

9 Ways to Reduce Stress at Work

Do you feel increased pressure at work? Does your time spin out of control? Does your work lead to stress and overwhelm? Use these nine simple steps to reduce daily stress at work so you can enjoy the balance of life you were meant to live.

- 1. Set priorities.**
What are your top three priorities today? Move through your workday with focus and concentration. Spend most of your time on the top three things that are most important. You have a report due, a meeting with your boss, and need to prep for a client meeting? Place your focus there. Minimize other distractions.
- 2. Organize your day.**
Give yourself a sense of control. Take 10 minutes in the morning to map out your day. What openings do you have in your schedule? How can you fill them with priorities, rather than distracting activities that aren't important?
- 3. Break down your projects.**
Overwhelm is a big stress builder. Look at your projects. How can you break them down into manageable pieces? Take a moment to break down your projects for the day and then get to work. Can't get everything done today? Schedule them tomorrow or later in the week.
- 4. Spend time with friends.**
Keep good friendships going. Go to lunch with a friend. Spend time socializing after work. If you devote time to good friends, you'll have a chance to unwind and have fun. Quality relationships are great stress reducers.
- 5. Take a break.**
Do you "power through" your day without stopping? Take a real break during the day. Resist the urge to work through lunch. Leave the office, order a meal, and enjoy yourself for a moment. Turn your brain off. Return to the office refreshed.
- 6. Produce quality work.**
Spend time on quality rather than trying to get lots of things done. If you do a quality job, you'll feel good about the results. Plus, you will avoid the added stress of work coming back to you because it wasn't done well in the first place.
- 7. Build a team.**
Rally people around your project. In most cases, you don't have to work on projects solo. Recruit people with strengths that compliment yours and fill in for your weaknesses. Give others a chance to contribute on important projects; achieve more success collectively while you reduce everyone's stress.
- 8. Know your stress outlets.**

If you face high stress, what are your outlets? What are the best ways for you personally to relieve stress? Good stress relievers include exercise, like taking a walk, reading a book, or closing your eyes and relaxing for 10 minutes. Create and post your own list. Use it when your stress elevates.

9. Assess where your time goes.

What do you spend your time doing each day? Keep a time log for one week. Write down how you spend each hour. Review your log to look for opportunities to gain balance. For example, turn your one-hour solo commute into a train ride. Take that extra time on the train to listen to music or read the newspaper.

When you face day-to-day challenges, use the above nine techniques to refocus and reduce stress. Take time out to do any of these nine things - even when you think you can't - to experience renewed energy and greater productivity.

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