

Safety FOCUSED

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Managing Work-related Stress

Learn how to better manage your work-related stress through six simple best practices that you can easily adopt.

Biking to Work Sets You Up for a Stress-free Day

Read about how biking to work can lower your stress levels throughout the day.

Over 75 percent of all visits to primary care physicians are a result of stress-related health problems.

A monthly safety newsletter from



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Managing Work-related Stress

It has been estimated that 75-90 percent of all visits to primary care physicians are a result of stress-related health problems, and the leading source of stress for adults comes from their jobs. The most common causes of work-related stress include a heavy workload, job insecurity, tight deadlines, bullying and a lack of support from managers.

Stress affects each individual differently. If it becomes overwhelming, it can lead to illness, injury and poor job performance. To reduce work-related stress and your risk of developing a more serious health condition, consider the following six best practices:

1. **Plan ahead.** Start working on tasks well before they are due, and always have an alternative plan in case something falls through.
2. **Prioritize your work.** Create a list of tasks that must be done and then break them down into smaller, more manageable assignments so you don't get overwhelmed.
3. **Slow down.** Think before you act to avoid having to repeat tasks.
4. **Use available resources.** Ask co-workers for assistance with tasks that you cannot feasibly tackle on your own.
5. **Balance your life.** Make sure that there is a balanced focus on your work and your home life to offset work stressors with personal time to yourself.
6. **Resolve conflicts.** Develop a conflict resolution plan to solve interpersonal problems with co-workers.

Biking to Work Sets You Up for a Stress-free Day

Riding your bike to work is not only good for the body, but also good for the mind. According to a recent study published in the International Journal of Workplace Health Management, employees who cycled to work experienced lower levels of stress within the first 45 minutes of work than those who traveled by car.

The survey also found that early morning stress and mood influence how the rest of the day will unfold, shaping how events are perceived, interpreted and acted upon throughout the workday.

The study looked at data from 123 employees at an information technology company using a web-based survey. The employees were asked questions about their mode of travel, perceived commuting stress and their moods. Researchers only looked at responses to surveys that were taken within the first 45 minutes of the workday, in order to ensure a more precise picture of employees' stress upon arriving at work.

Besides capturing early morning mood and stress, the study also confirmed previous research indicating that cyclists consider

their commutes to be less stressful than workers who travel by car or public transport.

Biking has other benefits that include keeping you physically fit and helping the environment. Here are five tips to help you commute by bike:

1. Make sure the distance and frequency of your commute is achievable. Don't ride too far or too frequently during your first couple weeks.
2. Always wear a helmet, and wear clothing that can easily be seen by motorists.
3. Do a dry run over the weekend to make sure you allot yourself enough time during the workweek and to make sure the route is realistic and safe.
4. Learn how to change a flat tire, just in case.
5. Carry a change of clothes in a backpack. Make sure the clothing is easy to change into and out of, and that it is wrinkle-resistant.



THE COMMON NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF STRESS

Common Effects of Stress on Your Body

- Muscle tension or pain
- Fatigue
- Upset stomach
- Sleep problems

Common Effects of Stress on Your Mood

- Anxiety
- Restlessness
- Irritability or anger
- Sadness or depression

Common Effects of Stress on Your Behavior

- Social withdrawal
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Overeating or undereating
- Angry outbursts