

PA ENTERPRISE

DeskDemon's Magazine for Executive PAs, Office Managers and Secretaries

August 2016

Sitting too long at work could be 'deadly'

Shortage of secretarial and support professionals expected in the second half of 2016

Pay Attention - and enrich your life

Is your business beach-ready?

- **Why do you feel like you're falling when you go to sleep?**
- **A third of Brits value digital photos more than their car**

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www.deskdemon.com

Terminal House, Station Approach, Shepperton, Middlesex TW17 8AS

Editorial

editoruk@deskdemon.com

Advertising

Tel: 0870 410 4038

mek@deskdemon.com

Design & Production

Jane Bigos

Graphic Design

janebigos@deskdemon.com

Kulasekaram Vimalarasa (Raj)

Web Developer

raj@deskdemon.com

Managing Director

Mek Rahmani

Founder, CEO

mek@deskdemon.com

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Sitting too long at work could be deadly

Sitting for at least eight hours a day in office could increase the risk of premature death by around 60%. But the risk could be battled with an hour long exercise session, unveils a study based on the survey of more than one million adults.

The research paper published in The Lancet has unveiled that sedentary lifestyles pose great threat to public health as smoking and resulting into more deaths than obesity. The study has recommended that employees should include a five-minute break every hour and do exercises in evening.

An hour of brisk walking or cycling spread over a day was enough to combat the dangers of eight hours sitting in the office, the researchers said. Current public health advice recommends just half this level of activity - yet almost half of women and one third of men fail to achieve even this.

Prof Ulf Ekelund, the lead scientist, from Cambridge University and the Norwegian School of Sports Sciences, said: "We found that at least one hour of physical activity per day, for example brisk walking or cycling, eliminates the association between sitting time and death."

He added: "You don't need to do sport, you don't need to go to the gym, it's OK doing some brisk walking maybe in the morning,

during your lunchtime, after dinner in the evening. You can split it up over the day but you need to do at least one hour."

Researchers said the typical modern routine of spending a day in front of a computer, followed by an evening slumped in front of the television, was proving fatal.

"Take a five-minute break every hour, go to the next office, go upstairs to the coffee machine, go to the printer. Build physical activity in your everyday life."

Mortality rate was 9.9% for those who sat at least eight hours and managed less than five minutes of activity. Those who sat at least eight hours but managed to carry out an hour long exercise regimen, death rates in them dropped to 6.2%.

Cancer and heart disease were the most likely reasons of death associated with inactivity.



"This report is showing that inactivity kills. When we realized this about smoking we tackled it - we need to do the same about our office culture", affirmed Steven Ward, executive editor of UK Active.

The study also found that watching TV for three hours or more a day was linked with an increased risk of early death, regardless of physical activity -- except among those who were the most physically active. However, even among those who exercised the most, the risk of premature death was significantly increased if they watched five hours of TV a day or more, the researchers added.

Many office workers, especially commuters, would find it hard to avoid long periods of

being seated but should make every effort to break up their day, with short walks, the scientists said. "Take a five-minute break every hour, go to the next office, go upstairs to the coffee machine, go to the printer," said Prof Ekelund. "Build physical activity in your everyday life."

Workers need to do double the amount of exercise recommended by health officials in the UK, he said. The studies could not pinpoint why long periods of sitting were specifically risky, but the scientists involved said that movement appeared to assist the body's metabolism, while sedentary periods could influence hormones such as leptin, which regulate energy balance.

Shortage of secretarial and support professionals expected in the second half of 2016

- 37% of employers say that they anticipate shortages of secretarial and support professionals in the second half of the year and 21% say that Britain's decision to leave the European Union will compound the shortage.
- 74% of employers plan to recruit primarily for mid-level professionals in the second half of the year



Research from Robert Walters has found that over a third of employers expect to face skills shortages when looking to recruit secretarial and support professionals in the second half of 2016. A fifth of employers believe that these skills shortages will be exacerbated by Britain's decision to leave the European Union.

Rebecca Gaden, Manager, Secretarial and Support Recruitment, Robert Walters, comments: "Increasingly, employers are looking for secretarial and support professionals to take on a broader role, expanding from straightforward team support responsibilities into elements of project management."

"As a result, employers are becoming more rigorous about the skills required in candidates, forcing them to recruit from a smaller talent pool in order to find the professionals they need."

"Demand for secretarial and support professionals at this level is now outstripping

supply and many employers are struggling to source candidates. Over a fifth of employers also believe that Britain's decision to leave the European Union will further exacerbate this skills shortage."

Mid-level professionals are expected to be the most sought after, with 74% of employers planning to recruit individuals at this level into positions such as personal assistant, team support and administration roles based on reception.

Rebecca Gaden continues: "In particular, businesses are showing interest in recruiting professionals at the mid-level with experience in personal assistant or executive assistant roles. Professionals who have demonstrated the ability to support a small team and senior staff simultaneously are likely to be particularly sought after."

"Employers are also showing a renewed interest in recruiting secretarial and support staff with European language skills, particularly Spanish, French and Portuguese."

Half of UK workforce don't believe their employee benefits meet their needs

- Increase in popularity of 'work perks' is not keeping employees happy, as four in 10 UK workers feel undervalued
- Discounted cinema vouchers, nap time, massages, free fruit and coffee are overrated as people want access to more financial and emotional wellbeing benefits

New research has revealed that almost half of all UK workers think their current employee benefits package is not tailored to their needs.

The study of 1,000 UK workers - published by payroll lending provider SalaryFinance in line with the UK's first Smarter Working Day initiative - has found that 38% of UK workers currently have access to flexible working benefits, however, only 26% prefer flexible working conditions to great financial and psychological wellbeing benefits.

Less than one in five currently have access to benefits designed to support mental wellbeing, such as counselling services, and only one in four receive financial wellbeing support from their employer. In contrast, one in three receive ad hoc incentives such as free lunches, birthday cakes and duvet days.

With 58% of people saying that their employer has never asked for feedback on their benefits programme, employers could be falling out of touch with the needs of staff.

With nearly four in ten current UK workers feeling 'undervalued', Aresh Sarkar, CEO of SalaryFinance says that employers must act now to meet ever increasing expectations from employees if they are to attract and retain top talent.

"Employers have increasingly realised their responsibility to support their employees in many ways, including providing access to remote working opportunities and occasional free, healthy lunches. These proactive incentives are of course to be welcomed.



Is Your Business Beach-Ready?

Seven tips for ensuring your business stays on track during the holidays

With school holidays underway and employees looking forward to a well-deserved break, businesses are faced with the challenge of negotiating their team's summer breaks with the minimum amount of disruption.

Claire Ward, founder of HR subscription service for SMEs – www.thehrhub.co.uk – gives the following advice to business owners on managing the summer months successfully.

1. Work out what your business needs

Start by working out what your business needs over the summer. How will you ensure that the phones are answered, that queries are dealt with in a timely manner and that customers or clients are dealt with by an appropriate person? How many team members need to be present at any given time? Do you have any special events or sales periods that need extra support?

2. Get all the information

Map your business plans against your team's annual leave calendar. That doesn't just mean holidays, but also one-off leave requests for e.g. children's sports days, family celebrations or summer events such as festivals. Then you can work out where the gaps and pressure points are.

3. Think creatively about resourcing

The summer can be a useful period for introducing new learning and development opportunities. Ask your staff whether they might consider stepping into a different role or learning a different skill for a short period. Managed properly, it can do wonders for their motivation and confidence.

4. Consider using contract staff or sub-contractors

Sub-contractors or contract staff can bring excellent benefits to a business in terms of a fresh outlook, different experiences and new ways of solving problems. Depending upon the complexity of the role, you may need to invest in extra induction time to get them up to speed. Remember to plan ahead - the right people may not always be available at short notice.



5. Keep spirits as high as the temperature

The summer can be a bit of an unsettling time for employees with team members taking time off, sports and other events. To combat low spirits, organise an outdoor picnic during the lunch hour, treat your staff to strawberries and cream, or organise to have the biggest sporting events streamed into the workplace. Small gestures can often go a long way.

6. Be a 'good sport'

Avoid any HR own-goals by highlighting important sporting dates to employees early and manage their expectations by explaining how holiday requests are dealt with. Consider flexible working options, such as compressed hours, weeks when crucial events or matches are on. Watch out for those

who might pull a sickie by making sure your managers are clued in to when key games are on so they keep a watchful eye on any likely wanderers...

7. Finally...don't underestimate the importance of holidays for you and your staff.

45 million working days were lost due to stress, anxiety and depression over the last three years¹. While long working hours and low pay are also to blame, taking proper breaks is essential to the well-being and success of your employees. Actively encourage your staff to take a holiday, if they haven't already done so.

For more HR information and advice, visit www.thehrhub.co.uk

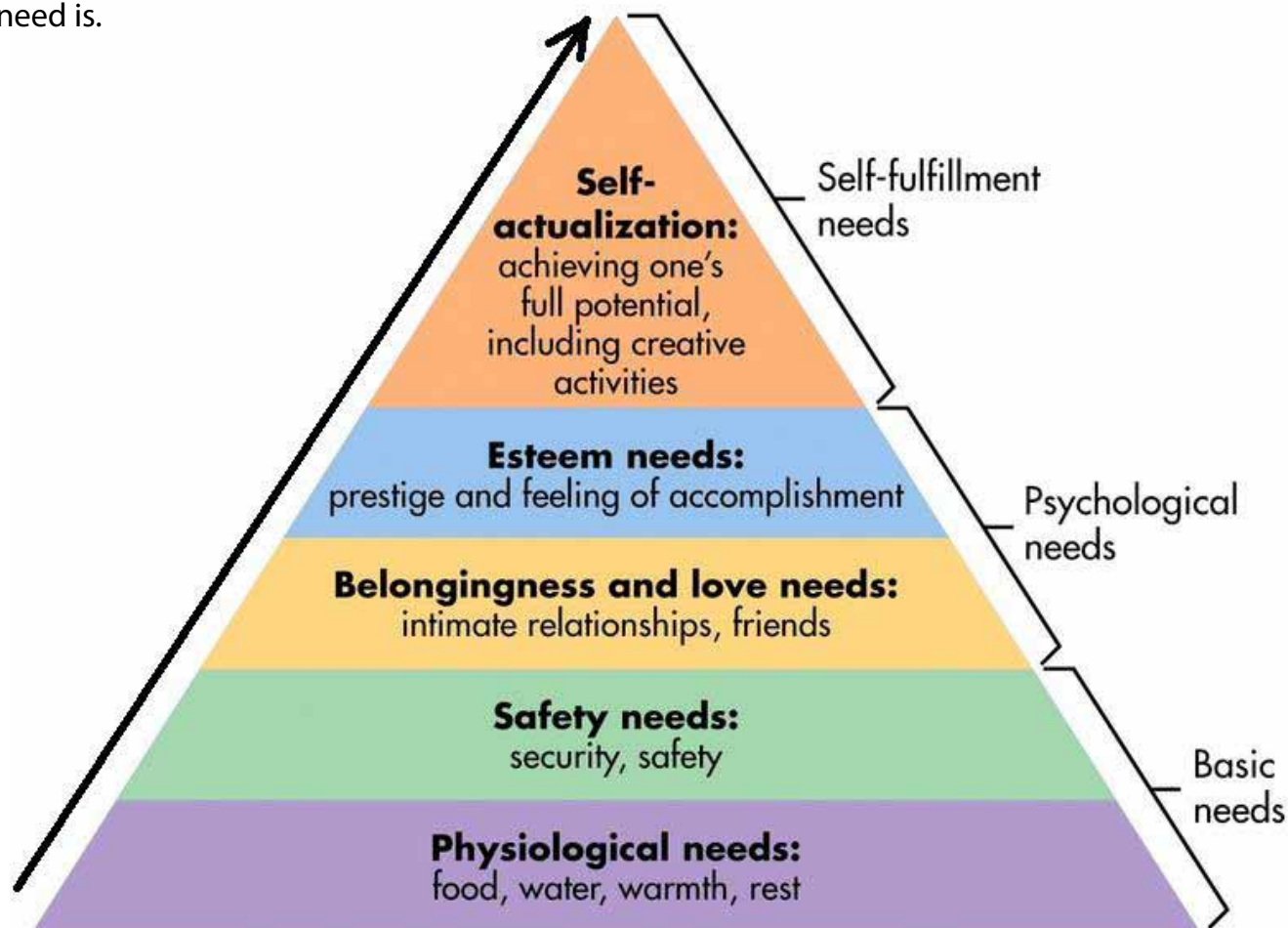
Knowing What You Need

By Linda Adams, President of Gordon Training International

For our daily lives to have meaning and purpose, it's important to be aware of what our needs are. That sounds so obvious and simple and yet it isn't at all. It's often quite difficult to identify our real needs.

When we aren't in touch with them, we often float through life or periods of it without direction or purpose. In addition, when we get into conflicts with others, they're often hard to resolve because one or both of us aren't aware of what our real, underlying need is.

A model developed by well-known psychologist, Dr. Abraham Maslow, helps people understand more about the nature of human needs. Maslow believed that people have five levels of needs as shown in this pyramid:



LEVEL 1 – Physical survival: food, water, air, sleep, shelter—things we cannot live without.

LEVEL 2 – Safety and security: feeling physically and psychologically safe. We feel fear when these needs aren't met and when people are fearful, they work on getting rid of the fear, not the task at hand.

LEVEL 3 – Emotional and social: having relationships with others—family, friends, co-workers. These include needs for love, acceptance, belonging and intimacy. When these needs aren't met, people experience loneliness, anxiety and depression.

LEVEL 4 – Achievement and success: being productive, achieving, accomplishing things that give us feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. We need to feel that we're making a contribution, doing something that matters.

LEVEL 5 – Self-Actualisation: when we are getting Level 1-4 met, a need for self-actualisation – a need to fulfill our potential comes into focus. We are motivated to make the most of our unique talents and abilities, to be the best that we can be, "to become everything one is capable of becoming..." Some of the characteristics of self-actualisation are feelings of wholeness, joyfulness and a heightened awareness of living. Think of times when you have experienced such moments.

Understanding this **Hierarchy of Needs** makes you more aware that we all have many basic requirements that are necessary and essential to our survival, health and well-being and that our behaviour is geared toward meeting those needs. It helps you see your own behaviour and that of the people with whom you live and work in

a different frame of reference. Instead of labeling behaviour as "bad" or "selfish" or "misbehaviour", it can be seen as "need-meeting".

Next, knowing the communication and conflict resolution skills gives you tools that are invaluable in getting many of those needs met, especially Levels 3-5.

Active Listening is an essential skill both for helping yourself and for facilitating others in getting in touch with real, underlying needs. When you can listen to yourself and accept your feelings and needs fully, you free yourself to move forward, to grow and develop. Further, self-acceptance leads to acceptance of others as they are—without judgment—and so allows them the same opportunity.

Equally important is the ability to express your feelings and needs in a clear, congruent way so that you can become and remain self-aware and authentic, and can continue to move forward to fulfill your life goals.

And finally, when you're in conflict with another person, being able to self-disclose and listen with empathy and understanding are necessary skills for identifying the real needs of both people from the start so that the conflict can get resolved and stay resolved.

Take a few minutes to gauge where you are on Maslow's hierarchy at this point. Also think about the people with whom you live and work and at what level(s) they are/might be functioning. Use this new awareness as you make daily decisions about your own life and as you relate to your family, friends and co-workers.

Why do you feel like you're falling when you go to sleep?

By Jason Ellis, Northumbria Centre for Sleep Research.

It should be one of the most relaxing times of the day. You climb into bed, get comfortable and cosy, start to feel your brain slowing down ... and then suddenly you experience a shocking falling sensation. It's like you misjudged the number of stairs you were walking down, leaving your leg in mid air for just a bit longer than you expected. Not pleasant.



This bedtime tumbling sensation is the phenomenon known as the “hypnic jerk” and may sometimes be accompanied by a visual hallucination. You may have heard it called a “sleep start”, the “hypnagogic jerk” or the “myoclonic jerk”.

So what is it?

The hypnic jerk occurs when the muscles, usually in the legs, involuntarily contract quickly, almost like a twitch or spasm. Although the reasons behind this are not that well understood, the evolutionary perspective suggests that it serves at least two important but interrelated functions, the former of which is still relevant today.

First, this sudden awakening allows us to check our environment one last time, an opportunity to ensure that it really is safe to go to sleep by creating a startle-like response. You might have accidentally dropped off somewhere dangerous, after all.

Another suggested evolutionary function is that it allowed us – or at least our early ancestors – to check the stability of our body position before we went to sleep, especially if we started to fall asleep in a tree. The jerk would allow us to test our “footing” before unconsciousness set in.

The other main theory suggests that the hypnic jerk is merely a symptom of our active physiological system finally giving in, albeit sometimes reluctantly, to our sleep drive, moving from active and volitional motor control to a state of relaxation and eventual bodily paralysis.

When jerks go bad

Either way, although in most cases a normal and natural phenomenon, the hypnic jerk

can be a rather disconcerting or frightening experience. In extreme cases – whether in terms of frequency or the velocity and violence of the jerk – it can keep people awake, preventing them from entering the normal sleep onset process, resulting, in the longer-term, in a form of sleep-onset insomnia.

As the hypnic jerk is related to motor activity, anything that is going to keep your motor system active at night is likely to increase the chances of you having one.

As such, caffeine and/or vigorous exercise in the evening and high stress and anxiety levels at night are associated with an increased chance of a spontaneous hypnic jerk and should, where possible, be avoided. Other associations include being overtired or fatigued, sleep deprived or having an erratic sleep schedule. Here, keeping a good regular sleep/wake pattern can help.

Finally, from a nutritional perspective, it has been suggested, albeit anecdotally, that deficiencies in magnesium, calcium and/or iron can also increase the chances of experiencing a spontaneous hypnic jerk. That said, it has also been suggested that hypnic jerks can be evoked through sensory stimulation, during the sleep onset period, so ensuring that your sleep environment is cool, dark and quiet may be helpful in reducing the frequency and intensity of them.

There is actually very little research on the topic, presumably because it is largely seen as a normal phenomenon, making it difficult to suggest a definitive “treatment”. However, we do know that as we get older the number of hypnic jerks we will experience should decrease naturally.

Calamity Cook Britain: *UK Top 20 Cooking Disasters*

Roast dinner, lasagne and a traditional fry up are amongst the dishes Brits can't cook properly, according to a new study.

Researchers have revealed the top 20 dishes Brits regularly fail to serve perfectly on every occasion – because they are burnt, undercooked or hard to deliver to the table at the same time.

Eggs prove particularly baffling, as omelette, scrambled eggs and poached eggs are all often served up too runny, stuck to the pan, undercooked or over-boiled.

Other dishes Brits regularly cremate or serve raw are pizza, Yorkshire puddings and Victoria sponge.

The poll of 2,000 adults shows the average person will endure a cooking disaster at least three times a month – that's 36 meals ruined across the course of one year.

Dishes such as pancakes, curry, spaghetti Bolognese and soufflé cause problems for even the most proficient cooks.



Speaking on behalf of Sharp Home Appliances, which conducted the research, UK Sales and Marketing Director, Andy Warren said: "There is nothing more disappointing than spending time on a meal, and then discovering that something has gone horribly wrong.

"Our researchers discovered many adults are suffering mishaps in the kitchen on a regular basis, often because they're rushing things and don't have the time to spend poring over recipes or getting the correct settings on the oven.

"Distractions such as the children, the television, work and even the pet dog can make concentrating on the one matter in hand difficult.

"And this is why we can understand why many adults stick to the same meals day in and day out for ease and speed."

The study shows six in 10 British adults rarely deviate from their repertoire of familiar dishes because they usually go wrong if they try to cook anything else.

This means the average family will eat approximately six meals on rotation, to lower the number of cooking disasters in the home.

When it comes to getting things wrong, a third of those polled admit they frequently burn food, while the same percentage often over-boil the vegetables.

Three in 10 cooks will often serve up mushy pasta or rice, while one in six will often burn the edges of a dish but discover it is still raw in the middle.

Adding too much salt, sugar or spice are other common mistakes, as are serving something raw or soggy by accident.

But for a third of adults, cooking in the kitchen is just one of many tasks they are trying to do at the same time, which is why they end up with a disaster on their hands.

A further 22% admit they're often so engrossed in the television while cooking

they'll get things wrong, and a fifth blame the children for being so distracting.

While 13% simply get flustered when trying to knock up an evening meal, 20% make silly mistakes when in a rush.

Four in 10 people think they can attribute some of their cooking disasters to the fact they don't know how to use their oven properly, and 38% aren't even confident they know how to use all of the settings on the microwave.

But it can be devastating when a meal goes wrong, particularly when time is limited, which is why 21% of Brits claim to have had a complete 'toddler tantrum' when realising their errors in the kitchen.

15% of people have been known to burst into tears as a result of the dinner being inedible, while 26% have resorted to getting a takeaway.

TOP 20 DISASTER DISHES

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Soufflé | 11. Crème Brulee |
| 2. Yorkshire puddings | 12. Pancakes |
| 3. Roast dinner | 13. Curry |
| 4. Omelette | 14. Meringues |
| 5. Scrambled eggs | 15. Pork chops |
| 6. Poached eggs | 16. Dauphinoise potatoes |
| 7. Victoria sponge | 17. Risotto |
| 8. Toad in the hole | 18. Traditional fry up |
| 9. Lasagne | 19. Spaghetti Bolognese |
| 10. Pasta carbonara | 20. Beef Stew |

Paying Attention

By Linda Adams, President of GTI

When we hear the words “pay attention”, it reminds us of being children when our teachers and parents ordered us to do it. We hear it as a negative: “You’re not paying attention” or “I need your undivided attention”. It usually means “I’m going to tell you something you might not be interested in or don’t want to hear. Listen anyway.” In the military, “Attention!” is an order and there’s even a specified way to “stand at attention” ready to obey the next order.

I want to discuss the value of paying attention as a way of enriching our everyday lives because I believe that consciously deciding to pay attention makes a hugely significant difference in how we think and feel and behave. As Anne Lamott put it: “There is ecstasy in paying attention.”

The Price of Not Paying Attention

We can miss many of the moments of our lives—each day—because we aren’t fully present for them and are at least partially unaware of what we’re doing or experiencing. We’re on auto pilot.

Often, we give several activities our partial attention and aren’t conscious of diffusing our focus because it has become such a habit. We even pride ourselves on being able to multi-task. How many times have you talked on the phone and handled another task, say

reading through your email or even typing a response, at the same time? Or eaten breakfast, watched the morning news and looked through the paper or worked the crossword puzzle at the same time? Or kept your eye on a television program while your spouse or child was talking to you? Or were so intent on getting a task done and moving on that you didn’t take the time to converse with or even smile at someone who assisted you in a store or bank? These are some examples from my own life and I could cite more.

Ironically, while we multi-task to get more accomplished which one would think would give us a sense of satisfaction, it seems that the opposite often happens—we feel a sense of dissatisfaction, a lack of fulfillment—where’s the meaning?

Paying Attention to Yourself

This is not selfish. It is not the attitude of “Everything is about me.” It is showing high regard for yourself. It means valuing yourself enough to give your thoughts, feelings, needs, ideas, goals and aspirations your full attention. It means taking the time and effort to go within yourself and discover what you feel, need, value or believe at any given moment. It means letting go of assumptions and judgments and letting what’s true for you emerge. Only then will what you say and do be in alignment with how you feel. Only then can you have authentic relationships with other people in your life.

Paying Attention in Your Relationships

Most of us are sensitive to whether others are giving us their attention. And we know how it feels not to have another person’s full attention when we’re talking to them. We can feel discounted, disregarded and it’s almost certain that we will not have a significant connection with them. Conversely, we know how satisfying it is when others attend carefully to us. When you give someone your undivided attention, you’re sending a message that they are worthy of it. You convey to them that you are noticing, concentrating, focusing on what they are saying and feeling—both verbally and non-verbally. By listening, you get into their shoes, understand their frame of reference, different though it may be from your own.

This is an essential skill. When you listen with genuine interest without judgment and instead of planning what you’re going to say next, it means that you can truly hear and understand the needs of your customers



and clients. And of your spouse and children and friends and other with whom you have relationships that matter to you. Only when there is this kind of listening can relationships can flourish.

Try This Out

Starting now, experiment today by observing your ability to give each person and each activity your full attention. When you notice yourself being distracted, without judging yourself for it, try to filter out everything except the person in front of you or the task at hand and give it your complete attention.

A third of Brits value digital photos more than their car

A third of Brits say that their digital photos and videos are more important to them than their car, according to new research. In addition, almost half of respondents consider digital memories to be more important than a smartphone, and 40% value them more than their credit card, wallet, or laptop.



This may not seem as surprising when you consider that two thirds of UK adults said they rely on footage and pictures of major moments such as holidays, weddings and children's birthdays more than their actual memory of the event.

Yet a fifth never back up videos or photos, meaning if a device fails or is stolen they could lose them forever.

Commissioned by mobile and antimalware experts BullGuard, the survey of 2,000 UK adults looked at their habits when it comes to backing up data.

"The study shows just how much we depend on pictures and videos to ensure we remember our major life moments," said Paul Lipman, CEO at BullGuard.

"Thanks to the improvements in digital technology such as smartphones, it's easier than ever to document these important memories.

"However, if something was to happen to the device they are stored on and the photos and videos weren't backed up, we may never get to see them again."

On average, Brits have 1,937 photos and 84 videos each stored on their computers and other devices, and they will take 35 pictures and 13 videos during a typical month.

Over half of those surveyed are concerned they will lose a photo or video footage in the future, while 30% have already suffered the loss of a precious memory.

In 23% of cases this happened due to a lost or misplaced device.

A hardware failure (41%), deleted by accident (25%) and theft (12%) were also common causes for loss.

Despite this, BullGuard's survey showed that almost a third 'don't think about' backing up digital photos and videos, and 33% just don't get around to it.

A quarter will back up these files just once a month, while 15% do it only once a year.

And interestingly, while 55% now use cloud storage services, just 13 per cent completely trust them to keep their data safe.

"Backing up any form of data is a laborious task that is often forgotten or put off in our busy day-to-day lives," Lipman continued.

"But when it comes to things like digital photos and videos, losing memories of treasured times that can be difficult or impossible to replace really hits home."

"It's a timely reminder of the fact that no matter how busy we are, it is always a good idea to find a bit of time to safeguard our most treasured possessions."

Most photographed precious memories:

Birthdays 56%

Vacations 55%

Weddings 46%

Your child/children in general 37%

Your child/children performing (e.g. in a play) 34%

Friends/family taking part in sporting events 24%

Watching your favourite band perform 18%

Musical performances (of your friends, family, yourself) 15%

Watching a football match 9%

Are we a nation of Hobby Jobbers?

- 89% of Brits have considered taking their hobby up as a full time job
- Personal trainer and photographer are most popular hobby-jobs
- Just 3% have made their hobby a full time career



Personal training, photography, writing, fashion and styling, cooking and hospitality are most popular amongst aspiring hobby-jobbers.

Almost nine-tenths of Britons have considered taking up their hobby as a full time job, according to new research.

A survey of 1,005, published in The Hobbies, Dreams and Jobs Report, carried out by beabetteryoucourses.co.uk, found that 89% of Brits have considered making their pastime their full time job.



Sports-mad Brits are most likely to consider pursuing a career as a personal trainer (65%), with careers in photography (48%), writing (37%), fashion and styling (33%), and cooking and hospitality (30%) also popular amongst

aspiring hobby-jobbers.

However just 3% of the population, (approximately 1,569,786 Brits) have followed through with their intention and made money from their hobby.

65% of Brits cite financial insecurity as the main reason for not pursuing a career in a field they have a genuine interest in.

A lack of job security also ranked as a concern, with 54% claiming this was a factor when converting hobbies into full time jobs.

Almost half (47%) were put off by social pressures from friends and family, whilst 35% felt too settled in their existing career to make the change to another industry.

Simon Bubb, managing director at www.beabetteryoucourses.co.uk, said: "Seeing just a small percentage of UK adults have switched industries to pursue their passion despite such a large amount considering the switch is disappointing. Most professions include a considerable amount of transferable skills so moving into a new sector doesn't mean starting from square one."

"Taking the plunge and starting a new career can be daunting, but with the right business guidance and support network it is not a difficult task. Taking a considered look at the industry and what training required are sensible first steps."

Interestingly, women and those aged 25–34 were most likely to embark on a new endeavour.