

Holiday Stress Relief

The holidays may be a time of joy, but they aren't always a time of peace. Balancing your family's expectations with work commitments and social obligations can make this the most stressful time of the year. At the office, you may discover that the work is still coming in, but most of your colleagues aren't. You may even be planning to take some time off yourself. Before the season gets too busy, try these strategies for reducing holiday stress in the workplace.

Organize your workspace

If you're going on vacation, organize your desk before leaving. Label files so that others can find information easily and leave a list of projects that you're working on. If something needs to be done in your absence, leave written instructions. Your voice mail message should include the date of your return and the name and telephone number of someone in the office who could take an urgent message

Take care

Fatigue, headache, elevated blood pressure, shortness of breath, increased irritability and insomnia. These are all symptoms of stress. You can reduce these symptoms by taking care of yourself during the holiday season. Eat balanced meals, get plenty of sleep, avoid alcohol and exercise regularly. Exercise is particularly important for energy and good health during the holiday season. Get a head start on your New Year's resolution: Talk to your doctor now about creating the right exercise program for you.

The spirit of the season

When your co-workers are on vacation, the phone's ringing off the hook, the fax machine has run out of paper and you still haven't finished your holiday shopping, the season may not seem quite so jolly. Nevertheless, do something to remember the real spirit of the holidays. Consider donating gifts to a needy family, collecting canned food for a local shelter or sponsoring "Santa's visit" to a local children's hospital. You might find this is the best "stress reliever" of all.

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