



# Avoiding Job Burnout

## Causes of Workplace Stress

There are several causes of stress in the workplace, the most prevalent being work overload. Fifty percent of workers report that they often spend 12-hour days on work-related duties, and an equal number of people frequently skip lunch. With recent downsizing, most employees are now performing the work of two to three people. Other causes of workplace stress include:

- Lack of control over one's area of responsibility or destiny
- Contact overload, especially with difficult people
- Lack of communication or feedback
- Personality – controlling, inflexible, perfectionist
- Role ambiguity; unclear expectations

## Job Burnout

Over time, stress leads to burnout. Symptoms of burnout include fatigue, depression, forgetfulness, irritability, and physical complaints. These factors can cause undue stress. Burnout can result in decreased effectiveness and lower productivity.

So how can you avoid burnout and better manage the stress on your job? Start with the basics: get plenty of rest, eat right and exercise. Other specific recommendations are:

- 1. Develop a good support network.** When things are stressful at work it helps to have someone you can talk to, someone who will listen and acknowledge your frustration. These people may be colleagues, friends or family members. Oftentimes by talking through the issues with a trusted friend, you can come up with creative solutions. Knowing these people support you can help ease the burden.
- 2. Renew yourself on a regular basis.** Just as batteries need recharging, our bodies and minds need recharging as well. We need to rejuvenate ourselves on a regular basis, daily and weekly. What refreshes you? It's very personal. For one person it may be curling up with a good novel. For another, it may be participating in a sport, such as golfing or bike-riding. We all need to take time out for recreation. When we do, we're more likely to come back to work with greater energy and enthusiasm. Besides recreation, take personal time for yourself on a daily basis. Spend some quiet time to unwind, pray, meditate, or reflect. Such daily personal time helps you maintain a better frame of mind.
- 3. Keep a positive attitude.** Your attitude toward stress (and life in general) can make a big difference in how you respond to stress. Those who handle stress more effectively view stress as a challenge rather than a problem. Use self-talk to help maintain a positive attitude toward stress. For example, tell yourself, "I know I can overcome this challenge." Focus on what you can learn from the experience rather than how difficult it is.

Even if you're overloaded you don't need to feel overwhelmed. Following these tips to combat a stressful work situation can help you be more productive and effective in the long run.

### Other helpful tips:

- Plan your week in advance, but be flexible.
- Keep meetings to a minimum (when possible).
- Take breaks.
- Limit distractions.
- Know your limits.
- Take care of yourself.