

# Combining your home and work life can be better for role performance say researchers

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Leaving work at the office and home at the door may not always be the best strategy for employee well-being and performance, finds a new study published in the journal *Human Relations* by SAGE in partnership with The Tavistock Institute.

Traditionally it has been thought that in order to maintain concentration and high performance, employees needed to have a strict separation between [home](#) and [work](#). However, new research suggests that in fact integration across both domains reduces the impact of moving between home and work roles while also preserving employees' ability to be effective in their jobs.

"In the long run, it may be better to allow employees' minds to wander and take occasional phone calls from home rather than set up policies that establish strict and inflexible boundaries, which could discourage the development of functional ways to juggle both", argue the researchers.

They outline how individuals with integrated boundaries across home and work are likely to develop methods that help them transition between these domains more efficiently and with less mental effort. Their study finds that employees who use flexible working arrangements, such as "flextime" and "flexplace", experienced less disruption to job performance during times when home interruptions spilled over into the workplace.

To help reduce the number of cognitive role transitions an employee experiences throughout the day when work-life integration policies are not feasible, they suggest methods such as goal setting, which involves creating plans that specify 'what, when and how' incomplete tasks will be accomplished. Creating these plans may help prevent mental distractions from unfinished tasks that are not relevant at work. They conclude:

"Overall, our findings suggest that integration, rather than segmentation, may be a better long-term boundary management strategy for minimizing resource depletion and maintaining higher levels of [job performance](#) during inevitable work-family role transitions."

**More information:** "Out of Sight, Out of Mind? How and When Cognitive Role Transition Episodes", *Human Relations*, 2016.

Provided by SAGE

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