

The Pursuit of Happiness in the Practice of Law

Four pathways to the pursuit of happiness: exercise/physical health, mental health, mindfulness, and balance.

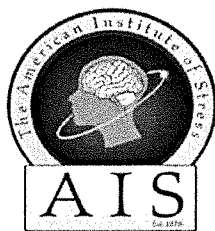
PHYSICAL HEALTH

Tips:

- § **Bring a healthy lunch from home.** It's hard to have the will power to eat healthy at lunch, by bringing a lunch or meal planning it helps control portion size and nutrition.
- § **Drink water at work** rather than coffee or soft drinks.
- § On average, it takes more than 2 months before a new behavior becomes automatic — 66 days to be exact. *The European Journal of Social Psychology* (July 16, 2009). So stick with your activity and make it into a good habit.
- § **Schedule specific times for work outs and keep them.** Incentivize the work out (i.e. reward going to workouts, like splurge meals or after work drinks; penalize missing workouts by self-imposed fines).
- § **Set realistic goals and keep track of your progress** (fit bit/apple watch). Triathlon Coach Richard Van Sickle, himself a former practicing attorney, offers this advice: "I hear a lot of excuses for not exercising, but the most common excuse has to be a lack of time. People seem to think they need 15 hours a week to get in shape, but that's just not true. Thirty minutes a day of physical activity can make a huge impact. Starting out, it doesn't even have to be 30 consecutive minutes. 10 minutes, 3x a day can work. Small changes, repeated frequently can improve our health. Things we've all heard before like taking the stairs instead of the elevator, don't take the closest parking spot, ride your bike to return that DVD, walk. If you're already walking try to pick up the pace for 2 minutes, 5 minutes, 10 minutes – you don't have to run just walk quickly."
- § **Have an accountability buddy.**
- § **Have a "Commit to be Fit" month at your firm,** where you have healthy lunches and meetings promoting physical wellness and nutrition.

o Sources:

- § www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2016/november-december/law_and_life_blending_fitness_routine_a_lawyers_schedule.html
- § www.americanbar.org/groups/lawyer_assistance/resources/lawyer_wellness.html



Workplace Stress Survey

Enter a number from the sliding scale below, which best describes you.

STRONGLY DISAGREE AGREE SOMEWHAT STRONGLY AGREE
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I can't honestly say what I really think or get things off my chest at work. _____

My job has a lot of responsibility, but I don't have very much authority. _____

I could usually do a much better job if I were given more time. _____

I seldom receive adequate acknowledgement or appreciation when my work is really good. _____

In general, I am not particularly proud or satisfied with my job. _____

I have the impression that I am repeatedly picked on or discriminated against at work. _____

My workplace environment is not very pleasant or safe. _____

My job often interferes with my family and social obligations, or personal needs. _____

I tend to have frequent arguments with superiors, coworkers or customers. _____

Most of the time I feel I have very little control over my life at work. _____

Add up the replies to each question for your TOTAL JOB STRESS SCORE _____

If you score between 10-30, you handle stress on your job well; between 40-60, moderately well; 70-100 you are encountering problems that need to be resolved.

What Makes Lawyers Happy?: A Data-Driven Prescription to Redefine Professional Success

by Lawrence S. Krieger & Kennon M. Sheldon, Ph.D.
83 Geo. Wash. L. Rev. 554 (2015)

- First theory-guided empirical research seeking to identify the correlates and contributors to the well-being and life satisfaction of lawyers
 - o Data from several thousand lawyers in four states provides insight about diverse factors from law school, legal career and personal life
- Study focuses on internal and external factors that contribute to lawyers' happiness
- Lawyers in different practice types and settings demonstrate the applied importance of the contrasting internal and external factors

- **Tier One Factors** (The most important factors affecting the level of lawyers' happiness at work)
 - o Autonomy - independence, control, self-determination
 - o Relatedness – connection to others – clients, colleagues, staff
 - o Competence – the sense of knowing what you're doing
 - o Internal motivation - enjoyment, interest, or meaning

- **Tier Two Factors**
 - o Autonomy with supportive supervision – Mentoring and supervision by more senior attorneys with understanding, respect, and some allowance of choices, as opposed to control
 - o Intrinsic values - The presence of personal values of self-improvement, intimacy, and altruism/community), as compared to extrinsic values (for affluence, power, or recognition)

- **Tier Three Factors**
 - o Vacation days taken
 - o Children
 - o Married/long term committed
 - o Exercise
 - o Alcohol use (quantity)
 - o Prayer (affiliated/congregation)

- **Tier Four Factors**
 - o Income
 - o Law school debt, on graduation
 - o Class rank
 - o Billable hours (increasing)

- **Tier 5 Factors**
 - o Age
 - o Other demographics

Mindfulness Meditation

The goal of **mindfulness meditation** is simple: to pay attention to the present moment, without judgement. However, as you practice, you'll find that this is easier said than done.

During mindfulness meditation, you will focus on your breathing as a tool to ground yourself in the present moment. It's normal that your mind will wander. You'll simply bring yourself back into the moment by refocusing on your breathing, again and again.

Follow the instructions below to begin practicing mindfulness meditation.

Time & Place

Aim to practice **daily** for **15-30 minutes**. More frequent, consistent, and longer-term practice leads to the best results. However, some practice is better than no practice.

Find a time and place where you are unlikely to be interrupted. Silence your phone and other devices, and set a timer for your desired practice length.

Posture

- ❖ Sit in chair, or on the floor with a cushion for support.
- ❖ Straighten your back, but not to the point of stiffness.
- ❖ Let your chin drop slightly, and gaze downward at a point in front of you.
- ❖ If in a chair, place the soles of your feet on the ground. If on the floor, cross your legs.
- ❖ Let your arms fall naturally to your sides, with your palms resting on your thighs.
- ❖ If your pose becomes too uncomfortable, feel free to take a break or adjust.

Awareness of Breathing

Because the sensations of breathing are always present, they are useful as a tool to help you focus on the present moment. Whenever you become distracted during meditation, turn your focus back to breathing.

Notice the sensation of air as it passes through your nose or mouth, the rise and fall of your belly, and the feeling of air being exhaled, back into the world. Notice the sounds that accompany each inhalation and exhalation.

Wandering Mind

It's normal that your thoughts will wander during mindfulness meditation. At times, it might feel like a constant battle to maintain focus on your breathing. Don't worry—that's normal. Instead of struggling against your thoughts, simply notice them, without judgment. Acknowledge that your mind has wandered, and return your attention to breathing. Expect to repeat this process again and again.

BALANCE

Multi-tasking is a Myth!

Round 1

Round 2

Tips :

§ **Set client boundaries** and expectations for each representation.

§ **Unplug from time to time.**

- Not just from work, social media, and political news coverage as well.
- Bright LED light can slow or halt the production of melatonin, the hormone that signals that it's time for bed. Try reducing your screen brightness, using night shift settings or downloading apps like Flux and Twilight to change the hue and intensity of the light your favorite device is giving off. (Or just turn it off).

§ **Travel**

§ **Take lunch and coffee breaks** (change your space and clear your mind)

o **Find a practice peer and/or mentor:** Mentorship isn't just for learning how to take better depositions. Discuss balancing your life with your work with attorneys you trust. We all have to figure it out.

o **Serve Your Community:** "Compassion is the key to happiness" – HH the Dalai Lama. Pro bono work, service to the bar, and community service related and unrelated to the practice of law are great ways to keep perspective and give back.