Tips for a Stress-Free Workday

Have you ever felt stressed at work? How about your employees? Of course! We all have. In the short term, stress can cause headaches, stomach issues and sleep problems. Long-term stress can contribute to health problems such as anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

Here are 10 tips to reduce and cope with job stress for you and those you supervise.

1. **Figure out why you're stressed out at work.** For example: too much work, limited support from coworkers, lack of advancement opportunities, inconsiderate customers, etc. Targetting your stressors will help you feel more in control and hopefully enable you to make some positive changes.

2. **Problem solve.** Once you identify the areas that cause stress, you can begin to problem solve. You may be able to change some work conditions; others you'll probably have to cope with. Learning how to manage your reaction to stressful situations which you can't change can help improve the overall quality of your life. Prepare your responses ahead of time if possible for situations you can anticipate such as an angry customer, a last-minute work request, conflicting priorities, or a complaining coworker.

3. **Take regular breaks, if possible.** Even a ten-minute walk around the block can help clear your head and provide new perspective. A good way to add movement into your work day is to schedule "walk and talk" meetings.

4. **Make a list.** Work on tasks in order of importance. Try to work on unpleasant tasks earlier in the day, so you aren't dreading that task all day. This also gives you a sense of achievement to start off your day. For larger tasks or those that require concentration, try to block out your time to avoid interruptions.

5. **Break projects into smaller tasks.** Then, focus on finishing one step at a time. End your day by writing down your priorities for the following day.

6. **Clean up your workspace.** Being able to find documents and supplies when you need them saves time and helps prevent stress. You may want to ask someone who is organized for help.

7. **Rely on a support network of coworkers, family and friends.** Try to avoid complaining and gossiping. Instead, focus on working together to build a better workplace.

8. **Find a mentor**. A mentor can help you solve work problems that may cause stress. Networking within your industry is a great way to find mentors and also be a mentor while socializing at the same time.

9. **Aim for balance between work life and personal life.** If you build a healthy personal life with family and friends, you might be better able to put work situations in the proper perspective, and enjoy the support of those around you.

10. **Create boundaries for yourself.** This can help you separate your work life and personal life. For example, turn off your phone during dinner or make a rule not to check your email after 9 pm. As much as possible, set aside some time for yourself to do something you enjoy.

If stress from work is too much, you may benefit from speaking with a professional counselor from the Employee Assistance Program who can help you identify areas that need changing, cope with stress, and find a satisfying life/work balance.

Source: Learn to Manage Your Work Stress
www.liveandworkwell.com/en/member/article.15428.html

Learn more about the services provided by the Employee Assistance Program including counseling, work-life resources, legal help, and financial planning.