

Stress Management

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We all have those days when everything that could possibly go wrong does but if this is the rule rather than the exception then you may be suffering from stress. Stress not only impacts on your productivity but can also adversely affect your health. Here are some tips to help minimize your stress levels:

Don't take on too much

Do you believe that there aren't enough hours in the day? Sadly there are only 24 hours and we need to be sure that we don't try and do too much. Too often we place unreasonable demands on ourselves and this increases the likelihood of stress and decreases our efficiency. Remind yourself that you can't be perfect all of the time.

Prioritise

Make a list of all the tasks you need to do. An organized list, from most important to least, is a lot easier to tackle than the jumble in your mind that just stresses you out. Once you've completed the task cross it off, seeing the list shorten is one of the most rewarding accomplishments. Take 10 minutes at the end of each day to update your list and move incomplete items to tomorrow.

Learn to say "No"

Too often we take on additional work because we don't want to upset someone by saying no. Remember that you are only capable of handling so much and that saying no is actually going to help you. If your boss is placing unreasonable demands on you ask him which is most important or urgent so that you know which to focus on – your boss needs to prioritise too!

Get Organised

Clear the clutter! Establish a simple filing system to keep you organized and try to deal with a piece of paper only once – deal with it straightaway to avoid unnecessary clutter. Set aside time to handle routine admin like filing and reading your emails. A clear desk = a clear mind.

Determine your deadlines and plan accordingly

Don't leave things to the last minute. If you're handling a large project then break it down into manageable chunks and deal with them a bit at a time. This helps to make the project less daunting and relieve unnecessary stress.

Take regular breaks

The temptation to push through until the task is complete is sometimes overwhelming but it is always better to take a break. Get up from your desk, stretch your legs and get some fresh air. It will clear your head and help you to focus better. Don't get trapped into playing the "First to arrive, last to leave" game that often happens in corporate environments – make an appointment at least once a week so that you're forced to leave work on time.

Take your full leave entitlement

The office won't fall apart if you're not there. Even if you don't actually go away you should take your leave and just relax away from the usual stresses of the office. Try and establish the right balance of work and leisure so that you enjoy going to work – no one on their deathbed ever says that they wish they'd spent more time at the office!

If these techniques don't help to ease the stress you're feeling or if the pressure of extra work is not easing then you should approach your boss to let him know how you're feeling. Be honest but try to be positive in your comments and make suggestions that could benefit others in the office too.