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Managing Stress in the Workplace

Posted by Melissa Houston on Jan 29, 2013

Be proactive

According to Lisa Quast, a contributor to Forbes.com, it is important to find out what causes stress. If managers can pinpoint what triggers are likely to induce stress, it is much easier to take steps ahead of time to prevent them. She recommends:

1. **Practice primary prevention:** This suggests taking a look at the whole picture. Is workflow logical and running smoothly? Are employees feeling weighed down with too many responsibilities? Are they being given a reasonable amount of time to get their work done? All of these questions are good ones to ask when trying to find out what weighs on an employee's mind.
2. **Implement on-going intervention techniques:** While it is important to recognize triggers initially, it is also important to revisit the issue of stress on a regular basis. Find ways to assess employees' level of stress, such as surveys, assessments, and interventions.
3. **Provide management training:** Stress management training can really help with understanding the root causes of stress, the effects of excessive amounts of stress, and ways to help employees reduce workplace stress. Managers can also learn how management styles impact employees stress levels.

These are excellent tips to prevent stress in the work environment...but, no matter what, stress is likely to occur on the job. Here are some tips to combat stress (and you may even shed a few pounds in the process!)

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*Get in a good work out

According to WebMd, "Your body can fight stress better when it is fit." Working out allows you to release endorphins, which can also put you in a much better mood when times are tough.

*Meditation

The Mayo Clinic says, "Different types of meditation techniques can calm your mind and reduce stress. Concentration meditation involves focusing your attention on one thing, such as your breathing, an image you visualize or a real you look at – for example, a candle flame."

*Walk the dog (he'll appreciate it too!)

It is amazing how being outside and getting a breath of fresh air can alleviate stress on the brain. I know I always feel it is a productive day if the dog gets walked.

*Set aside an hour of "me" time

A lot of times we get stressed out because we over commit ourselves to too many work-related responsibilities. It is important to make time for personal hobbies and interests as a reminder of the fun things in life.

*Lean on a friend

Sometimes a venting session can have a major impact on stress management. Whether it be a simple phone call or lunch-date, it can be a relief to express your feelings and receive positive feedback from a close person you trust.

*Reduce caffeine intake

I know...this may be a tough one for some of you...it is for me too. But, "The temporary 'highs' caffeine and sugar provide often end in with a crash in mood and energy. By reducing the amount of coffee, soft drinks, chocolate, and sugar snacks in your diet, you'll feel more relaxed and you'll sleep better," says Melinda Smith and Robert Segal, authors of the article, "Stress Management."

A lot of times people become stressed and decide that it is just a way of life. However, it doesn't have to be that way. By embracing the suggestions above, or even coming up with your own solutions, you're already on the way to becoming a happier and healthier individual.

To learn more about stress prevention and management, check out these links:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/lisaquast/2011/09/26/the-importance-of-proactively-managing-workplace-stress/>

<http://life.gaiam.com/article/8-proven-ways-manage-stress-tips-mayo-clinic>

http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_management_relief_coping.htm

