

WELL BALANCED^o

- APRIL 2024 -
Stress Awareness Month

Stress AT Work



In today's fast-paced work environment, the pressures of deadlines, high expectations, and constant connectivity can often lead to stress among employees. You might be feeling stressed right now or have over the last week! It's important for everyone to be aware of stress and burnout—and what to do about it.

» Address the Issue

Identify common stressors in your workplace, such as excessive workload, tight deadlines, conflicts with coworkers, or lack of resources. Be more proactive about communicating openly with your manager or colleagues about these hurdles when you start to notice them. Managers can talk with their employee about the situation; whether it's workload or other special circumstances, acknowledge that they are being asked to do more, recognize the work that's being done and ask how they might better support the employee.

» Be a Part of a Supportive Culture

Does your workplace have a peer support network, mentorship program, or employee assistance program (EAP) you can participate in? Caring and connecting with others creates a happier and more positive environment, reducing stress. If your workplace could use



Want more resources on stress?

Talk to your employer to find out what is available to you through your employee assistance program (EAP) or employee wellness program.

more connection opportunities for employees, create them! Start a lunchtime book club, game night after work, or coffee group to catch up before the day starts.

» Commit to Work/Life Balance

A better blend between work and life can help you manage work-related stress but it's something that takes practice! Focus on improving one area at a time, like finding something you love outside of work to engage in, or setting a time to end work for the day. Feeling fulfilled is also a big element of work/life blend. If your work feels completely unrelated to the activities that stir your interest, enthusiasm, energy, and sense of meaning, you may need to look at how you can change the work you do or the way you do it.

Create a less stressful and more resilient personal work environment, where you feel empowered to prioritize your well-being while achieving professional success.

🔍 Visit welcoa.org/health-observances for online stress resources.

FOUR EASY BREATHING EXERCISES YOU CAN DO AT WORK

Breathing practice can help you feel more centered. It can also improve posture, reduce inflammation, and help you feel calmer and more alert. Try these four exercises provided by totalwellnesshealth.com at your desk when your next tight deadline is approaching:



Deep Breathing

Get comfortable. This breathing technique will probably come more naturally than all of the other techniques. Similar to when your doctor asks you to breathe deeply during a chest exam, you'll find this technique engages your mind and breath fully.

Here's how to do it:

- » Breathe in through your nose until your belly fills with air
- » Breathe out slowly through your nose
- » Put one hand on your chest and the other on your belly and breathe in
- » The hand on your stomach should rise more than the one on your chest
- » Breathe out and feel your belly lower
- » Repeat three more times



Breath Focus

Focusing on your breath can help you push other anxious thoughts out of your mind. It allows you to concentrate solely on your breath and filling your lungs fully.

Here's how to do it:

- » Take a few deep breaths to get started
- » Imagine you are breathing in calm and goodness
- » When you breathe out, imagine you are exhaling your negativity and stress
- » Continue for several minutes



Dr. Weil's 4-7-8 Breathing Method

Dr. Andrew Weil, a Harvard graduate and founder of the University of Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine, teaches this method frequently. He believes it can help with falling soundly asleep and anxiety reduction.

Here's how to do it:

- » Count to 4 while breathing in deeply through your nose
- » Note your belly should expand
- » Count to 7 while holding that deep breath
- » Count to 8 slowly while exhaling through your mouth
- » Repeat four more times



Equal Breaths

As you practice this technique, you'll be able to increase your inhale and exhale count. This exercise allows you to really focus on breathwork and keeping a "balance" within your diaphragm.

Here's how to do it:

- » Inhale and exhale for the same count
- » Start with a slow count of five in
- » Exhale for another slow count of five
- » Repeat for several minutes

Additional Resources:

- » [How to Address Workplace Stress for Employee Well-Being - The American Institute of Stress](#)
- » [7 Habits of Highly Happy People - WELCOA](#)