

RESOURCES

PODCASTS
- AT Corner: NATA Position Statement Series: Facilitating Work-Life Balance
- JAT Chat: Work-Life Balance in Athletic Training

TED TALKS
- How to Make Work-Life Balance Work
- 3 Rules for Better Work-Life Balance | The Way We Work

BLOG
- What Can Be Done About Burnout in Athletic Training?

TOOLKIT
- Work-Life Balance Tool Kit

highlights NATA FOUNDATION FREE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

"Exploring Well-Being in Athletic Training" *(Thomasen et al, 2023) S- 87*. Categorization of well-being may not accurately or wholly represent AT experiences, as significant differences in Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF) total scores are present between several demographic groups.

"Perceptions of Self-Care and Work-Life Balance Among Secondary School Athletic Trainers" *(Singe et al, 2022) S-153*. Secondary school athletic trainers regularly engage in self-care practices that focus on physical and social well-being, which help manage WLB and reduce stress. These activities create "me time," counter burnout, and improve patient care by maintaining better WLB.

"A Parental Perspective of the Work-Life Interface of College Athletic Trainers: A Descriptive Qualitative Design" *(Cairns et al, 2021) S-200.* This research resulted in three main themes regarding work family guilt in athletic trainers: 1) conflict and guilt, 2) guilt is bidirectional, and 3) management of guilt is analyzed in the collegiate athletic trainer.

"Perspectives of Structured Policies and Organization as Ways to Improve Work-Life Balance: A Critically Appraised Topic" *(Tran et al, 2021) S-214*. Organized and well-communicated policies and strategies increased work productivity and reduced overall stress.

"Self-Care Strategies Used by Athletic Trainers" *(Eberman et al, 2021) S-217.* Self-care strategies are thought to decrease work-life conflict and burnout, as well as build resilience. Athletic trainers are actively engaged in using 4 to 8 self-care strategies on a weekly basis.

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2. Graham, J. A., & Smith, A. B. Work and Life in the Sport Industry: A Review of Work-life Interface Experiences Among Athletic Employees. *Journal of Athletic Training*. 2022;57(3), 210-224. doi: https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-0633.20
3. Mazerolle, S. M., Pitney, W. A., Goodman, A., et al. National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Facilitating Work-life Balance in Athletic Training Practice Settings. *Journal of athletic Training*. 2018;53(8), 796-811. doi: https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-51.11.02
4. Oglesby, L. W., Gallucci, A. R., & Wynveen, C. J. Athletic Trainer Burnout: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Journal of Athletic Training*. 2020;55(4), 416-430. doi: https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-43-19

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