



# 7 Mistakes Small Business Owners Need to **Avoid** when Juggling Health and Work

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## 7 Mistakes small business owners need to avoid when juggling health and work

When it comes to work and health, after almost 30 years working in this field as a healthcare professional with thousands of people, designing award winning “return to work” rehabilitation services, running my own small businesses and then having to navigate my own health recovery and business journey, I am an expert in helping people return to work after illness or injury.

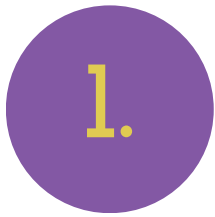
Much of this valuable information is hidden in research papers or government national plans, often out of sight to the individual who needs it most and the preserve of the healthcare professional.

Yet as a business owner you are used to being in control of your day to day life, and often leading others too.

Armed with some of this knowledge yourself, you can make better choices about how to manage your own relationship between work and health and get back in the driver's seat of your own business and life whilst managing your health proactively - regaining focus, purpose and energy so that you can love your work AND live the life you want without ruining your health.

**Here are some of the biggest mistakes business owners make that keep them stuck in exhaustion, struggling to manage their business and their health...**





## Not taking any time off when you know you need to.

You know you're getting run down and you're worried about getting ill but you just don't believe it's possible to take time off. You may be afraid of losing income or not being able to serve your customers and clients so you just keep going, keeping your fingers crossed that you'll be alright.

The problem with this is it can come at a cost when you are least expecting it - forcing you to take time out.

**A recent report found new health conditions cost employed people up to £2,200 on average per year in lost income with others in the household also badly affected.**

In 2022, the average number of days off work per person in the UK was 5.5 per year, costing the employer in the region of £650, but multiply that by several weeks and you are quickly up to £2000+ and the impact of being the owner of the business soon starts to overshadow the salary costs if you are unable to generate new revenue.

But modifying your work or taking some time off work so that you have the opportunity to look after your own health as an investment in the future is wise. Choosing to take time out or adjust your work to support your health might cost you a few days' income in the short term, but finding yourself taking several weeks or months out for something unexpected and unplanned could cost thousands in lost revenue, flow of new work and reputation.





## Refusing to delegate or accept practical help from colleagues and co-workers.

As business owners you like to be in control, with your finger on the pulse. But when your health is suffering you need to be able to get help to do the things that don't need your expertise and time so that you can free up time to prioritise your recovery and maximise your energy for the things that matter to you most.

Working out what tasks could be done by others in the immediate and short term can free up your diary to look after your health proactively, or attend your appointments and to take additional rest and rehabilitation if you have been ill or injured. - to put your health needs first - fast tracking your ability to regaining your energy, which in turn will help you get focused on what only you can do, and why you must be the one to do those remaining tasks.

You may know that some tasks simply deplete you because they are not really in your skill set and you don't love doing them, but you've been doing them because you're the owner - right? They may be a throw back to the shoestring start-up you had where you did everything, and it's time to evolve anyway.

These draining tasks are the first ones to consider delegating - the chances are someone else can do them faster and better than you can, and you can get on with stabilising yourself and the business for the longer term.



3.

## Not prioritising your health needs before or after illness or injury.

When you prioritise your health as a matter of course, you minimise the likelihood of becoming unwell or injured, or just getting exhausted. You maximise the likelihood of being able to live and work in the way that you want to.

Good health needs a variety of approaches to nutrition, exercise, sleep, rest and finding the fun and joy in life.

If you are not making time to manage your health proactively NOW that can contribute to becoming run down, burnt out and becoming unwell, or getting injured.

After illness or injury it is even more important to make time for your health needs, whether that's attending appointments, managing pain, improving your lifestyle or modifying your work to ensure you have the best chance of recovery.

Just going back to the way that you did things before is not a viable option if you want to really be able to work effectively making best use of your time and energy into the future.





## Starting to think your work is “*bad for your health*”.

It can be really easy to find yourself talking about work and your business as if it is a bad thing that is tiring you out or has made you ill. You may be resenting long hours and lack of support.

The research tells us that work is good for our health overall, but only if it is “good” work.

The truth is, as a business owner it is up to you to take control of your working systems and environment. To become a business owner in the first place you must be creative and imaginative and enjoy problem solving.

Rather than blaming your work and your business, think about reframing it. Look at your business as a whole then look at the subtasks and activities within it so that you can identify what may need changing or modifying so that your business can better support your health in the way you need it to go forward.

**Can you redesign your work and life  
to support your health needs for the  
long term?**







## Expecting to go back to work full time at 100% performance after a period of not working at all

This is a really common mistake that lots of people make. As you start to feel better you want to get back to productive working activity. You may be feeling guilty about time away from your business, pressure on colleagues or the fact that you haven't been able to speak to customers and generate new income.

**You want to go back to work ASAP and get things back to "normal".**

The truth is that if you push yourself to go back to full-time hours and expect yourself to be able to perform all your activities just as you did before, you are likely to find yourself bouncing in and out of work, getting frustrated and disappointed with yourself.

If you have had a serious illness or injury, your life and your work will probably never be the same again, and trying to do what you always did before will just get you the same results - frustration, exhaustion and poor health.

Creating a plan so that you have a clear pathway to start work again and then build up gradually can be an effective way of managing this process. This will give you confidence that you're going to be able to cope.





## Letting your routine slide and bad habits creep in during time off sick.

Letting your routine slide too much and finding yourself watching daytime TV and Netflix boxsets whilst still in your PJ's can have a negative impact on your mindset, your health and your business growth and income.

You may be in need of extra sleep and rest, but this shouldn't become a reversed routine of being up all night and sleeping all day and not bothering with basic self care.

Keep to a simple routine so that you have a reason to get up in the mornings, get dressed, and allocate time to attend to your health and your recovery. This recovery timetable can still have naps, gentle exercise, time with friends and family as long as it is all about prioritising you and your health needs in the short term. This will make it so much easier to return to a working timetable when you are ready.

Also, beware using increasing amounts of alcohol, smoking, food or recreational drugs. What can start as a way to relax can innocuously morph into a regular "coping" strategy. And whilst you may feel this is acceptable on occasion, if it's becoming regular and you notice yourself becoming low in mood without them, they are potentially damaging.

On a basic level, all of these things interfere with the body's physiology and its ability to repair and heal from illness or injury. They have far-reaching effects on sleep and mental health, which then further impacts your routine and can lead to a downward spiral.





7.

## Avoiding activities you enjoy (especially spending time with other people).

This one is a really common mistake often perpetuated by not wanting to be “seen” out and about in case people think you are not genuinely ill or because you feel you shouldn't do certain activities whilst you are “sick”.

However, we do know that recovery and maintenance of good health includes being positively connected with other people and having a good support network around you.

Identifying a couple of key activities that you can still enjoy even whilst being ill or injured will have a positive influence on your recovery and help maintain your mental health and confidence.

For example, you may need to spend less time doing the activity (30 minutes instead of 60) or spectate in a sport that you would normally participate in.



## Hi, I'm Heather

As a mentor, speaker, consultant and health professional, I support small business owners to safeguard their business from the impact of illness or injury - before or after it occurs.



When you work with me I help you get back in the driver's seat of your business to regain focus, purpose and energy so that you can love your work AND live the life you want without ruining your health.

When we turn a health crisis into motivation to create a lifestyle with more focus, energy and purpose, we create time to do all the things we love. **That's when life starts to work with us not against us.**

Don't get overwhelmed or exhausted, tripped up by the unexpected, or wait until it's too late! Instead, why not see serious injury or illness as a "wake-up call" and use it as an opportunity to discover a purpose-driven calling - whether in a new job or business doing what you love (instead of something that just makes money)?

As a small business owner, having a **Health and Business Strategy Plan** or a **Health and Business Disaster Recovery Plan** is vital to know that you're working at your best while also being prepared for health disasters or major life events.

Working together, we will ensure you are equipped with both the practical skills and tools you need to create a plan that works, fits in your life, aligns to your long- and short-term goals and supports your long-term health needs through intuitive mentorship and somatic trauma-informed coaching.

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