



Précis Paper

Balancing Life and Law

Giles runs, rides a bike, swims and is fit. Fitness and practicing law go together. An inspirational discussion.

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1. In this edition of BenchTV, Giles Stapleton (Barrister) and Alan Conolly (Senior Partner) discuss how Mr Stapleton maintains a healthy work-life balance through exercise.

What Giles Stapleton does to create a Work-Life Balance?

2. To ensure a healthy work-life balance, Mr Stapleton engages in exercise. He is a triathlon competitor in the Clydesdale (over 100 kg) category. He competes in Ironman triathlons which incorporate a 3.8 km swim, 180 km cycle and a 42 km run. Mr Stapleton does not train competitively for this event; rather, he trains casually within his daily life. Each time he competes, Mr Stapleton strives to beat his own personal best record; challenging and strengthening his mind.
3. On a daily basis, Mr Stapleton trains on his way to and from work. Living at the Northern Beaches, he cycles from Dee Why via Narrabeen before heading to work. In total this is a 40km bike ride. On alternate days, Mr Stapleton runs to work. This takes approximately 1.45 hours. He ensures that he will arrive early to work so that he can relax in a café, eating breakfast and having a coffee. Travelling home from work is the best part of the day in Mr Stapleton's opinion. He states that it is during this bike ride that he can unwind and forget about work.

The Benefits of Exercise

4. Mr Stapleton states that exercise has helped him with his marriage. His wife is an exercise addict and also competes in triathlons. He has found that they have a great bond because of their competitive spirits. Further, Mr Stapleton has found that exercise helps him stay mentally well. It improves his mental fitness, clarity of thought and enables him to remain competitive in practice.
5. Exercise has also allowed Mr Stapleton to enjoy his practice more. He finds that he can operate on less sleep, can endure more stress and he believes it gives him an edge in court. When Mr Stapleton feels physically and mentally fit, he gets more competitive and feels that he can present his client's case to the best of his abilities.
6. Mr Stapleton has found that exercise has been extremely beneficial to his social life. On his morning rides to work he often cycles with a group of similarly aged individuals. The people in this group are not all lawyers or barristers, so it is not about networking or marketing. It is a casual group of people who strive to compete and push each other to do the best they can. Afterward, they go to a café to unwind and talk.

Staying Motivated

7. Mr Stapleton has found that the best motivation to keep exercising is thinking about how you feel when you stop. He states that he often does find staying motivated challenging, especially when he is extremely busy and feels as though he cannot complete his work and exercise. In the past, where Mr Stapleton stopped exercising, he experienced a reduction in energy; losing all the aforementioned benefits. Further, he finds that if he maintains his commitment to himself to exercise then he is more likely to stay on top of all his work.

A Cautionary Tale

8. Mr Stapleton cautions anyone considering taking up cycling as an exercise activity. His bike is his joy but it is important to be mindful of motorists. The sport is dangerous; but, Mr Stapleton states that cyclists just have to be extra careful.
9. Most importantly, Mr Stapleton comments that in the legal profession it is very important to attribute time to yourself. There is always the temptation to put work first and it takes a lot of effort to exercise; however, once someone puts in the initial effort and your body starts to get fit then sometimes it can be quite difficult to stop.

BIOGRAPHY

Giles Stapleton

Barrister, 9 Selborne Chambers, Sydney

Giles Stapleton was admitted as a solicitor in 2005 before being called to the NSW Bar in 2012. Prior to coming to the Bar, Giles held executive positions in public companies in the Australian property funds management industry. His primary practice is in corporate, commercial, property, equity and family law. He also has particular legal interest in property development, investment management, financing arrangements, corporate/family asset structures and directors' duties.

Alan Conolly

Senior Partner, AR Conolly & Company

Alan Conolly founded the legal firm AR Conolly and Company in 1968 where he remains a partner in full-time practice. He has chaired companies in diverse industries including, oil, IT, dance, agrochemicals and film. Life Members of the Law Society of New South Wales, publisher of Benchmark.

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