

HealthyBy Choice

...One Day at a Time

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STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

JOB STRESS

Constant stress can weaken your immune system and make you more likely to get sick. It can also make an existing health problem worse. Stress has also been shown to lead to long-term health problems such as heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure or lead to drug or alcohol abuse as a coping mechanism.

Everyone feels and responds to stress differently. It's important to recognize some typical signs of job stress which include headaches, trouble concentrating and having a short temper. Any of the methods below can have a significant impact on your overall emotional well-being.

- **Focus on the here and now.** If your mind is racing in 1,000 different directions, it's in a constant state of anticipation. Help your mind move to the here and now by paying attention to your breathing. Since you always breathe in the present moment, focusing on breathing makes you break your pattern of thought and brings you back to the present.
- **Change the scenery.** Instead of eating lunch at your desk, eat it outside or sit in the break room and enjoy lunch and a healthy conversation with your colleagues.
- **Take breaks during the day.** While we all have deadlines, it doesn't mean that all the work has to be completed at once. Take a few minutes to stretch your legs or go for a walk on your lunch hour. Take a second to look out the window and drink in the scenery.
- **Be real.** Set realistic deadlines to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Prioritize your workload and focus on the most important items first. In some situations, it's okay to say "no" or delegate a task to someone else.
- **Create a balance.** It's important to have a work-life balance to avoid undue stress and burnout. Set aside some time to go to the gym, engage in a hobby or socialize with friends.



These stress relievers release endorphins from the body that clean out built-up adrenaline. It's important to remember that no one is ever completely in control of a situation, but by bringing your mind and body into the here and now, it allows you to better cope with whatever is thrown your way.

TIPS FOR MANAGING STRESS

- Keep a positive attitude.
- Accept that there are events that you cannot control.
- Be assertive instead of aggressive. Assert your feelings, opinions, or beliefs instead of becoming angry, defensive, or passive.
- Learn and practice relaxation techniques; try meditation, yoga, or tai-chi for stress management.
- Exercise regularly. Your body can fight stress better when it is fit.
- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Learn to manage your time more effectively.
- Set limits appropriately and learn to say no to requests that would create excessive stress in your life.
- Make time for hobbies, interests, and relaxation.
- Get enough rest and sleep. Your body needs time to recover from stressful events.
- Don't rely on alcohol, drugs, or compulsive behaviors to reduce stress.
- Seek out social support. Spend enough time with those you enjoy.
- Seek treatment with a psychologist or other mental health professional trained in stress management or biofeedback techniques to learn healthy ways of dealing with the stress in your life.

* Sometimes the most productive thing you can do is relax. *

