

Momentum

Managing workplace stress



Yale

Counseling & Support Services
1-800-327-9240
For TTY Users: 1-800-456-4006

Fitting in fitness breaks

- ✓ The typical office worker spends about nine hours per day sitting. Taking fitness breaks at work is vital for stress relief and better health.
- ✓ Easy in-place exercises include stretching, incline pushups against a desk or wall, bicep curls using reams of paper, progressive muscle tightening/relaxing, stationary jogging, squats and shadow boxing.
- ✓ Mobile activities can include walking around the work complex, taking the stairs, and convening walking meetings instead of desk-bound discussions.

The impact of excessive stress

If you spot the warning signs of accumulating stress, it's important to adopt coping strategies before serious health problems develop.

In today's world, everyone knows what stress feels like. Some stress can be good—a positive push that helps you rise to daily challenges. However, when stress triggers your body's fight-or-flight stress response—which can result even from everyday events—its effect on your emotional and physical health can be damaging if the stress is prolonged.

- Excessive stress shows up in ways such as muscle tightness and pain, headaches, fatigue, sleep problems, high blood pressure, low libido and digestive problems.
- It also often causes restlessness, concentration problems, anxiety, irritability and depression.
- Stress can lead to angry outbursts, social withdrawal, and unhealthy responses such as overeating, smoking cigarettes or abusing alcohol and/or drugs.
- Longer-term effects can include development of cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disorders and obesity.

If you know how stress typically affects you, and you see early warning signs such as emotional upset, physical discomfort and appetite changes, it's time to start actively managing your stress. Your program can help.

Many people are so accustomed to chronic stress that they don't recognize it; over time this can wear down the immune system and lead to illnesses of many kinds.



Log on to MagellanHealth.com/member today!

Magellan
HEALTHCARE SM

Keeping work stress at work

A rough day at work can sometimes follow you home and spill over into your family relations. Try these techniques that help keep work and home life separate.

- Make a conscious effort to mentally remove yourself from work before coming home. Breathe deeply and release distressing work-related concerns.
- Familiar returning-home rituals can help clear your head and refresh you. Do something simple like changing clothes and washing your face. Or, stand out on the back porch for a moment to breathe. Put on your favorite soothing music or do your favorite exercise. Experiment and find out what works best for you.
- Enjoy a little down time. Don't rush right into preparing a meal if you can help it. Grab at least a few moments of relaxation with your partner, children and/or pets first.
- At home for the evening, avoid work-related email and messaging when possible. If you can't fully avoid it, limit it to a set time, away from the family space.

Tips for stress management



Track stressors

Try keeping a journal where you document situations that create excessive stress and how you respond to them. Record your impressions about the environment, including the people and circumstances involved, the physical setting and how you reacted. Think about ways you could potentially change the stressors or respond differently to them.



Prioritize health, relaxation

Adopt a relaxation technique such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga, tai chi, or meditation. Keep your diet healthy and well-balanced. Try not to fall back on "comfort" eating with junk food to ease stress. Strive to get more sleep. Follow a regular exercise routine that you can enjoy and sustain.



Have a "third space"

Although work and family may consume most of your time, be sure that you (and your partner) have a separate space where you can explore your interests and relax. Such spaces and activities—gardening, reading, playing music, crafting, painting, fishing, martial arts, poker nights—help you maintain a distinct, healthy identity.

Additional sources: WebMD.com, Harvard Business Review.



Webinar—On Wednesday, June 14, join us to learn successful work relationship skills: *How to Improve Your Relationship with Management for Organizational Success*. Register [here](#).