

Stress at Work

How to Reduce and Manage Job and Workplace Stress



In this difficult economy, you may find it harder than ever to cope with challenges on the job. Both the stress we take with us when we go to work and the stress that awaits us on the job are on the rise – and employers, managers, and workers all feel the added pressure. While some stress is a normal part of life, excessive stress interferes with your productivity and reduces your physical and emotional health, so it's

important to find ways to keep it under control. Fortunately, there is a lot that you can do to manage and reduce stress at work.

Warning signs of excessive stress at work

When people feel overwhelmed, they lose confidence and become irritable or withdrawn, making them less productive and effective and their work less rewarding. If the warning signs of work stress go unattended, they can lead to bigger problems. Beyond interfering with job performance and satisfaction, chronic or intense stress can also lead to physical and emotional health problems.

Signs and symptoms of excessive job and workplace stress

- Feeling anxious, irritable, or depressed
- Apathy, loss of interest in work.
- Problems sleeping
- Fatigue,
- Trouble concentrating
- Muscle tension or headaches
- Stomach problems
- Social withdrawal
- Loss of sex drive
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope

Common causes of excessive workplace stress

- ❖ Fear of layoffs
- ❖ Increased demands for overtime due to staff cutbacks
- ❖ Pressure to perform to meet rising expectations but with no increase in job satisfaction
- ❖ Pressure to work at optimum levels – all the time!

Reducing job stress by taking care of yourself

When stress on the job is interfering with your ability to work, care for yourself, or manage your personal life, it's time to take action. Start by paying attention to your physical and emotional health. When your own needs are taken care of, you're stronger and more resilient to stress. The better you feel, the better equipped you'll be to manage work stress without becoming overwhelmed.

Taking care of yourself doesn't require a total lifestyle overhaul. Even small things can lift your mood, increase your energy, and make you feel like you're back in the driver's seat. Take things one step at a time, and as you make more positive lifestyle choices, you'll soon notice a noticeable difference in your stress level, both at home at work.

- ❖ Get moving
- ❖ Make food choices that keep you going and make you feel good
- ❖ Drink alcohol in moderation and avoid nicotine
- ❖ Get enough sleep

Reducing job stress by prioritizing and organizing

When job and workplace stress surrounds you, you can't ignore it, but there are simple steps you can take to regain control over yourself and the situation. Your growing sense of self-control will also be perceived by others as the strength it is, leading to better relationships at work. Here are some suggestions for reducing job stress by prioritizing and organizing your responsibilities.

- ❖ Time management: create a balanced schedule, don't over commit yourself, leave earlier in the morning, plan breaks
- ❖ Task management prioritize, break projects into small steps, delegate responsibility

Reducing workplace stress by improving emotional intelligence

Even if you're in a job where the environment has grown increasingly stressful, you can retain a large measure of self-control and self-confidence by understanding and practicing emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage and use your emotions in positive and constructive ways. It's about communicating with others in ways that draw people to you, overcome differences, repair wounded feelings, and defuse tension and stress.

Reducing workplace stress by breaking bad habits

As you learn to manage your job stress and improve your work relationships, you'll have more control over your ability to think clearly and act appropriately. You will be able to break habits that add to your stress at work – and you'll even be able to change negative ways of thinking about things that only add to your stress.

- ❖ Resist perfectionism
- ❖ Clean up your workplace
- ❖ Think positively about your work

What managers or employers can do to reduce stress at work

It's in a manager's best interest to keep stress levels in the workplace to a minimum. Managers must act as positive role models, especially in times of high stress. All of the tips mentioned in this article are twice as important for managers to follow. If someone that we admire remains calm, it is much easier to remain calm ourselves – and vice versa! There are also organizational changes that managers and employers can make to reduce workplace stress.

- ❖ Improve communication
- ❖ Consult employees

- ❖ Offer rewards and incentives
- ❖ Cultivate a friendly social atmosphere
 - ❖ http://helpguide.org/mental/work_stress_management.htm