

**Stress** is an interesting emotion or feeling. A little stress is not always bad: it can be an effective motivator, and the adrenaline that stress creates can help improve both mental and physical performance. Too much stress can negatively affect your performance at work, your relationships, and your physical and mental health. Fortunately, there are many ways to control and reduce stress and increase health and wellness.

## How Stress Affects Work

There are many negative effects when someone carries stress to work. A couple examples include:

1. **Lack of focus.** Dealing with any of the above stressors is going to come with a mental load. Constantly giving thought to a stressful situation takes your mind off the task at hand.
2. **Strain on work relationships.** Stress can cause a person to shut down or become angry towards those around them. This situation negatively affects communication between co-workers. Lack of communication or teamwork can lead to injury.

## Stress Management Techniques to Help

- Take **good care of yourself.** Get enough sleep and exercise, eat healthfully and be sure to drink water throughout the day.
- Build a **positive outlook.** Try to maintain a "can-do" attitude. Focus your energy on things that make you feel good.

- **Laugh often.** Laughter can help you to stay upbeat. Watch a funny movie, share jokes with friends and look for the humor in everyday life.
- Learn how to **relax.** Take a few deep breaths and envision yourself in a peaceful place. You can also take a walk, listen to soothing music, or read a good book.
- **Exercise regularly.** Exercise is a powerful stress reliever.
- Learn to **recognize when you are stressed.** Excessive stress can cause symptoms like neck or back pain, headaches, upset stomach, trouble sleeping and fatigue. Try to recognize these signals, before they become overwhelming. Tell your supervisor if you feel the schedule is creating pressure that is affecting your work and health.
- **Focus on the things you can control.** When you feel anxious, ask yourself, "Is there anything I can do to change this situation?" If the answer is no, try to let it go.
- Have a **conversation** with a loved one, friend, or coworker about the issue.
- **Learn to say "no"** to obligations and activities that will overload your schedule.

## Conclusion

If your efforts to control your stress do not seem to be working, you might find it helpful to talk to a professional.