

## People over 40 should only work 3 days a week. Yeah!

Working **fewer** hours improves performance as a person gets older but working full-time is still better for your brain than being inactive

Before you read the complete article, look at this vocabulary and find it in the text:

**less/fewer:** *less is used for uncountable nouns and fewer for countable ones. However, this difference is often ignored and 'less' is used for both countable and uncountable*

**to shout:** *to say something very loudly*

**performance:** *the action or process of completing a task or function*

**to impair:** *to damage or weaken something (particularly a function)*

**them:** *in this sentence it is an object pronoun that means 'him or her'*

Answer this question honestly: *Would you like to work **less** hours for the same money?* If you answered (or **shouted**) "Yes, of course!", then a new study has some great news for you. But only if you are over 40.

In 2016, a group of Australian researchers published the results of an investigation which found that, for workers over 40-years-old, a three-day working week could result in their best **performance**. "Of course!" you shout out. "I'm going to start doing that next week!" you tell your boss (who doesn't seem to react well to your suggestion of eliminating Monday and Friday from your schedule).

But how did the researchers arrive at the such a wonderful conclusion (but only for those who are over 40)? The Melbourne Institute of Applied Economics and Social Research invited 3,500 women and 3,000 men in Australia to have their work habits analysed through a series of cognitive tests. These included reading words aloud, reciting lists of numbers backwards and matching letters and numbers under time pressure.

The participants who worked around 25 hours a week performed best while those working up to 55 hours got worse results than participants who were unemployed. From this we can conclude that it's possible to be more productive at work by working **fewer** hours. It's a classic case of 'less equals more'.

Around the world, countries are raising the age of retirement (to 68 in some cases) and workers are now required to work more years to be able to receive their

hard-earned pensions. But the results from the Australian study raise the question of the effectiveness of making older people work full time (40 hours a week) on top of demanding that they work more years.

It has been shown that intellectual stimulation is required to stimulate brain activity and maintain our cognitive functions as we get older, but the stimulation that is provided by work can be counter-productive because longer working hours can cause fatigue and stress, two factors that can damage and **impair** our cognitive functions. It's a question of finding a sensible balance.

The reason that working more than 30 hours a week is detrimental for your brain, while working fewer hours, is good is not clear yet. Full-time work (40 hours a week) is still better than no work in terms of maintaining cognitive functioning. For many, the logical conclusion is to reduce the working hours of middle-aged and elderly adults to around 25 hours a week without fearing that their productivity will fall. Let's not forget that 'senior workers' also bring many intangible benefits to the workplace that younger employees generally lack such as experience, vision and contacts.

The study didn't consider factors such as why people work the amount of hours they do or the effects that different types of jobs have, but it provides strong evidence that employers and governments need to reconsider some of their traditional policies and recent decisions.

So next time you speak to your boss, perhaps you should show **them** this article (even better, the original study) and start renegotiating your contract!

Written by ECP coach *Rob Hextall* after reading [this article](#) [Watch the video here :-\)](#)

*Let's chat about that!*

Write your opinions in an email and send them to your ECP coach!

- Do you think it's possible to do all your work in just 25 hours?
- Do you think your cognitive functions are getting worse as you get older? Why/Why not?
- How do you think your mind improves as you age?
- When do you think you are going to retire? What will you do?



Do you know which ECP coaches are over 40 years old? Warning! These pictures were taken in 2014



# Social Events In English

Real-Life English in Vitoria-Gasteiz



# iLook, iThink, iSpeak

Real Language to Express Yourself Better



## CINEMA NIGHTS!

Come and socialise in English!

LIVE!English presents:

## COFFEE SATURDAYS!

Come and socialise in English!



**THIS SATURDAY!! SEE YOU THERE!**

Come anytime between 11.00 and 12.30 😊

The last Friday of every\* month from October to June, come to ECP to watch a film in English (with English subtitles) and talk about it afterwards.

October 26th - November 30th -  
January 25th - February 22nd - March 29th - May 31st - June 28th

WhatsApp John for more details on:  
**657 73 13 54**

**Time:** 19:30 to 21:30

**Place:** ECP Hub (C/San Ignacio de Loyola 15)

**Price:** Free!

**Friends welcome**

\*Please note: there will be no Cinema Nights in December or April.

The first\* Saturday of every month from October to June, come to Panadería Bertiz, C/Francia for a coffee and a chat in English.

October 6th - **November 10th** - December 1st - January 12th - February 2nd - March 2nd - April 6th - May 4th - June 1st

WhatsApp Alison for more details on:  
**608 42 64 92**

**Time:** 11:00 to 12:30

**Place:** Panadería Bertiz, C/Francia

**Price:** Just bring enough for a cup of coffee!

**Friends welcome**

\*Please note: Coffee Saturdays will take place on the second Saturday in November and January.

## Talking about future desires

**Hope** is used to talk about future actions/ events that you would like to happen.

*I **hope** (to be able) to travel around Europe and stay in nice hotels.*

*I **hope** to have saved enough money to have a comfortable retirement.*

**Expect** is used to show something that is considered probable or certain.

*I **expect** to retire between 60 and 65.*

*I don't **expect** I'll retire before I'm 60.*

**Want** expresses a strong desire to do something.

*I **want** to retire before I'm 65.*

*I **want** to have a good pension.*

**Would like** expresses hopes and nice ideas that may or may not happen.

*I **would like** to buy a house on the coast and live there part of the year.*

*I'd **like** to see my grandchildren go to university.*

**Chat with your colleagues and ECP coach about what you hope, expect, want and would like to do:**

- in the next five years
- in the next twenty years
- when you retire (if not already covered above)