

## Managing Stress at Work



Managing stress at work is a skill that we all need to obtain because we all experience stress. Effectively managing stress at work is necessary to staying productive and avoiding burnout. No matter what the cause, there are some fairly simple and universally effective steps you can take to facilitate managing stress at work and regaining your sense of balance. When you're feeling overwhelmed, give these stress management tips a try:

### Don't Forget To Breathe

Yes, managing stress at work can be as simple as taking a good deep breath. When you are stressed, you breathe more shallowly and your blood-pressure rises. The lack of oxygen actually makes it harder to focus. This is why a stressful situation often leaves you feeling muddle-headed. You can combat both of these problems by filling your lungs to capacity. Stop what you are doing and take five slow breaths, breathing into the deepest parts of your chest. It's amazing how much better you will feel and how much more relaxed your body will be – who knew managing stress could be that simple?

### Move Your Body

When you are stressed, your muscles also tighten. This is especially true of the neck, shoulders, and back. Unfortunately, you may not realize that your body is freezing up on you until later in the day, when it really starts to hurt. So it's good to make sure that you move around a bit during the day, especially if you sit at a desk or behind a computer. At the same time that you take a break to breathe, do a little stretching, roll your shoulders, bend, reach, and try to work out all the creaks and kinks.

### Shift Your Focus

Oftentimes, we get so wrapped up in a project, problem or challenge that we lose all perspective and forward momentum. This type of stress at work can cause us to feel stuck, frustrated, and unable to make any progress. If you find yourself reaching your breaking point, walk away from that issue for a minute and focus on something else. For example, if you are trying to work through your company budget and the numbers seem to be playing tricks on



you, try simply stepping away and spending a few minutes doing something brainless. Organize your desk drawer, file some papers, check your email or return a few phone calls. Let your mind change gears and when you come back to the problem at hand, you'll find that you see it with fresher eyes and a clearer head.

## Take A Break

If simply focusing on a different activity doesn't reduce your stress, it's time to get up and physically walk away for a few moments. Take a stroll in the fresh air, get a cup of coffee, go out for lunch – but do something that allows you to completely disconnect from work. If it's near the end of the day, sometimes it's best to just turn off the lights and head home for a good night's sleep. Your brain will subconsciously still be working through the problem, even when you are watching TV or playing with your kids. And quite often, the solution will be right there waiting for you in the morning.

While all of these tips for reducing stress at work seem simple, they can really help keep you productive (and sane).

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