

Action Steps in Managing Stress

What can the concerned manager do today to begin managing his or her personal stress? The following steps may be considered:

- Consciously assess your pace of life. Take inventory of all recent changes. Include current or upcoming changes. Analyze job situations and identify those you find particularly stressful.
- Try to become aware of your own physical and emotional limits. Learn to detect stress symptoms (such as heart palpitations, headaches, rapid pulse, and insomnia). Learn to identify your state of stress so you can begin to deal with it directly.
- Simplify your life. Attempt to foresee the occurrence of specific stress-producing job events and try to schedule them so they do not occur simultaneously. Don't suppress all change and tension; merely manage it.
- Leave job tension at the office. Keep work and home life separate.
- Leave room within your coping range for unanticipated stress situations. Don't load your time and budget your energy completely to its quota. Maintain a state of readiness by staying healthy.
- When an unexpected stress situation or major change arises, stop and think about it. Is it really as serious as it appears to be on the surface? Is it worth the expenditure of valuable energy on worrying and tension? Or, with the application of a little imagination and flexibility, can you adapt easily and readily?
- Evaluate the various alternative mechanisms you have for coping with tension. Are the "old ways" still working effectively? Or is it time to take a break, get away from it all, and evaluate new courses of action objectively?
- Be flexible and imaginative, and shy away from stereotyped reactions. Follow through by analyzing the implications and range of consequences in your response.
- Above all, be in conscious control of your life. Participate actively, and with flexibility. Remember, as a manager, that you are particularly exposed to tension and susceptible to stress.
- Remember, too, that stress is not all bad. Some stress is both necessary and desirable. The basic issue is not its elimination but its containment and allocation – the management of stress.

Slowing Down Internally

- Try to stop doing more than one thing at a time.
- Learn to listen without interrupting.
- Do things that require concentration, not just the trivial things.
- Learn to savor your food. Take time to enjoy it.
- Cultivate your sense of humor.
- Review the causes of your hurry sickness once a week.
- Control your impatience.
- Take time to show your appreciation to others in a genuine way.

Re-Engineering Your Life

- Get up earlier so you can start the day leisurely, not fighting against time.
- Try to find a period in the day for total body relaxation.
- Restructure trips and vacations to relieve stress, not cause it.

Modifying Your Work Habits

- Ask yourself what activities you should stop doing.
- Eliminate activities instead of doing more in less time.
- Don't leave half-completed projects around the office. They simply remind you that you're behind.
- Eliminate business lunches when possible. Take an exercise break.
- Try not to see every situation as a challenge. Let others help.
- Cultivate good judgment, not just speed, when making decisions.
- Try not to impose your sense of time urgency on others. Don't continually interfere with others who work more slowly.
- Examine your telephone habits. Let others handle some of your calls.