

Dealing with Stress

We choose how we react to change in our lives. Our physical and emotional reaction to change can cause stress.

By learning to manage stress, we gain control and improve our health. By identifying our stress triggers and becoming aware of how we feel when under stress, we can take steps to combat it. Simple relaxation techniques can help us off-set stress with periods of calmness.

TRUE STORY

A lettuce packer for 12 years was promoted to supervisor of the packing house. Responsible for the quality of the lettuce pack-out, he managed over 100 employees.

He worked through his lunch hour and late into the evening to keep up with the paperwork, and he didn't take a day off for weeks on end. He insisted on making every decision relating to the packing house, even minor ones. He rarely delegated responsibility to his foremen or other employees.

During an early morning safety meeting, he collapsed while addressing his employees. Rushed to the hospital, doctors diagnosed a heart attack. His poor eating habits, smoking, lack of sleep, and personal and job stress contributed to his condition.

What could have prevented this accident?

- Delegate tasks to employees. This relieves your stress while motivating your staff to learn and grow on the job.
- Maintain regular eating and sleeping patterns.
- Stop smoking.
- Seek help if you feel overwhelmed.

Healthy Habits to Control Stress

- Organize your work and your time so that you impose order on each day. If you structure your day, you're less likely to feel overwhelmed.
- Make a daily to-do list that prioritizes your tasks in descending importance.
- When pressed for time, ask for help.
- Maintain regular sleeping patterns. A good night's rest will help you feel better and face the next day's challenges more effectively.

- Eat healthy foods. A balanced diet improves your physical and mental state.
- Keep moving. When you feel tense, take a short walk or do slow stretching exercises.
- Learn to relax. Find your own relaxation technique based on activities you like.

EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employer:

- Create an environment that fosters open communication.
- Adjust employees' workloads to avoid burnout.
- Train new supervisors to handle their increased responsibilities.
- Emphasize teamwork and support so that employees feel comfortable helping each other.

Employee:

- Communicate any job concerns to your supervisor.
- Try to get and stay organized in approaching your workday.
- Take responsibility for your health and safety.
- Identify ways to relax on and off the job.
- Maintain perspective. Avoid worrying about minor matters; focus on more productive issues and happier thoughts.

Zenith provides workplace safety resources at: **TheZenith.com**[®]