

# Research finds after-work hobbies key to proactivity in the workplace

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Employees who engage in sporting, learning and volunteering activities outside work are more likely to get a better night's sleep and be more proactive in their job, new research involving Curtin University

researchers has found.

The research, published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, examined how the after-work activities of employees shaped their proactive behaviour and motivation at work the next day.

Lead Australian author ARC Laureate Fellow Professor Sharon Parker, from the Centre for Transformative Work Design based at Curtin University's Future of Work Institute, said employees and managers needed to be aware of how their personal activities might influence their work performance.

"After work, people often take part in activities to alleviate stress, such as reading books, practicing new hobbies, going to the gym and cooking. These activities have a knock-on effect for the quality of our sleep and how we should feel the next morning when we go to work," Professor Parker said.

"How we feel at work impacts our proactivity, which helps create competitive, dynamic and fast-changing work environments, and translates to better work results and career success.

"Our research found that employees who engage in sporting and learning activities, such as going to the gym, exercising, volunteering and [reading books](#), after they finish work were more likely to get a better night's sleep, and be more proactive at work the following day."

The research also showed that conflicts with [family members](#), additional work demands at home, doing chores and disciplining children negatively affected someone's proactivity at work. It also found that too much relaxation and detachment after work, while contributing to feelings of calm the next day, did not give people the energy and confidence boost needed for next-day proactivity.

Professor Parker explained that the findings could have important implications for the future of the workplace, as well as important tips for managers in dealing with staff.

"Our research suggests that managers and organisations could run workshops or seminars to help employees better understand the relationship between their personal lives and their daily work," Professor Sharon Parker.

"It may also be beneficial for managers to take measures to help employees cope with [negative experiences](#) that occur outside of [work](#) and accept that employees' proactive behaviour fluctuates from day to day. If managers have more reasonable expectations of their employee's proactive behaviour, then they will be better equipped to respond to an [employee](#)'s change in proactivity."

**More information:** Kan Ouyang et al. Enjoy your evening, be proactive tomorrow: How off-job experiences shape daily proactivity., *Journal of Applied Psychology* (2019). DOI: [10.1037/apl0000391](https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000391)

Provided by Curtin University

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