

10 Ways to Manage Stress in Your Workplace



“I feel hopeless at my job”

“I find it hard to fall asleep when I get back from work”

Most of us have been there, struggling to meet deadlines, finding it difficult to concentrate and losing interest in a job we used to love at the beginning.

Stress in the workplace is a major issue in the world today. According to statistics given by [The American Institute of Stress](#), 40% of people in the world experience stress in their workplace daily.

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Five Causes of Stress in The Workplace

- Heavy workload.
- Toxic/discriminatory work environment.
- Performing boring or unfulfilling work.
- Job instability/insecurity.
- Unrealistic expectations and targets.

Effects of Stress in The Workplace

1. Physical Effects:

a. Obesity: A [survey](#) carried out in Canada estimated that 90% of people who are overweight are experiencing work-related stress in the workplace. When you are stressed at work, you tend to eat a lot especially foods high in calories which makes you gain weight.

b. Drug/Alcohol Abuse: If you are stressed at work, you may resort to taking drugs or alcohol as a way to cope with the expectations and pressure of work on you.

c. Heart Problems: Stress at work can increase the risk of developing heart related problems or diseases. According to a [Yale Medicine Psychologist](#), long term stress increases the risk of high blood pressure, stroke and heart attacks.

2. Mental Effects:

a. Anxiety Disorders: When you are stressed at work, you can easily develop mental health issues like anxiety. In relation to mental health, anxiety disorder refers to a range of disorders identified by excessive worry, fear, nervousness that can affect the normal daily functioning of a person.

Examples of anxiety disorders you are likely to develop when you are stressed at work include Generalized Anxiety Disorder(GAD) and Panic Disorder.

b. Insomnia: A major effect of being stressed at work is finding it difficult to fall asleep at night. Long term stress increases the production of the stress hormone-cortisol, which affects your sleep patterns and rhythms and makes it difficult for you to sleep at bedtime.

C. Depression: Long term stress at work can reduce/disrupt the production of chemicals like serotonin, dopamine (mood lifters) in your body. The reduction/disruption of these chemicals can lead to depression.

Also, high level of stress at work can increase negative thought patterns, social isolation, insomnia which can contribute to depression/depressive symptoms.

10 Ways of Managing Stress at Work



Here are ten ways you can manage and effectively reduce stress in your workplace:

1. Identify Your Triggers

The first thing to do when you are stressed at work is to find out what causes it. You need to find out what work activity is making you stressed at work. Find out if it's your workplace, workload, job expectations etc that is making you feel stressed. Only by identifying your triggers can you start working on a solution.

2. Add Mindfulness Practices into Your Workday

Mindfulness is a mental practice where you become aware of the present. When you practice mindfulness, you are able to take notice and become conscious of your mind, body and environment. It also helps you stay focused and less overwhelmed.

Examples of mindfulness exercises that can help you reduce stress at work:

- Mindful Appreciation.
- Mindful Immersion.
- Mindful Focus.
- Mindful Breathing.

- Mindful Meditation.

You can also make use of mindfulness apps like [Headspace](#), [Insight Timer](#), Calm, [Smiling Mind](#) etc.

3. Physical Exercise

Exercising regularly is a good way to manage stress at your job. When you exercise, stress hormones-cortisol and adrenaline are reduced while the production of feel good chemicals in your brain like endorphins, serotonin are increased.

How can You Include Exercise in your Work Day?

- Walking/Riding to Work
- Using the work gym during breaks
- Taking the stairs instead of the elevator
- Using standing desks in your workspace.

4. Creating Time Management Techniques and Routines

Time management is the process of planning the time spent on specific activities in order to work more efficiently. The aim is for you to do more in less time.

Here are 4 Time Management Strategies to Use at Work:

- Set daily and specific goals
- Break down big projects into smaller tasks
- Eliminate distractions especially from your phone.
- Do your most important tasks first

5. Work-life Balance

It is important that you know how to allocate your time and energy for work and your personal life. Striking a healthy work -life balance will help you reduce work-related stress significantly.

The best way to do this is to set clear boundaries for yourself. For example, you can decide not to check work emails at home or not bring work documents at home.

6. Nurture Hobbies and Interests outside Work

If your work makes up 90% of your life, you are bound to be stressed at work. So, you need to have hobbies and pastimes that you pursue outside work.

Examples of hobbies and Interests to pursue outside work include cooking, joining reading clubs, learning a new instrument, starting or joining a band etc.

7. Ask for Help

If you feel stressed at work, you can ask for help from your colleagues or employers. They can help you reduce your workload or help you find better ways to handle it.

8. Develop Healthy Responses

When you are stressed at work, you tend to respond in self-harming ways like overeating, blaming others, overreacting, using drug/alcohol, self-isolation etc.

Therefore, you need to develop healthier responses e.g meditating, exercising, deep breathing etc to manage or reduce stress at work.

9. Take Regular Breaks

One of the best ways to manage stress at work is to take a break. Go on vacations and trips. Take regular walks. Hang out with your friends. Sign up for spa or massage sessions.

This will help you become more energized, reduce physical tension and reduce stress.

10. Create a Comfortable Work Environment

You will be less stressed at work if your workspace is more comfortable. Personalize your work space with items that motivate you. Keep your work environment organized. You can also arrange your workspace ergonomically i.e in a way that will reduce discomfort and strain on your body.

Here are 3 Ways to Make Your Workplace Ergonomic:

- Use a standing desk.
- Find the right work chair for you.
- Adjust keyboard height.

Final Note: The effects of being stressed at work can be very dire. Managing stress in your workplace is therefore very important and beneficial for your mental, physical and overall well-being.

