

Stress: Make it Work for You

Stress is an unavoidable part of everyday life. While stress is considered normal – even positive at times – it isn't healthy to let it build up or go unmanaged. With the help of your **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** you can put stress in its place and manage it on your terms. Here are some steps for repurposing your stress.

List and let go

We all keep a mental checklist of the day's tasks and, while it's good to have a general idea of what needs to get done each day, your brain may become overwhelmed as more and more items are added. Physically writing out a list and assigning a priority scale can not only help you determine what to tackle next, it's also a beneficial way to add visual perspective of your to-dos. Plus, there's nothing more satisfying than crossing out tasks that you've completed!

Take advantage of your talents

When we are able to integrate personal skill and talent into our work or other commitments, we tend to be more motivated and find extra enjoyment in our endeavors. When these outlets do not exist, the lack of fulfillment can cause stress – and even resentment – to creep in. Make a conscious effort to balance what you *have* to do with what you *like* to do, either by contributing to a special project at work where your talents can shine or by carving out time in your personal life to focus on something that excites you.

Alter your outlook

The slightest shift in our attitude can sometimes make all the difference when it comes to the way we feel. Likewise, putting a positive spin on an otherwise negative situation is a great way to combat stress. While staying positive isn't always easy – especially in the moment – with practice you can learn to be more mindful of your feelings and redirect your energy. The next time you feel stressed, try to stop, take a breath, and think about the bigger picture.

Greet it with gratitude

Sometimes it's not what happens *to* us, but how we *react* to what happens to us that matters most. Since we can't completely eliminate the stress from our lives, we can try to learn from our stress and be grateful for lessons learned. If you stayed late to finish a work project, appreciate knowing that it will go much smoother next time now that you've laid the groundwork. Or if you commute to work, spend time considering what you are grateful for in your life.

For more information on stress and stress management resources, call to speak with an EAP consultant. The EAP is a voluntary and confidential employee benefit available to federal employees and their family members at no cost. Call any time, day or night.

24 HOURS A DAY

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