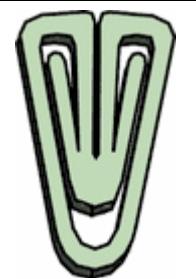


Wellness WorkLife News!

Simple Stress Busters for Your Work Day

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NOVEMBER 2003



Traffic delays. Late assignments. Office politics. Budget cutbacks. No doubt some or all of these stressors can be blamed for the stress you feel each day at work. But looking at such stressful situations from a new perspective can help you relax and make significant progress in reducing your stress. "In fact, if you take a step back, you may realize that, despite the occasional significant problems in the workplace, much of what bugs you on a day-to-day basis is actually the small stuff," says Richard Carlson, Ph.D., author of "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff at Work." Here are three steps you can take to reduce your work-related stress.

Step 1. Evaluate the situation

Keep a stress journal for two weeks. Write what caused your stress, the day of the week and time of the day it occurred and how you handled it. At the end of the two weeks, read your journal to determine if there's a pattern. Is your stress related to the type of work you're doing? Is the job too complicated? Do you need more training? Is your workload too much? Is the work boring with not enough challenge? Or does your stress come from people --demanding managers, snippy co-workers or complaining customers?

Step 2. Write a letter

Summarize your evaluation in a letter to your supervisor. The main purpose of writing this letter is to clarify your thoughts. Maybe you need more training, a job with less people contact, a slower-paced job, a more challenging job, more help or a staff that gets along better. Don't show the letter to your boss until you're clear about what's causing the stress and you have some solutions.

Step 3. Wait

Change often takes time so you need to be patient. But if it's obvious the situation isn't going to change and you still want to keep your job, you can reduce your stress by using the following stress busters.

- ☒ Write in your journal. Just the act of writing in your journal will reduce your stress. Keep track of what is or isn't improving. Speak to your supervisor again after a few weeks.
- ☒ Listen. Sometimes people are so anxious to tell their side of a problem that they forget to listen. Ask your co-workers their perspective of the situation--then listen. "The slightest improvement in our listening skills can pay enormous dividends in the way of better relationships, enhanced performance and, yes, even stress reduction," says Dr. Carlson.
- ☒ See the humor in it. Make up an office sitcom or mentally dress people in clothes from a different era. When you see the funny side of a situation, it doesn't seem like such a crisis.
- ☒ Create a safe haven. Close your eyes for a few minutes and remember a very peaceful place where you were relaxed and happy. When you open your eyes, you'll feel refreshed.
- ☒ Take a 10-minute break. If you can, go outside in the fresh air and take a walk. Removing yourself temporarily from the situation will help you gain your composure.
- ☒ Have lunch with a friend. Call someone you enjoy being with and go out for a nice, relaxing lunch. Doing this on a regular basis will give you something enjoyable to look forward to.
- ☒ Take a vacation day. You don't function well at work when you're overly stressed, so take a day off to have some fun. This will recharge your batteries and keep things in perspective.
- ☒ Accept the situation. According to Dr. Carlson, "there's something incredibly peaceful in recognizing and surrendering to the fact that small stuff does happen and that the nature of life is that it's full of conflicting choices, demands, desires and expectations."