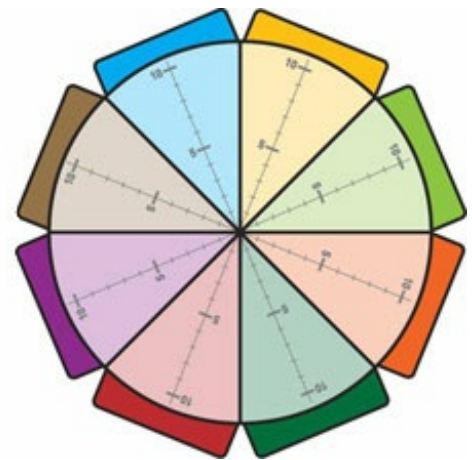


Lifestyle Balance Pie

 smartrecovery.org/smart-recovery-toolbox/lifestyle-balance-pie

Living a balanced life... has a nice sound to it, doesn't it? A meaningful life is one that is in balance, one in which adequate time is given to the activities that express your values and priorities. (NOTE: Refer to the [Hierarchy of Values worksheet](#) to rank your values.) No matter what those values may be, many of us do not live our life in balance, or in a manner that consistently sustains the things we value most.

It's important to note that achieving a balanced lifestyle is just like the other points in our 4-Point Program—there is no magic involved and it takes some work to accomplish. Many of the other SMART tools can be helpful and utilized in your quest to achieving and living a balanced life. The SMART tools aren't just to develop recovery skills—there are many who refer to them as being life skills.



Balancing Your Life

There are two main actions that lead to a balanced lifestyle. The first is to understand and respect each of the important areas of your life. The second consists of changing your perspective in the areas in which you are stuck. The exercise below will allow you to see how you're dividing your time in the pie of your life.

In this exercise, to work at creating a healthy, meaningful balance in your life, you will:

1. **Take an inventory.** When completing this worksheet, you'll determine and evaluate the areas that you focus your time and energy, becoming aware of what parts of your life are in or out of balance.

2. **Be honest.** This exercise will show you the areas in your life that you pay less attention to. Upon completing, be honest with yourself about your reaction to the picture it shows. What are your thoughts and feelings? Are there areas where you want to spend more time? Why? Are there fears or discomforts that you're avoiding or keeping you from doing something? If you were able to pay more attention to those lacking areas, how would you start? When would you begin?
3. **Go with your gut.** When looking at your pie, you may find several areas that you feel could use more attention, and it's unlikely you'll have the time to work on all of them at once. Which one is waving its hand wildly and saying, "*Me first! Me first! Pick me!*" Which is the one beckoning you the most? Go with your gut instinct. It's easier (*and more fun*) working on the area you're initially drawn to.
4. **Plan and prepare.** In order to pay more attention to the areas, you'll need to make time for it... otherwise it won't get done. Placing your focus on these less tended areas will take some getting used to. Change doesn't happen overnight, and it's no different here. Create a plan... and stick to it.
5. **Get support.** Making changes isn't easy. Rather than struggling and risking failure, get all the outside help and support you can get. You might ask loved ones, friends, colleagues, or seek professional help. This will make changing the behavior easier, bringing your life into a better balance.
6. **Balance.** Your pie may show one area of your life which is heavier than others. How much time of your time is spent on the thing(s) that is going well for you? Again, be honest with yourself. Is it that specific area that you spend the most time on? All of the areas in your life should be done with moderation and balance in mind. Otherwise, your life becomes unbalanced and one-sided.
7. **Have fun!** If the work you put forth in balancing your life starts to feel burdensome, back off a bit. You are doing this work to become healthy and whole, not to add more chores to your life. Seek out the fun in all your efforts; have a good time with the new experiences while exploring the other areas of your well-being. In the big picture of things, when your life becomes more balanced and well-rounded, the healthier and happier you'll be. So don't forget to have fun!

Get Started with Lifestyle Balance

1. On a blank piece of paper, draw a large circle to represent your life.
2. Thinking of your life as a pie, divide it into slices and then label each piece with an area of your life that is important to you. (*e.g., Family, friends, spirituality, romance, health, work, recreation, personal growth, money, physical surroundings, etc.*)

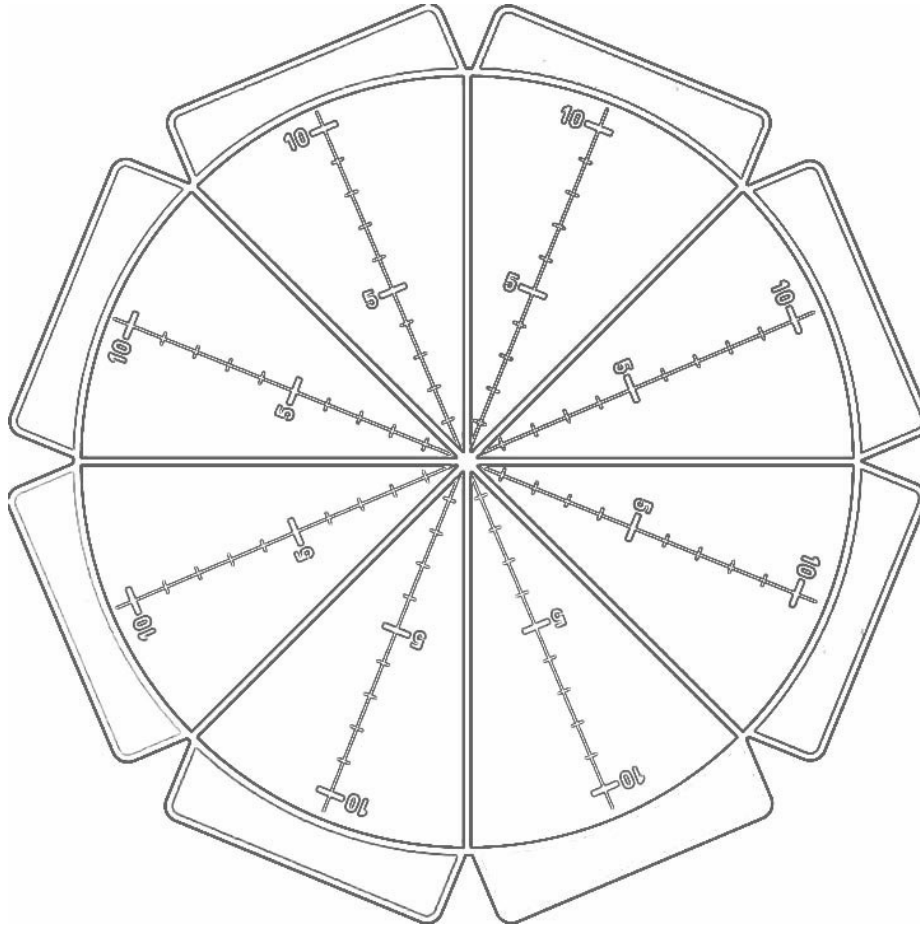
3. Within each slice, draw another line as a ruler. Think of the pie's outer edge as being completely satisfied (10) and the center as being totally dissatisfied (0). Give a rating to your level of satisfaction in each of the areas you've listed by placing a dot to indicate the level of satisfaction you have in each particular area of your life.
4. After completing the rating for each slice, connect the dots to create a new outside perimeter of your pie. What does it look like? Is it round and full, and ready to put on the table for everyone to see? Or does it look like there have been bites taken out of it? Think of it as being the tires on your car. What would the ride be like? Would it roll along smoothly and effortlessly? Or would it be rough and bumpy? Then ask yourself (*and answer*) the following:

Questions Concerning Lifestyle Balance

- Am I living a balanced life?
- Are my true values and priorities reflected here?
- If I had one month left to live, is this the way I would be spending my time?
- Am I involved in too many activities? Is there too much on my plate?
- How much of my time is spent caring for others? For myself?
- Are there areas of my life that need more of my attention?
- Is there a dream or desire that keeps getting put off that I'd like to focus on?
- What area(s) needs more attention? Where is less attention needed?
- What changes do I want to make? What can I do to round out my life?



5. To move yourself forward to a more balanced lifestyle, take steps at providing more time for and start filling in the areas with gaps—those spots where it looks like a piece of your pie is missing—because it is! When doing so, be sure to place your focus on the complete picture of your life, not just specific areas. After all, it's the big picture that "living a balanced life" is all about.



This exercise and graphic is based on the work of Julia Cameron's "The Artist's Way" and is used by permission of Penguin Publishers.

See Also:

[Hierarchy of Values Worksheet](#)

[Values and Goals Clarification](#)