

Health tip: Stress in the workplace



83% of US workers said they suffer from daily work-related stress. Besides the toll on a person's health, stress costs businesses (and the economy) billions of dollars in absenteeism, decreased productivity, lower output, employee turnover, and healthcare costs.¹ While there is no magic pill to reduce or eliminate stress, there are several ways you can learn to help manage the stress in your life and in your workplace.

Stress may affect your health in multiple negative ways. Chronic stress may:²

- Increase your risk for a variety of physical health problems including digestive issues, headaches, muscle tension, heart disease, heart attack, high blood pressure, stroke, and weight gain.
- Increase your risk for a variety of mental health problems including anxiety, depression, sleep issues, memory, and concentration impairment.
- Cause individuals to indulge in unhealthy behaviors for stress relief, such as consuming alcohol, smoking or self-isolation.
- Suppress the body's immune system, making it more difficult to recover from illnesses.

Stress in the Workplace³

There are different types of stressors, and you may experience multiple at the same time, such as:

- A general increase in workload with staffing changes.
- An increase in workload related to adhering to new tools and protocols.
- Customers or workplace visitors with service or product grievances.
- Caretaking of children or adult family members in addition to meeting work requirements.
- Digital overload.

Because workplace stress is inevitable, providing stress management tools may mitigate stress and lower its costs to the business over time. Additionally, utilizing these tools may offer employees improved mental well-being and overall health.¹

There are two main types of worker-related stress including:⁴

- **Burnout** – Feelings of extreme exhaustion and being overwhelmed.
- **Secondary traumatic stress** – Stress reactions and symptoms resulting from exposure to another individual's traumatic experiences, rather than from direct exposure to a traumatic event.

What may you do?⁵

Managing stress effectively involves taking both proactive and reactive steps to help reduce its impact on your life. It's important to take a breath before you react in a stressful situation and find which stress relief techniques work best for you.



Self-care techniques may include:

- Writing in a journal.
- Creating a support system through your family, friends, supervisors, and teammates who you may discuss your thoughts and feelings with.
- Practicing breathing and relaxation techniques.
- Maintaining a healthier diet and getting adequate sleep and exercise.
- Taking time off from your job to unwind.
- Avoiding or limiting caffeine and use of alcohol.



Additional Support may be provided by:⁶

- A buddy system.
- An Employee Assistance Program.
- Community Resources such as non-profit and governmental organizations.



Sources:

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