

Conquer Work-Related Stress

Did You Know?

When you're feeling stressed, you can help ease your mind and body using these five stress relievers:

1. Move your body to re-energize yourself.
2. Tell a joke and laugh.
3. Relax your mind by taking a mental vacation.
4. Take a deep breath, hold it and then slowly exhale. Repeat four or five times.
5. Write about a stressful experience to help let go of negative feelings.



The printer is jammed, and the phone won't stop ringing. Your in-box is filled with unread e-mails, and you're 10 minutes late for a meeting. While these everyday occurrences can make you feel stressed, they're actually minor sources of work-related stress that are normal and can help keep you productive.

Higher levels of stress, however, can lead to burnout and cause you to become less productive. Sources of high levels of stress fall into seven major categories. Think about whether any of the following is a source of stress for you:

Control. Do you believe that you have a great deal of responsibility but little control or decision-making power in your job?

Competence. Are you concerned about your ability to perform well, think that you're inappropriately challenged or feel insecure in your job?

Clarity. Do you feel uncertain about what your duties are, how they may be changing or what your department's or organization's goals are?

Communication. Is there poor communication in your workplace, or are you unable to express your concerns, frustrations or other emotions?

Support. Is it difficult for you to resolve work-related problems because you feel unsupported by your coworkers?

Significance. Do you find your job absent of meaning and find yourself unable to take pride in it?

Increased responsibilities. Have you assumed additional responsibilities?

Know The Warning Signs

Whatever is causing your stress, you should know the warning signs of being over-stressed:

- Headaches or backaches
- Trouble sleeping
- Neck or shoulder stiffness
- Irritability
- Relationship problems
- Changes in appetite

Long-term stress can also affect your immune system, making it harder for you to fight off disease. It can also contribute to high blood pressure and heart disease and make an existing health problem worse.