Nine Ways to Control Stress



Safety Talk

What's at Stake?

Stress – everyone has it. It is a natural part of life, but too much stress can cause health problems and can affect your ability to work safely. It's becoming increasingly difficult to disconnect and unwind in our 24/7/365 world of news, noise, and responsibilities.

What's the Danger?

The accumulated stresses of everyday life can damage your health in irreversible ways – from early aging to heart problems to long-term disability.

Physical symptoms of excessive stress can include headaches, digestive upsets, muscle tension, sweating, shaking, heart irregularities, fatigue and other discomforts.

Emotional and mental symptoms can include nervousness, depression, confusion, inability to concentrate, mood swings and anger.

Long-term stress has been linked to ailments such as heart disease, cancer and ulcers.

Certain behaviors may also be symptoms of too much stress – excessive eating, drinking, smoking or drug use. Recklessness in driving and work activities may also be a sign of stress.

How to Protect Yourself

1. Learn to manage your time better to avoid last-minute deadline pressures or work overload. Learn to delegate some responsibilities.
2. Tackle first things first. Learn to complete your work in order of priority – doing the most important task first and saving the least important for last.
3. Talk things over with somebody you trust. This helps you by letting off steam, and you may come up with some solutions.
4. Learn to focus on solutions rather than problems. Instead of just complaining about what is wrong, try to find ways to fix it.
5. Learn some specific stress reduction skills. Many people find relief from stress by practicing techniques such as deep breathing, progressive relaxation or even meditation.
6. Get regular exercise. It will help you fight stress in two ways. First, exercise

is relaxing, and it gets your mind off your worries. Second, being physically fit can help you to handle stressful events better.
7. Eat regular balanced meals. You'll feel better and you'll improve your health. Don't overdo the caffeine because it can increase nervousness. Take it easy on sugar, as well as alcohol and other drugs.
8. Get enough sleep and take time to relax each day.
9. Develop some interests outside of work. Spend some time on a recreational activity each day – even if you have only 15 minutes to spare.

Final Word

It is important to reduce stress, so you can concentrate on doing your job well and safely. Controlling stress will help you spend quality time with family and friends outside of work too.

What would you do?

Your busiest time at work happens to coincide with the holiday season. You're working long hours, work itself is even more chaotic than usual, and you've got a ton of things to get done before family comes to stay for the holiday. You feel the stress of it all piling up. What would you do?