

STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Keeping up with the demands of a career and family can be very stressful, and stressed-out employees can lead to a less productive workplace.

In addition to emotional problems, stress can have health effects, including insomnia, anxiety, upset stomach, muscle aches, and headache. When stress is left unsolved, though, it can lead to more serious health risks such as cardiovascular disease, increased blood pressure and cholesterol, weakened immunity, and ulcers. The resulting poor health and attitude can lead to absences from work, poor performance, and increased workplace injuries.

These tips can help employees to have a happier, healthier workplace.

- **Change your environment**

Is your work area set up for peak performance? Remove excess papers and clutter and keep frequently used items easily accessible. When feeling overwhelmed, head outside for a short break.

- **Eat right and exercise**

Cut down on caffeine, eat a balanced diet, and do physical exercise to keep fit. Don't skip meals. Simple stretching and desk exercises can also help relieve midday stress.

- **Try power naps**

It isn't always possible in the middle of a busy day, but if you have ten free minutes, consider taking a short nap.

- **Prioritize your work**

It is easy to feel bogged down when faced with a pile of work that needs to get done. Take ten minutes to list the most important tasks and do what you can in the time allotted.

- **Alert your supervisor**

If you are faced with a workload that is too large or too small and unrealistic deadlines, talk to your supervisor to find solutions.

Employees aren't the only ones who are responsible for reducing stress. Employers should also take proper steps to create a safe, stress-free work environment. Start with these tips.

- **Listen to your employees**

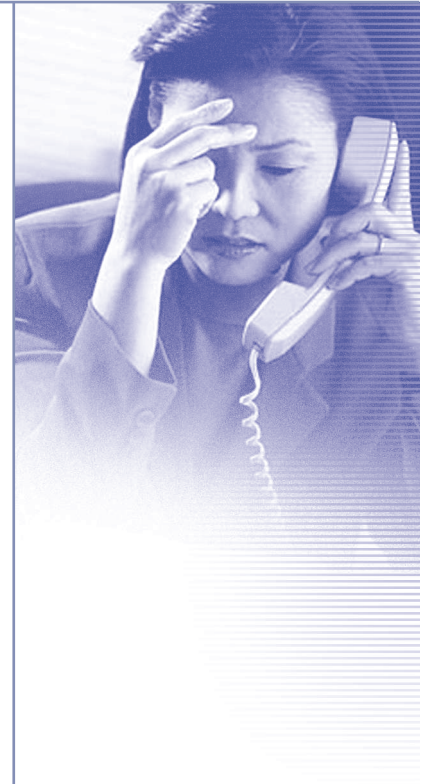
Hold group discussions or design a survey to find sources of stress and the best steps to reduce stress. Measure job satisfaction and find ways to improve it.

- **Communicate change**

Let your employees know what you are doing to reduce stress. This could include taking extra safety measures to make a safer workplace or bringing in lunch occasionally to boost morale.

- **Be realistic**

Do not give an employee more work than he or she can realistically handle. Check in with employees to make sure they are able to do quality work in the time given. Provide training so that employees can feel confident about their skills and procedures.



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