

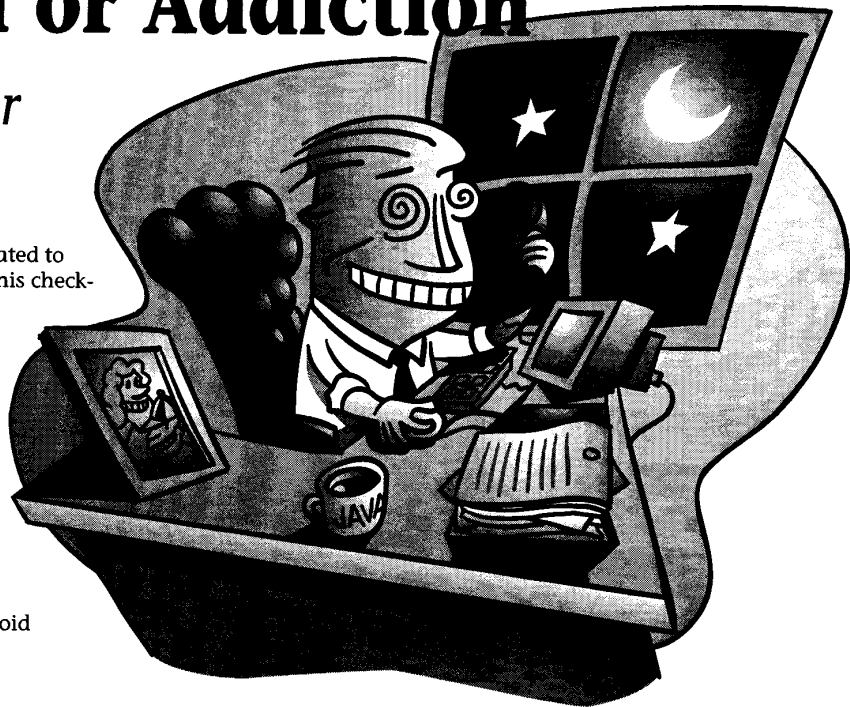


Dedication or Addiction

What's Driving Your Work Habits?

What's the difference between being dedicated to your career and being addicted to it? Use this checklist to help you decide who's in charge of your life: you or your career. Do you:

- feel a sense of being driven when working?
- feel empty, depressed or panicky when you're not working?
- often miss dinner or family celebrations because of work?
- feel you'll never get your work done, no matter how hard you try?
- have to always be "on call"?
- feel you must keep driving yourself to avoid disaster?
- stay awake nights thinking about work?
- often work more than 10 hours a day?
- find yourself preoccupied at home with work-related concerns?
- feel successful but not happy?
- overschedule appointments?
- have chronic physical problems, such as headaches, neck pain or colitis?
- have family and friends who complain that you're obsessed with work?



If you answered "yes" to several of these questions, you may be more than just a hard worker. You may be on your way to full-blown workaholicism. If so, it's time to take a long hard look at your work life. Ask your family and close friends for help in assessing whether you're addicted to work. Recognizing a problem is the first step toward resolving it.

Reclaiming Your Life

Workaholics have lost control of their lives. There are three ways to get back in control.

1. Manage Stress: Stress and work addiction reinforce each other in a vicious circle. You can break the pattern by learning tactics for managing stress. Yoga, exercise, meditation and walking are all helpful. Or try these simple activities:

- Do deep breathing—inhale slowly through your nose, mentally count to two, then exhale for a count of four. Repeat five times.
- Stand up and stretch for one minute every hour.
- Massage your neck and shoulders to relieve tension.
- Cut down on alcohol and caffeine.
- Each day, find time for a nonwork activity you enjoy.

2. Talk Yourself Up: Low self-esteem is often behind work addiction. Try repeating these affirmations to yourself several times a day. Believe it or not, they really work.

- "I'm relaxed, peaceful and happy."
- "I'm successful and will achieve my dreams."
- "I have a right to a balanced life."

3. Reach Out

It may not be easy, but recovering from work addiction depends on your asking for help. Ask those close to you to help you recover by giving you feedback and positive reinforcement on your progress. If you can't reach out to those around you, get professional help from a psychotherapist, pastoral counselor, outpatient treatment group or Workaholics