

Saul and Saul, LLC

CONSULTING PSYCHOLOGISTS: TUCK T. SAUL, PhD & SUZANNE C. SAUL, PhD

CERTIFIED COACH: TUCK T. SAUL, PhD

BEING A HARD WORKER VS BEING A WORKAHOLIC

Workaholism can manifest like many problems do, such as having a substance abuse problem, being an alcoholic, or having an eating disorder. It is often difficult because our society condones this disease. Here are some examples of differences between being a hard worker and being a workaholic:

- Hard workers experience their work as a necessary and, at times, fulfilling obligation. Workaholics see their work as a place of safety from the predictableness of life and a distance from unwanted feelings and/or commitments.
- Hard workers know when to set limits on their work in order to be fully available and present for their family, friends and to be able to participate in play. Workaholics allow their work to take top billing over all the other areas of their life. Commitments to family, friends and their children are often made and then broken to meet work demands.
- Workaholics get an adrenalin rush from meeting impossible demands. Hard workers do not.
- Hard workers can turn off their work appetite. Workaholics can not *not work*. They remain preoccupied with work no matter where they are – playing golf with friends, attending their children’s sporting events, etc.

Getting the picture?

If you are curious about how workaholic you might be, I invite you to take the Workaholic Addiction Risk Test (WART).

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WORKAHOLIC ADDICTION RISK TEST

(From *Chained to the Desk* by Bryan Robinson, 1998)

To find out if you are a workaholic, rate yourself on the WART using the rating scale of 1 (never true), 2 (sometimes true), 3 (often true) or 4 (always true). Put the number that best describes your work habits in the blank beside each statement. After you have responded to all 25 statements, add the numbers in the blanks for your total score. The higher your score (highest possible is 100), the more likely you are to being a workaholic; the lower your score (lowest possible is 25), the less likely you are a workaholic.

	I prefer to do most things rather than ask for help.
	I get impatient when I have to wait for someone else or when something takes too long.
	I seem to be in a hurry and racing against the clock.
	I get irritated when I am interrupted while I am in the middle of something.
	I stay busy and keep many irons in the fire.
	I find myself doing two or three things at one time, such as eating lunch and writing a memo while talking on the phone.
	I over commit myself by biting off more than I can chew.
	I feel guilty when I am not working on something.
	It's important that I see the concrete results of what I do.
	I am more interested in the final result of my work than in the process.
	Things just never seem to move fast enough or get done fast enough for me.
	I lose my temper when things don't go my way or work out to suit me.
	I ask the same question over again without realizing it, after I've been given the answer once.
	I spend a lot of time mentally planning and thinking about future events while tuning out the here and now.
	I find myself continuing to work after my coworkers have called it quits.
	I get angry when people don't meet my standards of perfection.
	I get upset when I am in situations where I cannot be in control.
	I tend to put myself under pressure from self-imposed deadlines when I work.
	It is hard for me to relax when I'm not working.
	I spend more time working than socializing with friends or on hobbies or leisure activities.
	I dive into projects to get a head start before all of the phases have been finalized.
	I get upset with myself for making even the smallest mistake.
	I put more thought, time and energy into my work than I do my relationships with loved ones and friends.

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	I forget, ignore or minimize celebrations, such as birthdays, reunions, and anniversaries or holidays.
	I make important decisions before I have all the facts and have a chance to think them through.

Those scoring in the upper third (67-100) are considered highly workaholic. If you scored in this range, it could mean that you are on your way to burnout, and new research suggests that family members may be experiencing emotional repercussions as well. Those scoring in the middle range (57-66) are considered mildly workaholic. If you scored in this range, there is hope. With acceptance and modifications, you and your loved ones can prevent negative lasting effects. Those scoring the lowest range (25-56) are considered not workaholic. If you scored in this range, you are probably a hard worker instead of a workaholic. You needn't worry that your work style will negatively affect yourself or others.

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