



# The cornerstones of work ability for small business entrepreneurs

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Check  
your work  
ability!

## TOP 10 tips

*Are you a small business entrepreneur or sole entrepreneur? It is important that you recognize the demands, stress factors and risk factors related to entrepreneurship and your industry, take them into consideration and act in a way that improves your health and work ability. It is equally important that you recognize and attend to the resources needed for your work and your business. Your well-being at work also depends on your choices and attitude. You can cope with work better when you remember to look after your company's most important asset: yourself.*

*Find out how familiar you are with habits and activities that promote an entrepreneur's work ability. The more these TOP 10 statements apply to you, the better your work ability.*

### 1. Is your life well-balanced?

- My work-related schedules are in good order and well-planned.
- I separate my work and my free time.
- I don't work too much (too much being over 50 hours per week).
- My work leaves time for my friends and loved ones.
- My entrepreneurial life and family life are well-balanced.

### 2. Does food provide you with the fuel you need?


- I eat breakfast.
- I take a lunch break during the working day. I use the lunch break to eat.
- I eat packed lunches or snacks in a pleasant environment or make regular use of lunch spots in the area.
- I apply the plate model nutritional guidelines to my meals, including snacks.
- When I'm thirsty, I drink water. A suitable amount is 1–1.5 litres a day. Strenuous physical work requires more.
- I do not constantly replace proper meals with snacks
- Eating at regular times gives me energy for both work and free time.

 **TIPS RELATED TO HEALTHY EATING:** [www.evira.fi/en/foodstuff/healthy-diet/nutrition-recommendations-for-all](http://www.evira.fi/en/foodstuff/healthy-diet/nutrition-recommendations-for-all)

### 3. Does your physical fitness level meet the demands of entrepreneurship?

- I use stretching, strength training, fitness training or incidental exercise to avoid stiffness, injuries, back pain and neck pain.

- I exercise appropriately with respect to my prevailing fitness level and vigour.
- I take every opportunity for physical activity: I take the stairs instead of the lift.
- I also try to get higher-intensity exercise that makes me sweat and get out of breath. The recommended amount of moderately strenuous exercise is at least 2.5 hours per week.
- I give myself enough time to recover after exercise that causes sweating and breathlessness.
- My physical fitness level is sufficient for the physical demands of my work.
- When doing sedentary work, I get up and move around a little every half-hour. Sitting time per day should not exceed 8 hours.
- When I have aches or injuries, I see a doctor without undue delay.


 **HINT!** Walking, swimming and cycling are easy forms of exercise even for a beginner. You also don't have to do them alone. Exercise is more fun with a friend.

### 4. Stress and recovery under control?

- I take breaks during the working day.
- It's easy for me to relax and unwind after the working day.
- I recover from the strain and stress of work before the next working day. My recovery is evidenced by the fact that I feel refreshed in the morning and look forward to the day's events.
- I have energy for all kinds of activities after work. I don't just plonk myself down on the sofa, exhausted.
- I spend genuine free time filled with fun activities.



- I don't manage my stress using alcohol and tobacco. I can find help online for assessing my drinking habits and reducing my alcohol consumption [www.addictionlink.fi](http://www.addictionlink.fi).
- I take vacations to get completely away from work.

 **STRESSED BY SIMPLY HAVING TO TAKE A TEST? RELAX AND LEARN MORE:** [www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-symptoms-causes-and-effects.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-symptoms-causes-and-effects.htm)

**5. How well do you sleep and how do you promote good sleep?**

- I maintain a regular rhythm when it comes to work, eating and hobbies.
- I feel fresh at work. I don't get sleepy during the day.
- I exercise or spend time outdoors.
- I take it slow in the two hours before bedtime.
- I don't bring work to bed.
- I don't have a night cap before going to bed.
- I allocate enough time for sleep every night (7–9 hours).

 **ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT? TAKE A LOOK AT TOP TIPS FOR PROMOTING GOOD SLEEP:** [healthysleep.med.harvard.edu](http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu)

**6. Do you receive support and encouragement?**

- I have at least one person in my life who gives me practical support in difficult situations.
- I maintain relationships with friends. I can find a shoulder to lean on when necessary!
- I have relationships with fellow entrepreneurs. We help each other.

**7. Do you value yourself?**

- I show my respect for myself by setting aside time for myself.
- I am fair towards myself and others. I don't place unreasonable expectations on anyone.
- I have set limits on how much work I do and when I do it.

**8. Is your company viable?**

- My company has a business plan.
- My company has an up-to-date budget.
- My company has appropriately set prices. I know what my colleagues charge for similar work.
- I issue invoices on time and handle paperwork in a timely manner.
- My receipts are in order.
- I know how much I need to earn per year to handle my expenses and pay my salary.

- The flow of work is smooth in my company. My company has access to the appropriate tools and equipment for its operations.
- Ergonomics are in order.
- I get along with my colleagues. We have good teamwork!
- I follow what's happening around me and take proactive measures. My company keeps abreast of developments.
- I prepare contingency plans or risk analyses where necessary.
- I'm aware of my workplace's health and safety risks and have them under control.

**9. Do you have the required competencies?**

- Entrepreneurial competencies are part of my professional skills and work ability.
- I apply entrepreneurial know-how at work, including various applications and legislation.
- I manage my professional competence by seeking training on a regular basis. If my company has employees, I also look after the development of their competencies.
- I take steps to secure myself and prepare for the future I have appropriate insurance cover.
- My YEL/MYEL pension insurance levels are appropriate. I am aware of what my pension contribution levels are.
- I understand that YEL/MYEL income from employment affects my future pension, sickness allowance and maternity allowance.

 **WHAT ARE YEL AND MYEL?** [www.tyoelake.fi/en/pensions-for-the-self-employed](http://www.tyoelake.fi/en/pensions-for-the-self-employed)

**10. Do you receive support from occupational health services?**

- I have arranged for occupational health care services.
- I have planned my occupational health services in co-operation with my OHS provider.
- I have a written OHS plan.
- A workplace investigation or farm visit has been carried out for my company to assess hazards and stress factors and issue instructions for reducing them.
- I have met with an OHS nurse or physician during the past year in a context other than diagnosing and treating an illness.

 **HOW TO ARRANGE FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES?** [www.kela.fi/web/en/health-care-self-employed-persons](http://www.kela.fi/web/en/health-care-self-employed-persons)



**MORE INFORMATION**

Do you need to develop your company's activities in some respects? Bring it up with your OHS provider, entrepreneurs' association or business advisory services. Don't remain alone with your thoughts. Information and support: [www.ttl.fi/en](http://www.ttl.fi/en)

Service provided by entrepreneurs' association: [www.yrittajat.fi/en/about-federation-finnish-enterprises/membership-services/national-advice-line-526342](http://www.yrittajat.fi/en/about-federation-finnish-enterprises/membership-services/national-advice-line-526342)

These Top 10 Tips are based on Wo-

men @ work – Working together with female entrepreneurs to promote their work ability and health at the workplace, a collaborative project conducted in partnership with the women entrepreneurs' of Northern Ostrobothnia.