



Effective Ways to Minimize Work-Related Stress

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Workplace stress can sometimes be endured on a healthy level, causing administrative assistants to boost their productivity levels. On the other hand, when the stress is excessive, it can interfere with their productivity as well as have a negative impact on both their physical and emotional health. Many times, the ability to deal with workplace stress determines how successful a person will be, meaning it is of the utmost importance to learn to cope as best as possible.

Coping with Stress as an Administrative Assistant

As an administrative assistant, it is important for to understand that you are not the boss. Instead, you are a lower-level employee who works for an upper-level worker. On the bright side, though, there is still one thing that you have complete control over, and that is yourself. You may not be able to control everything in your work environment, but you for sure can control your actions, thoughts and concerns. Remember, managing workplace stress doesn't come about by obtaining a new job or making huge changes. Rather, it comes about by focusing on the one thing that you can control: you.

There is no doubt that a troubled economy brings about much stress at work. From one worker to another, you very well may not be alone in the work-related stress that you are enduring. Layoffs and budgets cuts are two of the primary factors resulting from a troubled economy that cause stress at work, so if your company is going through any of these, it makes much sense that stress levels will be high. Unfortunately, there is no *sure-sign* that a quick economic recovery is going to take place, so economy-related stress may stick around for a while, making it imperative that you learn everything you can about dealing with the pressure.

Keep in mind that your emotions can be contagious. When going through stress, your interactions with others are likely to suffer. The better you get at managing your stress, the better off everyone else will be and *vice versa*. Also, as you learn to effectively deal with pressure, you will also notice that other people's stress does not impact you in such a harsh way.

Learning to Manage Your Work-Related Stress

There are many ways that you can go about learning how to manage your work-related stress. For starters, you must recognize that much of your work-related stress is probably being derived from problems at home. Also, you must take responsibility for the fact that it is up to you to improve your overall physical and emotional well-being. Next, you must identify any negative attitudes that you have, followed then by eliminating them. Lastly, you have to better your communication capabilities because this will improve the relationships that you have with both your boss and other coworkers.

Recognizing the Warning Signs

If you feel that you are overwhelmed at work, there is a good chance that you will be very irritable as well as withdrawn from others. Both of these things will result in you having lower levels of productivity, which will translate into you feeling unhappy with your job. It is pertinent that you recognize these warning signs, because if you ignore them, there is a great likelihood that bigger issues will make their selves present in your life. In fact, beyond having a negative impact on your work performance, excessive work-related stress can take a harsh toll on your emotional and physical well-being. Warning Signs of Workplace Stress include:

- Fatigue
- Social withdrawal
- Muscle tension
- Using alcohol and/or drugs
- Problems sleeping
- Feeling anxious
- Irritable
- Trouble concentrating
- Headaches
- Stomach problems
- Depression
- Loss of interest in work
- Loss of sex drive

Common Causes of Work-Related Stress

- Pressure to meet quotas
- Fear of being laid off
- Having to work extensive amounts of overtime
- Coworker-related conflicts
- Boss being too demanding

Taking Care of Yourself to Reduce Workplace Stress

When excessive stress is endured, it will affect your ability to perform your job. It will also have a negative impact on your personal life as well as your physical well-being. When this happens, it's time to take action. Better yet, if possible, before the negative effects are endured, it is best to take action. You should always begin your path to dealing with workplace stress by first taking care of your physical and emotional health. You will notice that when your needs are being met, you will be stronger; thus, resulting in your ability to be more resilient to stress.

Taking good care of yourself doesn't mean you have to change every aspect of your life. There are many small things that you can do to ensure your needs are being met. Most importantly, remember to take things slow. If you get ahead of yourself, this will only cause you to endure more stress. Let's take a look at simple lifestyle changes and choices you can make to reduce the level of stress that you are enduring at work.

Lifestyle Choice 1. Move Around

Believe it or not, exercise is a stress reliever. Even when it feels like the last thing you want to do, exercise will help relieve you of much of your stress. In addition, it will help you get your body toned, your mind focused, and give you great amounts of energy. If you are looking for maximum stress relief, take part in at least 30 minutes of intensive exercise on a daily basis. If you can't squeeze 30 minutes of exercise into your busy schedule, simply do 15 minutes in the morning and 15 at night.

Lifestyle Choice 2. Eat Healthy

All of your life you have been told to eat healthy, and there is a good reason behind this. For one, eating healthy keeps you in good physical shape; this of course leads to less stress in your life. Also, if you don't eat healthy, you will become lethargic, meaning you will feel *not-up-to-par* when it comes to performing your administrative assistant duties. To make sure your blood sugar level stays at a healthy level, eat several small meals throughout the day.

Lifestyle Choice 3. Have a Beer or Two

If you have ever suffered from an alcohol and/or drug abuse problem, you most definitely should avoid this tip. On the other hand, however, if you are able to drink alcohol in moderation, doing so can help relieve some of your workplace stress. Just remember, you don't need to drink in the morning time or while at work. Instead, have a beer or two, or even a glass of wine, during dinner at night.

Lifestyle Choice 4. Go to Bed at a Decent Time

You need at least somewhere between six to eight hours of rest every night. Unfortunately, a common symptom of workplace stress is insomnia, but you need to do your best to overcome this issue by getting as much rest as possible. You will notice that by being well-rested, you will find it easier to keep your emotions in check, which is crucial in being able to deal with the pressures at work. One of the best ways to ensure you get enough sleep at night is to create a sleep schedule and stick to it.

Prioritize and Organize

When stress becomes overwhelming for you, you must sit yourself down and reorganize your priorities. By doing this, you can regain control over yourself. In fact, you can regain so much control that others will be able to notice the difference; thus, resulting in improved relationships between your loved ones, friends, coworkers and even your boss. Let's take a look at things you can do to prioritize and organize your responsibilities.

Time Management Tips

Get to work earlier: Do you feel rushed the entire way to work? Do you get to work and feel as if everything is already going wrong? If so, you need to leave earlier for work, meaning you will arrive earlier to work. Even leaving 10 to 15 minutes earlier than what you currently do can make all the difference in the world. Just remember, running late only adds to your stress, so wake up earlier, grab an extra cup of coffee and leave for work early.

Make a schedule and stick to it: There will always be things in life that interrupt a schedule, but when possible, you should stick to a routine. Remember, when creating a schedule for yourself, make sure you create it so that there is some type of balance between your work-life and your family-life, with your family-life always taking priority.

Avoid over-committing yourself: If you over-commit yourself to things, this will only add stress. Before you agree to do something, take a second to think about how it will affect your other commitments. If it seems you already have too much on your plate, avoid committing to new things. Instead, take care of things that need to be taken care of, followed then be reevaluating when new commitments can be taken on.

Take regular breaks: Without a break every once in a while, work is sure to drive you crazy. Thankfully, as an administrative assistant, you should have the opportunity to take a break every two to three hours. Better yet, you should be able to take at least a 20 minute lunch break. You will notice that by taking frequent, short breaks, along with a nice lunch break, this will significantly help you to appropriately deal with much of your work-related stress.

Task Management Tips

Delegate some of your duties: As an administrative assistant, there many come a time when you are able to delegate tasks to lower-level assistants. When doing this, remember to delegate them to those who you are fully confident can effectively complete the tasks. Otherwise, you will end up becoming stressed about the fact that they aren't completing the tasks as you want them to be completed.

Prioritize your tasks: There is no denying the fact that administrative assistants are responsible for a large amount of tasks. In fact, in most settings, without this type of assistant, a company would fall apart. You have to keep in mind that some of your tasks have priority over others, so sit down and make a priority list. Don't get discouraged when all of your duties can't be completed in a single day. Instead, make sure to complete at least all the tasks that are at the top of your priority list.

Compromise is key: When it comes to handling workplace stress, you must be willing to compromise. You must accept the fact that there are many things that you have no control over; however, for those things that you do, compromise by coming up with solutions that work for everyone.

Improve Your Emotional Intelligence

One of the best ways to go about retaining self-control in a stressful work environment is to practice emotional intelligence, meaning you use your emotions in a constructive way. Take note that your emotional intelligence will play just as large of a role in dealing with your workplace stress as your intellectual abilities will. To carry out emotional intelligence, you will need to communicate with others in a way that it draws them to you, which results in less tension and stress in the workplace. Let's look at how you can practice emotional intelligence.

Being self-aware: You must have the ability to not only recognize your emotions but also to predict how they will impact your life and others around you.

Having social awareness: You must be able to understand, as well as to react to, the emotions and feelings of others.

Managing relationships: No matter the relationship, whether it be with your boss or a fellow coworker, you must be able to carry out effective conflict resolution techniques.

Managing your emotions: You need to manage your emotions, changing your behaviors when a certain situation calls for adaptation.

Five Skills Needed for Emotional Intelligence

Stay in the moment: By staying in the moment, you will be able manage your own emotions. You will take notice to how your emotions impact your thoughts and actions, followed then by appropriately dealing with your emotions so that positive thoughts and behaviors are carried out. Never should you ignore your emotions; this will only lead to more stress.

Know when you are stressed: As hard as it may be to believe, there are actually many people who don't realize when they are stressed. To reduce your workplace stress, you can't be one of those people. You must identify your particular stress responses, followed then by implementing techniques that help you to be soothed.

Understand body language: It is pertinent for you to understand that your body language plays a large role in the way that you come across to people. If not careful, your body language may be creating a workplace atmosphere that is full of distrust and stress.

Learn conflict resolution methods: For almost every situation, there is a way to go about resolving it in a healthy and mature manner. If you don't understand effective conflict resolution methods, you won't be able to resolve a problem in a healthy way. Also, remember, every once in a while there will be a situation that can't be resolved. When this happens, simply walk away from the conflict.

Be humorous: Laughter reduces stress. Just keep in mind, a laugh at the expense of someone else will only cause much unneeded stress in your place of work, so avoid making fun of others.

Break Your Bad Habits

Bad habits can be hard to break. Thankfully, though, with time and effort, you can break your bad habits and relieve yourself of much of the stress that you are enduring at work. Habits and behaviors that you need to rid yourself of include:

Being a perfectionist: No matter how hard you try, nothing in life will ever be perfect, and this includes your work-life. If you set unrealistic goals for yourself at work, you will only be met by much unnecessary stress. All you can do is give your job your best, and if you work for a boss who asks for more than your best, you should consider switching places of employment.

Always thinking negatively: When you look at the downside of a situation, chances are, you will end up draining yourself of both motivation and energy. You have to get to a point in which you see the positive side of situations, followed then by doing your best to maintain a positive perspective.

Being unorganized: One of the most common factors that leads to work-related stress is having a messy office. As an administrative assistant, it is of the utmost importance for you to be extremely organized. In doing this, you can rest assured that all of your duties are being attended to, and this will also help you to be less stressed at work. A great way to stay organized is to make a to-do list, followed then by crossing off the things that you accomplish.

Controlling the uncontrollable: If you try to control the uncontrollable, you will stress yourself out. There are very few things in this life that you have control over, with the number one thing being yourself, so keep your mind focused on you.

Dispelling Stress

When you find yourself enduring much stress at work, take a quick break. Move yourself away, both physically and mentally from the stress that is taking place. If possible, go outside for a five minute walk. Physical movement is a great way to quickly reduce your stress.

If you feel the need to, talk over your work-related stress issues with someone who you can trust. Preferably, this person should not be another worker because this can lead to added tension among the workplace atmosphere. Find someone who is empathetic but also completely honest. In doing this, you can rest assured that the opinions the person gives will be for your best interest.

Another great way to dispel stress at work is to get to know your fellow workers. Chances are, as an administrative assistant, you have upper-level supervisors as well as workers who are a level lower than you on the corporate ladder. Make sure you mingle with each level of workers. By doing this, the atmosphere in which you work will be much more comfortable to work in, relieving you of much of your workplace stress.

Set a Good Example

Even as an administrative assistant, you may or may not be in charge of other employees. Whether you are or not, it is of the utmost importance for you to set a good example at work. By setting a good example, you will be confident in the fact that you are acting the way you need to act; this will lead to a reduction in the amount of stress that you endure at work. Also, setting a good example helps lead others to work in a way that stress is not produced; thus, causing the entire workplace environment to be nearly stress-free.

You should never dread going to work. Instead, you should wake up in the mornings with a smile on your face, ready to face the healthy challenges that administrative duties require you to overcome. If you find yourself becoming stressed at work, take comfort in knowing you can follow all of the above mentioned tips to make your work days as stress free as possible.

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