

# Self Management and Personal Wellness

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# Introduction

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## Overview

The purpose of this course is to help you take control of your life in three important areas: Personal Wellness, Time Management, and Stress Management.

### Personal Wellness

This section of the course emphasizes the importance of personal wellness and how it affects our daily life. You see the direct connection between behavior and wellness. You learn that personal wellness is an individual responsibility requiring a conscious effort to develop. You learn to recognize factors that impede personal wellness, and you are introduced to tips for maintaining optimum mental and physical health. You develop a Personal Wellness Action Plan applying the techniques learned.

### Time Management

In this section, you recognize your personal attitude toward time and the benefits of effective time management. By recognizing your unique time problems, you learn to avoid procrastination and set meaningful goals that reflect your own priorities. You realize that mental energy and peak performance varies throughout the workday, so priorities must be adjusted accordingly to accomplish important goals and activities. You identify your personal and professional roles and discuss ways to make time for the people and activities important to you. You develop a “Time Audit” that identifies how you are spending your time and areas where time management can be improved.

## Stress Management

This section is designed to help you understand the importance of stress management in a fast-paced, multi-tasked, “time-compressed” workplace. You learn about stress response and how stress can be viewed as both a negative and positive presence in your life. After learning the physical, emotional, and mental symptoms of stress, you identify your own personal stress indicators. Causes of stress are discussed, and the “Life Crises Unit” scale is presented to show situations that can be expected to trigger higher levels of stress. You develop your own Stress Management Action Plan.

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## Objectives

The information, activities, and practices provided in this course will enable you to:

1. Be proactive in making better life choices to ensure optimum mental and physical health.
2. Implement a successful time management plan to accomplish top priority goals and activities.
3. Apply stress management techniques to monitor and manage stress more effectively in your personal and professional life.



# Personal Wellness

This section will help you understand the importance of personal wellness and how it affects your daily life and that you will see the direct connection between behavior and wellness.

Personal wellness is each individual's responsibility and requires conscious effort to develop. You will learn to recognize factors in your life that impede your personal wellness.

What is the definition of "personal wellness?"

There is a strong link between personal wellness and job performance. A healthy person will perform better on the job, lose fewer hours, and in some cases motivate co-workers to perform better. On the other hand, an unhealthy person will not do as well on the job, may lose time due to illness, may spread germs to co-workers and have potentially lower morale.

We all agree that our most essential tools in life are our mind and body. The state of our minds and the condition of our bodies influences every part of our life. Working when you are not physically and mentally fit gets in the way of doing your job to the best of your ability.

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## Maintaining Personal Wellness

How a healthy mind and body requires maintenance and attention just as a car requires maintenance. We have many responsibilities in our life. We make sure our cars are tuned up, filled with oil, and filled with gas. We pay our water and electric bills to make sure our homes are properly lit and heated. We do these things so our cars and our homes will run smoothly. In other words, we take responsibility for these things in our life.

Personal wellness requires taking responsibility for your health. Many of us have a pretty good idea of what a healthy mind and body require. Yet a lot of us continue to ignore the tune up our bodies and minds may need. We put the wrong kind of oil and gas into our own vehicle, our body (for example: junk food). We even neglect our own need for a tune up, such as giving ourselves the opportunity to relax and to play.

What does “being healthy” mean to you?

### Case Study: George Henry

George Henry, a strong individual in good health, got a new job at ABC Airlines. He worked at the airport checking baggage. He was good at the job and he checked more bags than anyone else on his shift. At first he got along well with his supervisors and coworkers. Everyone liked him.

After two weeks on the job, George Henry was not as much fun. He didn't crack as many jokes and he didn't laugh at other people's jokes. He checked the same amount of bags as everyone else, but after a month on the job, George Henry found himself irritated with a lot of the people he worked with. He had to bite his tongue to keep from saying something nasty to his supervisor when he was asked to work overtime. *“Didn't the man know how hard he worked?”*



George Henry told his supervisor he could not work overtime. As he walked away he muttered to himself, “As much as my back is hurting me, the airline is lucky to get any work out of me at all.”

What happened to change George Henry?

Do you think George Henry’s attitude had anything to do with how he felt?

Do you feel like being nice when you’re not feeling well?

Have you ever been irritable when you weren’t feeling well?

There is a direct connection between your mental and physical health and how you behave. It is difficult to do a good job when you’re sick or in pain.

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## Preventive Medicine

Back problems are very common. Eighty percent of the American population will experience some kind of back pain during your lifetime. Many back problems can be prevented. George Henry's problem was preventable. Prevention is an important part of personal wellness.

### Lifting

Bends from the knees, not the waist. A common mistake people make is to use the waist as a joint. It is not a joint. Our fingers, wrists, and knees have joints. Joints are made to bend at sharp angles. Our waist is not a joint; it is not made to bend at sharp angles. Instead of bending at the waist to pick up an object, bend at your knees. This will save unnecessary strain on your lower back.

If you find yourself in a job that requires heavy lifting, and you are unsure of the right way to lift, ask your supervisor. You can also ask for a back support. Lifting properly can help you avoid back pain and injury in the future.

When you are lifting, remember George Henry. Don't overdo it. Use proper lifting techniques and pace yourself.



*Lifting*



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## Ergonomics

Today the emphasis is on preventing illness whenever possible. New industries have popped up to support preventive medicine.

The science of Ergonomics has become popular. Ergonomics is the study of the relationship between your work environment and your health. Certain things you may do on the job can affect your health. The way you sit, bend, type, and answer the phone can cause health problems. Work equipment that has been designed to eliminate health problems is called *ergonomically* correct equipment.

Can you identify something ergonomically *incorrect* in your work environment?

How can these things be corrected?

## Case Study: Ellen and Joan

Ellen was 32 years old and a healthy mother of two children. Her sister Joan was 38. Joan had three children and seemed to be healthy. Joan didn't like doctors, hospitals or anything related to the medical profession. Joan and Ellen's mother died when you were children. Ever since her death, Joan was afraid of doctors. She didn't know why her mother had died; she didn't want to know. Joan knew that a doctor's office or hospital was the last place she'd ever go.

One day Joan felt very bad. Her stomach was killing her. She tried to ignore it. Joan tried taking over the counter pain killers; nothing worked. Finally, her husband rushed her to the emergency room. Joan was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. It spread to her liver; Joan died six weeks later.

Devastated by her sister's death, Ellen tried to make sense of it. Her mother died at the age of 38, and now history was repeating itself with the loss of Joan, at the same age. She found herself unable to eat or sleep. She was very nervous; everything frightened her, from the phone ringing to the dog barking.

Can Ellen do anything to change the way she feels and reacts?

Would talking to someone help?



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## Health Risks

Many illnesses are hereditary, while others are not. Everyone has different health risks.

How can you determine what your individual health risks are?

Health risks are determined by:

- Family history
- Current physical health
- Life choices

Examples of hereditary health risks include: ovarian cancer, breast cancer, and prostate cancer.

There are four major health concerns in our society today.

- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- High blood pressure
- Obesity

The good news is that anyone can reduce his/her risk of all of these conditions with the proper life choices.

Two important life choices are:

Exercise

Diet

What are some other examples of life choices?

The choices you make in your life directly affect how you feel and how you function. Sometimes we forget we have the tools to change our life for the better at our finger tips.

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## Exercise

Exercise is a life choice that directly affects your level of wellness.

Benefits of Exercise.

Exercise is any physical activity that will develop or maintain your fitness level.

To condition your heart and lungs, you need to exercise 15 to 30 minutes, three times a week, in your heart rate target zone. Your heart rate target zone is between 60% to 75% of your maximum heart rate.

The formula for determining your zone is:

$$220 - (\text{your age}) \times .60 = \text{Your heart rate target zone}$$

Before you begin any exercise program, you should consult your physician. When you begin an exercise program, start gradually and work your way up. Don't be too enthusiastic and try to do too much too soon. You need to let your body get used to the new activity. If you start too soon you will pay for it with aches and pains and possibly injuries.



A sedentary lifestyle puts you at greater risk for developing chronic illness, such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer. Still, more than 60 percent of Americans are not physically active on a regular basis and 25 percent are not physically active at all, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Take advantage of the physical activities your everyday routine has to offer, and watch as the amount of exercise you do adds up.

Here are 12 ways for even the busiest people to add a little exercise to your daily routines. Remember, the more exercise you get, the greater the benefits.

- Put on some music at home and dance.
- Clean out your garage, basement or attic.
- Wash your car by hand.
- Whenever you can, take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Do gardening or yard work.
- Mop the kitchen floor.
- Walk around while you're talking on your cordless phone or cell phone.
- Vacuum all the rooms in your house.
- Stack firewood.
- Take a walk during your lunch break.
- Walk to the newsstand for a paper or magazine.
- Park your car far enough from the building entrance so you get a short walk.

Most experts recommend a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate exercise – physical activity that uses about 150 calories per day – most days of the week.

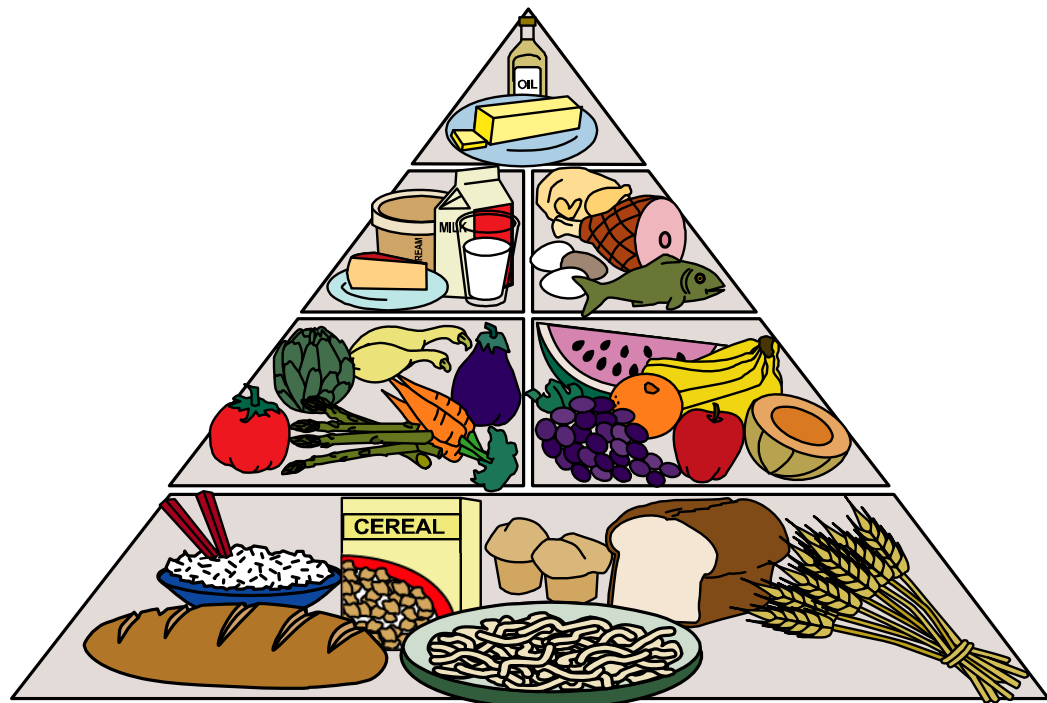
This doesn't mean you have to run five miles a day. In fact, you don't have to run at all. The key is to exercise moderately on a regular basis. A brisk walk, a 20 minute swim and fast dancing are all examples of moderate exercise.

For many people, finding time in your schedules for exercise is difficult. But if you don't have an uninterrupted 30 minutes to dedicate to exercise, that's OK. Research shows that exercise done in spurts throughout the day is still beneficial.

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## Diet

You are what you eat. It's true. What we eat can determine how we feel, how we act, and how well we are. A diet high in fiber and raw vegetables, and low in fat and sugar, helps to develop and maintain physical fitness.



*Food Pyramid*



Fat has been linked with many health problems. Medical research indicates that fat plays a part in the following health issues:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure

If we reduce the fat in our diet we can reduce the risk of these diseases.

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## Activity: Reading Food Labels

Which label has:

The highest percentage of fat calories: \_\_\_\_\_

The lowest percentage of fat calories: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest calorie content: \_\_\_\_\_

How can you lower your fat intake?

The American Cancer Society suggests that a high fat diet may be a factor in some forms of cancer (specifically breast cancer, colon cancer and prostate cancer).

List the foods that you eat that might be high in fat and the foods that might be low in fat.

Foods Probably High in Fat	Foods Probably Low in Fat

At home, check out the calorie and fat content in these foods.



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## Ways to Develop Healthy Habits

### 38 Ways To Break Bad Habits and Stick To Good Ones.

#### *Stick to it*

1. Make up your mind to change. Determination is key.
2. Find a healthy substitute. For example, rather than just saying, “I’m going to quit smoking,” you might say, “I’m going to take a walk to relax after dinner instead of having a cigarette.”
3. Reward yourself for making progress. Go to a movie, buy yourself a treat or have a helpful partner pamper you with breakfast in bed.
4. Don’t be too hard on yourself for little slips. People who indulge in excessive self-blame are more likely to get discouraged and give up.
5. Seek support from others. When things get tough, a partner, friend or support-group buddy can provide much needed encouragement.
6. Don’t lapse into wishful thinking. Instead of working, some people start merely wishing that behavior will change by magic. It won’t.
7. Make a lifetime commitment to change. Successful resolution-keepers see their goals as a marathon, not a 100 yard dash.

#### *Lose excess weight*

8. Pick realistic goals. Don’t set yourself up for failure by aiming too high. For example, instead of saying, “I want to lose 10 pounds by the class reunion next month,” say, “I want to lose 2 pounds this month.”
9. Keep a detailed diary of what you eat and when. You will become more aware of your food choices, portion sizes and eating patterns.
10. Cut down on overly large portions. It may help to get out the measuring cups and scale.

11. Weigh yourself no more than once a week. Focus more on eating well and exercising regularly than on achieving a particular number.
12. Find your personal motivation. Some people are motivated by the desire to be a good role model for your children. Others simply want to feel better.
13. Learn more about your problem. Read up on nutrition and fitness. Ask your health care provider to suggest reliable books and Web sites.
14. Keep hope alive.
15. Try, try again. Don't let setbacks dissuade you. Keep moving toward your goal.

### ***Eat better***

16. Choose your foods rationally, not emotionally. Any food that tastes good can be eaten in moderation, but some foods help you build a healthy body more than others. Focus on those.
17. Replace fried foods with broiled, steamed or baked versions. Buy fat-free or low-fat versions of food when available.
18. Drink water instead of soda pop. To give plain water more pizzazz, add a twist of lemon or lime or a slice of orange.
19. Eat small meals and light snacks throughout the day. You're more apt to make bad food choices if you let yourself get too hungry.

### ***Exercise***

20. Set measurable, specific goals. For example, instead of saying, "I'm going to exercise more," you might say, "I'm going to exercise 30 minutes a day at least five days every week."
21. Find an activity that you really enjoy. If you start to get bored, change the routine. Make it fun again!



22. Walk whenever you can. It doesn't take any special skill or equipment other than a good pair of shoes.
23. Work more physical activity into your everyday life. Walk to the dry cleaners or post office, and carry your own grocery bags.

### ***Stop smoking***

24. Keep a log of when you smoke and why. Become aware of your smoking patterns, such as lighting up after a meal. Then plan ahead for healthy ways to deal with these situations.
25. Pick a quit date and prepare your home. The night before you quit, throw out all your cigarettes and ashtrays.
26. Remind yourself that withdrawal is only temporary. Keep telling yourself that things should get easier by the eighth day or so.
27. Avoid the temptation to replace cigarettes with sweets. Chew sugarless gum or munch raw veggies to prevent weight gain.

### ***Relax more***

28. Practice deep breathing.
29. Harness the power of imagination. Close your eyes, breathe deeply and think of a relaxing image, such as a vacation scene or a pleasant memory from childhood.
30. Give yourself a pep talk. Tell yourself, "I believe in myself," "I deserve to be happy" and "I am strong enough to reach my goals."
31. Avoid stressful situations, if possible. Leave for work early to avoid rush-hour traffic, or leave your pager at home on weekends.

### *Drink alcohol moderately*

32. Learn to say no. Since most drinking situations are social, it helps to rehearse saying, “No thanks, I’ll have a ginger ale” or “Let me start with a glass of water.” Have an alternative beverage already in mind.
33. Set a reasonable limit. Moderate drinking is defined as no more than two drinks per day for men or one drink per day for women.
34. Don’t overfill drink glasses. A standard drink glass is a 12 ounce bottle of beer, a 5 ounce glass of wine, or a 1.5 ounce shot of liquor.
35. Sip your drinks, and space the sips. Also, try alternating alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages.

### *Stay healthy*

36. Have the appropriate health screening tests. Depending on your age and sex, these might include tests for several kinds of cancer, high blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes and osteoporosis.
37. Jot annual tests in your calendar a year in advance and schedule you around your birthday each year as an easy reminder.
38. Have your teeth professionally cleaned as often as your dentist recommends. Brush and floss at least once every day.



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## Activity: Personal Wellness Action Plan

In this activity you will use the information from this section of the course to create your own Personal Wellness Action Plan.

The action plan will include any known possible health risks you may face or you are concerned about. Elements of the action plan will be actions you are going to take to contain, control, or eliminate these risk factors. Other elements may be general concerns about life style changes you need to make.

Refer to the list of 38 Ways To Break Bad Habits and Stick To Good Ones in developing your Action Plan.

After class, you may want to ask family members about blood relatives' health history. If you have questions and concerns, you should check with your personal health care provider.

### Example Personal Wellness Action Plan

Health Risks or General Health Concerns	My Personal Wellness Action Plan
Excess weight	I will immediately start exercising more on a daily basis and I will make better choices in the foods I eat, such as low-fat and low-calorie foods.
High Blood Pressure	I'll lose weight, exercise, and try to relax more to reduce stress.
Diabetes	I'll follow my doctor's advise on foods to eat and foods not to eat. I will take my medication on a regular basis.
Lack of energy	I'll discuss my concerns with my doctor. I'll gradually increase my activity level to improve my stamina.

Health Risks or General Health Concerns	My Personal Wellness Action Plan

As you make changes in your “life choices,” you should remember that it is important not to be discouraged by minor setbacks. Persistence and perseverance will pay off in the end.

You need to remember that when you think positively about yourself, you work harder at what you want to do, and give up less easily. You also make a better impression on others, which encourages you to help you along the way.

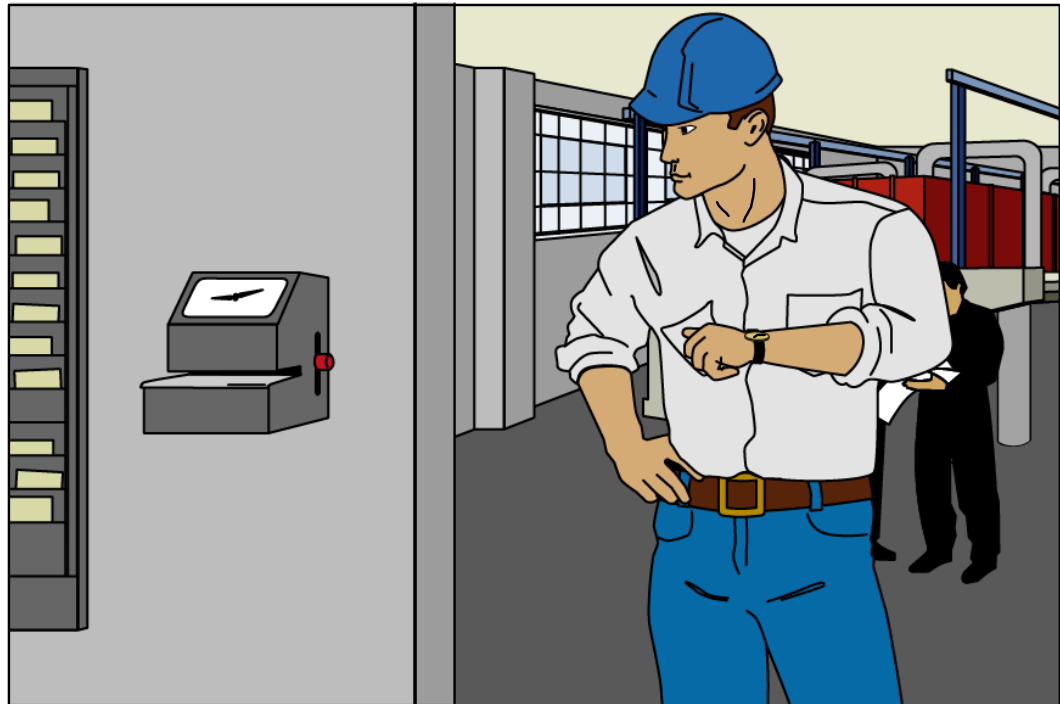


# Time Management

Very few of us feel that we have enough time to do all of the things that we want and need to do everyday. But would a thirty-hour day really solve our problems?

If we look deeper, we realize that it's not just a matter of not having enough time, it's really a matter of how we manage our time. We can't change the amount of time we have, but we can change how we use our time.

In this section you will learn techniques to better manage your time that will enable you to take control of your life in a more efficient way.



*Time Management*

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## The Nature of Time

The passage of time is viewed differently around the world.

In Western cultures, time is perceived as rigid, segmented, limited and linear. Time is treated as a commodity. Time can be saved, wasted or spent wisely. “Time is money” is a well-known adage in American culture.

In Western cultures, if you miss an appointment – it’s gone, forever.

In contrast, Eastern cultures view time as flexible, elastic, relaxed, unlimited and circular.

In Eastern cultures, if you miss an appointment it will come around, again. For example, when two people are interacting, you are more likely to continue with what you are doing until you have finished rather than end it and move on to the next scheduled activity. It is more important to focus on relationships than adhere to a clock.

In fact, Eastern cultures frequently interpret the Western preoccupation with time as a direct insult to meaningful interpersonal relationships. In general, Westerners are seen as wanting to rush through your personal encounters so you can get to the next appointment.

You are going to learn how we can combine attitudes of time from both the Eastern and Western cultures to gain control over how you utilize your time and allow time to accomplish the most important things.



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## Activity: What Is My Attitude About Time?

**Part I:** Do any of these statements describe you? (Check the ones that do.)

- ☐ Burned out, stressed out, rundown and tired
- ☐ Too much time is wasted in meetings
- ☐ Out of balance; out of control
- ☐ Always procrastinate important things
- ☐ Not enough time for important relationships
- ☐ Come home beat and exhausted
- ☐ Not achieving personal goals
- ☐ Not enough time to relax and unwind
- ☐ Not enough time for friends and personal development
- ☐ Need to spend vacation time unwinding
- ☐ Rushed getting off to work in the morning
- ☐ Not enough “goof-off” time
- ☐ Too much to do; not enough time for family and me
- ☐ Put off unpleasant tasks, miss deadlines and arrive late
- ☐ Things are getting backed up
- ☐ Enjoy my days off more than my workweek
- ☐ Don’t enjoy going to work after a few days off
- ☐ Have to work through lunch, or by staying late
- ☐ Don’t accomplish things on time; feel rushed and under the gun
- ☐ Interruptions throw me off track
- ☐ Too many priorities, often feel unprepared and pressured

**Part II:** Are these some of the things you want in your life? (Check the ones you want.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Eliminate feelings of stress and burnout
- \_\_\_\_\_ Look forward to Mondays (or the first day back to work)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get a better night's sleep
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enjoy more energy all day long
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enjoy time for a daily lunch break
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be more in balance every day
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get things done on time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reduce interruptions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Manage multiple priorities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reduce wasted time in meetings
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get to the important things and get you done
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have more fun during the workweek
- \_\_\_\_\_ Improve personal motivation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Set and achieve more personal goals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enjoy more relaxation time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be in command of my destiny
- \_\_\_\_\_ Go to work refreshed and unhurried
- \_\_\_\_\_ Come home relaxed and energized
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have more time for family and friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have more time for me and what I want to do
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get everywhere on time

Keep in mind that the aim of this section is to help you improve your *relationship with time*.

Our culture teaches us that time is an enemy. There is never enough time to get everything done. We are pressured by time. We begin to hate the very idea of time management.

You need to transform your relationship to time by changing those unhealthy thought patterns.



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## What Is Time Management?

Time Management is “effectiveness.” Doing the best job at the right of time to contribute to company and personal goals and objectives.

True effectiveness is not a matter of doing things right but of *doing the right things*.

Time management is results-oriented, not activities-oriented.

Managing your time well will help you be more effective in your job and at home.

## Benefits of Effective Time Management

There are many benefits to using your time effectively.

- You can be more proactive rather than reactive.
- You have more time for creative thinking.
- You have more time to assist and coach others.
- You develop a sense of control in your life.
- You will be viewed as effective and dependable by managers and others.

Many of us do not use our time as effectively as we could. This often occurs because we view ourselves as not having control over our time. There will certainly be days that we do not have as much control as we would like; however, we really do have more control over how we use our time than we think.

## 3 P's of Time Management

There are three areas in effective time management:

- Planning
- Prioritizing
- Personal Habits

When you plan ahead, schedule your priorities, and monitor how you use your time, you can become an effective time manager.

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## Planning

The first “P” in time management – Planning.

Planning is considered to be an investment in effectiveness and success.  
Planning will help keep you focused.

Time can be leveraged. Investing a little of your time in planning can actually free up time throughout the rest of the day. A daily planning session can act as a time lever. The cost is small – maybe as little as 10-15 minutes a day – but you can reap the benefits all day long.

These benefits include clearly defined goals and routines, increased focus on important tasks, and a greater sense of accomplishment at the end of the day.

The reason the importance of planning is being stressed is that most people do not spend any time planning. They don’t leverage their time. If planning is the key to control and if it’s such a simple task, why do so many people ignore it?



*Planning*



## Excuses for Not Planning

### *I don't have time to plan.*

This is the most common reason people say you don't plan. What you are really saying is that you prefer to do other things with your time, such as watching TV, reading the newspaper, or sleeping an extra 15 minutes. You don't put a high priority on planning. You are content with the status quo.

### *I already know what I have to do. Why take the time to plan?*

We all have routine tasks to do each day, but what about the other, non-routine tasks and responsibilities? If we are honest with ourselves, we all want to live our life in a way that permits us to accomplish routine things as well as important tasks and to feel in control of our time. To do this, a daily plan is necessary.

### *Planning doesn't work for me. I have too many interruptions.*

All of us have had the experience of arriving at work and even before we can take off our coats, someone calls or comes by asking for our help. Most of the time it's something "urgent." Some days are like that all day long. And some days have more interruptions than others. Admittedly, interruptions are a problem, but developing an awareness of this problem will enable you to take control of interruptions so that you become opportunities – not nuisances.

### *I feel tied down when I have a long list of things I have to do.*

No one likes to be faced with an overwhelming list of tasks to do; however, the solution is not to avoid planning. When your plan is meaningful and accurate, it gives you freedom. Remember the list is not in control – you are.

### *I don't know how to plan.*

Most people don't know how to plan effectively. Proper planning takes dedication and perseverance on an on-going basis. In this section, you will be given suggestions on how to become an effective, and maybe even an expert, planner of your time.

The extent and nature of planning your time is an individual activity. Your approach to planning should recognize two types: **long-term** and **short-term**. The division between the two types is up to you. Some people think of short-term as today. Some think of short-term as this week. Long-term may mean two years from now. It really doesn't matter what distinction you make, as long you take the time to plan to accomplish your goals, objectives, tasks, and obligations.

A list of **Things To Do** today can be a valuable tool in focusing your energy as you face the day each morning. The format of your list is not important. It can be written on a sheet of paper, or on a special form like you find in a "Daily Planner."

You should remember that all planning should be done acknowledging the aspect of uncertainty that applies. With this idea in mind, maintain as much flexibility as possible to take full advantage of unexpected events and changes as you pursue your plans.

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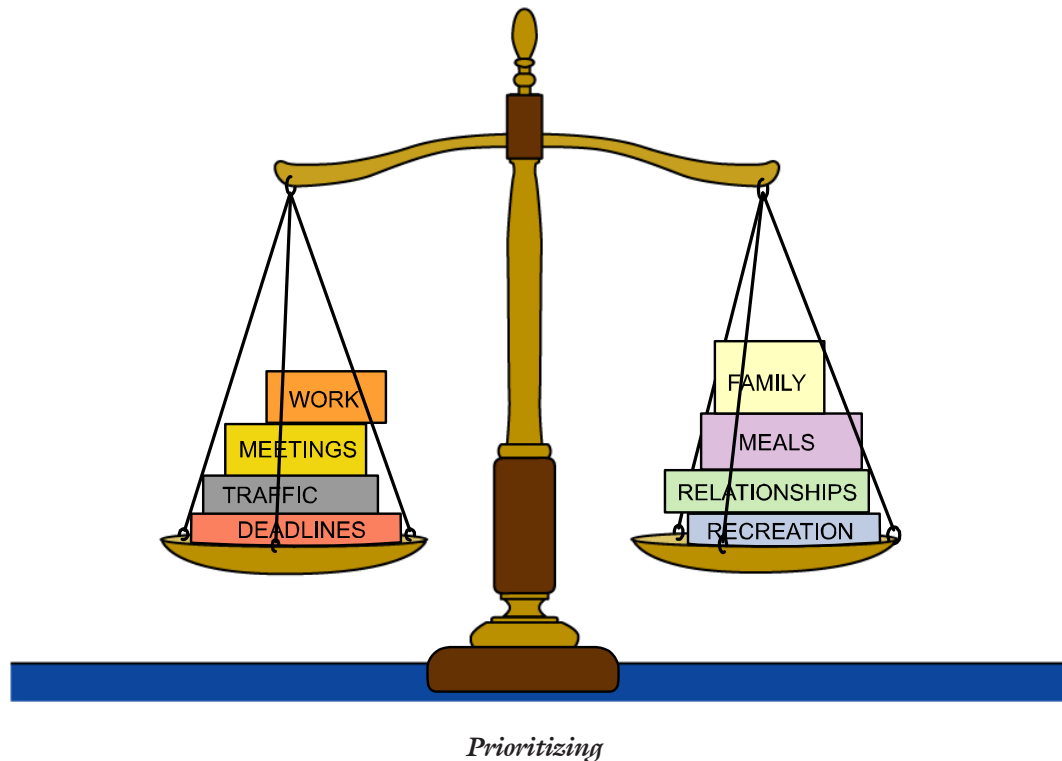
## Prioritizing

The second "P" in time management – Prioritizing.

The basic underlying principle of time management is to ensure that important tasks and activities get done. Prioritizing forces you to weigh the importance of each item on the task list and to make a conscious, thoughtful decision about what to do when.

The trick to prioritizing is to isolate and identify the things that will be of the most benefit to you personally and professionally in the course of your day.

It is important to focus on the most important tasks in order to achieve the greatest return. These tasks can be called your “Top Payoff Activities.”



### Where Does My Time Go?

Time is often associated with money, and just as we often find ourselves short of cash, we also find ourselves short on time.

To understand where your time goes, it is important to assess how you actually spend it. One way to do this is to keep a record in order to evaluate your utilization of time.

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## Activity: Time Audit

In this activity you will examine how you are utilizing your time.

It is important to be completely honest with yourself while you are analyzing your time. If you aren't, you won't be able to spot the areas that need improvements.

### Time Audit Worksheet

*Instructions:* Evaluate your current use of time during a normal day by completing the following statements. Remember to be *open* and *honest* with yourself.

1. In the course of a normal day, I spend the majority of my time in the following activities:
2. Which of these activities could be considered "Top-Payoff" activities?
3. Do you follow a written plan based on your day's priorities?



4. List your personal time wasters.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What am I doing that doesn't really need to be done?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What am I doing that could be done by someone else?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What am I doing that could be done more effectively or more efficiently?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What do I do that wastes other people's time?

We often think our time wasters are primarily external forces, over which we have no control, until we focus on the specific things we do each day. Then we realize that we can eliminate many time wasters and be much more productive.

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## The Proactive Attitude

What is a proactive attitude?

As human beings, we are responsible for our own lives.

*Proactive* people are driven by personal responsibility, internal values, carefully selected priorities.

Conversely, *reactive* people believe that their lives are completely controlled by external events, circumstances, and conditions.

People who don't believe they control their lives are constantly looking for external signals to motivate them and tell them how and when they should perform various tasks.

### Reactive vs. Proactive

*Reactive* people feel good if the weather is good. If the weather is bad, their attitude suffers. When people treat them well, they feel well; when people mistreat them, they become angry or defensive. They let others control them.

On the other hand, *proactive* people carry their own weather inside; rain or shine – it makes no difference. They are driven by their internal values to accomplish priorities regardless of the weather.

An ancient Chinese proverb:

*“Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in eliminating the nonessentials.”*

In reality, you have control over many aspects of your life, but you alone are responsible for initiating that control. Learning to recognize priorities and what you can control in relation to the choices you have is the first step in the process of managing your time more effectively.

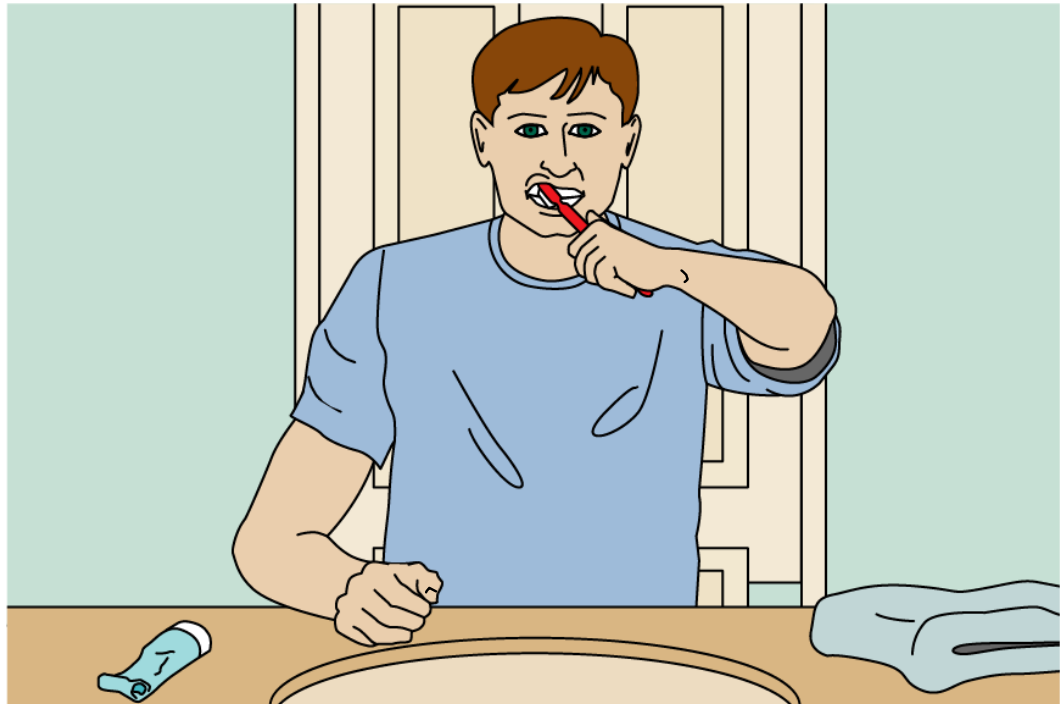
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## Personal Habits

The final “P” in time management – Personal Habits.

Our personal habits have a lot to do with how we spend our time.

We all begin our day with every intention of getting everything we need to do done. But do we ever think about “when” during the day would be the optimum time to tackle these most important tasks? It would be logical to schedule these tasks during our most productive time of day.



*Personal Habits*

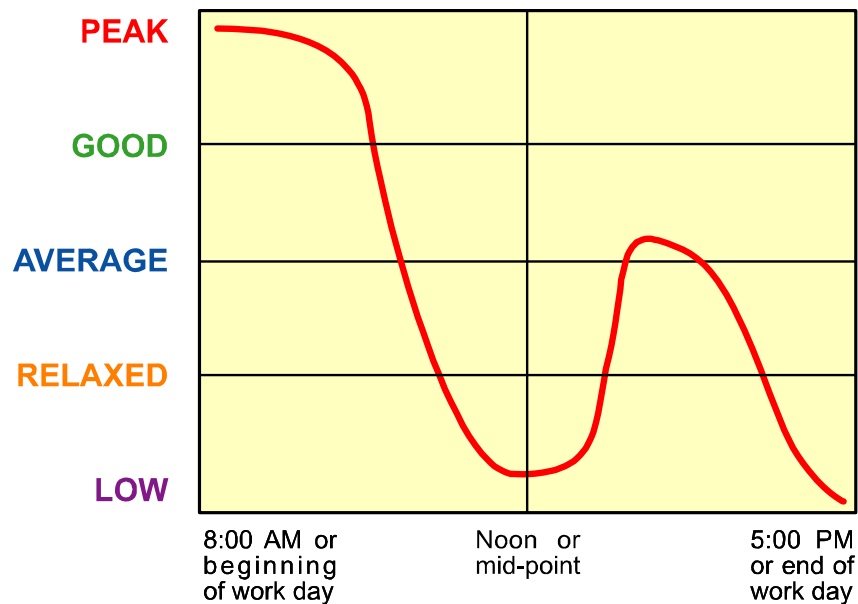
Do you know what your most productive time of day is?

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## Mental Energy and Peak Performance

Everyone has a time of the day when they are sharp, creative, and productive. As a CMS participant, you may have already noticed that there are times during the day when you're lagging – not able to concentrate very well or complete tasks efficiently. Almost every person is aware of how these individual times vary.

Dr. Dorothy Tennov, Psychologist at the University of Bridgeport, Connecticut, suggests there are five levels of productivity.



*Typical Energy Pattern*

### Five Levels of Productivity

- Peak Level:** You're at your best; able to learn new things and have new ideas. This is the time of day when you're most creative and alert.
- Good Level:** You're better than average, but not your best. You can do most things at this level.



**Average Level:** You can carry out complex activities, as long as you are familiar and not new to you. You are better at routine tasks, than at creative thinking.

**Relaxed Level:** You can function well if you stick to easy things.

**Low Level:** You don't want to have to think or make decisions at this level.

The most productive time of day is the beginning of your day. You are fresh, alert, and rested. You have lots of energy and are ready to go to work. Your level of concentration is very high and you have a long attention span.

As your day progresses, you usually begin to tire and lose concentration and interest. The quality of your work begins to slide.

Later in the day, you have a spurt of renewed energy when you can again tackle more demanding activities that require attention and concentration.

This energy spurt soon begins to decline and by the end of the day you have completely run out of steam.

If you have postponed working on important matters until you begin to run out of steam, both the quality of your effort and your overall productivity will suffer.

All people vary between these performance levels during the day. Everybody doesn't necessarily follow this exact pattern – starting high and ending low. In addition, some of the levels will last longer than others.

You shouldn't underestimate the role of nutrition in energy levels. Skipping meals can often prove counterproductive when a high priority task is ready to be tackled.

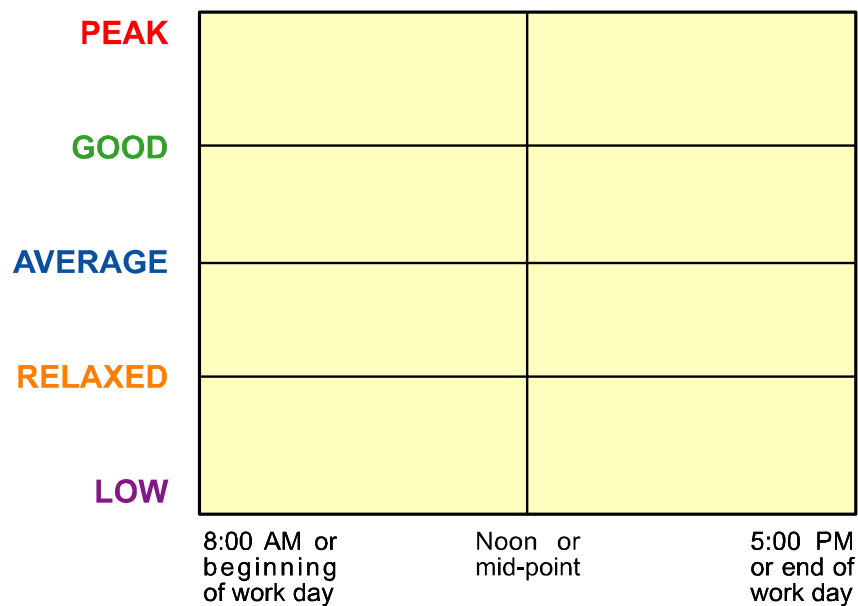
Being aware of your patterns plays an important role in planning your schedule. Identifying and monitoring these patterns through each day will help you to use your time optimally.

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## Activity: Know Your Performance Pattern

Take a few minutes to think about your energy pattern during a typical work day - starting with the beginning of the work day and ending with the end of the work day.

Draw your “energy pattern” on this graph, keeping in mind the four levels: Peak, Good, Average, Relaxed, and Low.



*My Energy Pattern*

Think about how you may be able to rearrange your work day around your peak and low performance levels.



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## Personal and Professional Roles

The roles that you play in your life greatly influence the way you spend your time and your personal habits. Your roles also affect how well you manage your time. In this section, you will identify these roles and the influence they have on your time management.

List *as many* different “roles” you can think of that you fulfill in your life.

Example:

*Personal Role: Father or Mother*

*Professional Role: Team member*

Personal Roles

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Professional Roles

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This list should remind you of all of the demands that are made on your time both personally and professionally.

## **Making Time**

### ***Couple Time***

Make at least two appointments with your spouse or partner each week. The first is to discuss “mundane” business such as who is taking the car to be serviced and the dog/cat to the Vet. The second is a social “date” just for the two of you.

### ***Family Time***

Set up a family meeting at least once a week to plan family activities, make family decisions, and assign home maintenance responsibilities. Also have a set family “fun” time each week. Try to have at least one family meal a day together. If dinner doesn’t work, try breakfast.

### ***Friends Time***

As with family, schedule time with friends. Schedule time with friends once or twice a month (more often if you can) to maintain your friendships. Friends are important for helping you maintain a balance in your life between work and play.

### ***Personal Time***

Last but not least, find time for yourself by getting up a half-hour earlier or going to bed a little later. Enjoy some quiet time for reading, exercising, or some other personally satisfying activity.

It is important to create a balance in your life between the various roles that you play in your personal and professional relationships. Success in one role can’t justify failure in another.

Success or failure in any role contributes to the quality of every other role, and of life as a whole.

The way you use your time reflects the way you live your life. Your life and your time are like a buffet line. You plate fills up sooner than you realize. You need to find balance and focus on the activities and relationships that will help you reach your personal and professional goals.

*Making Time*

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## Overcoming Procrastination

“We have all met the enemy and the enemy is us.”

Procrastination is universal. Even though you have now identified your roles, goals, and priority tasks, procrastination is still a problem facing each of you.

According to Workforce Magazine, January 1999, in the article, “What To Do When Being Overworked Leads to Procrastination,” its effects range from a minor slowdown to major catastrophe - and is probably the single most common time management problem. There is even a “Procrastinators National Association!”

On top of that, the multiple priorities and tasks facing you in today’s workplace make you feel overwhelmed - which leads to procrastination. Every person has a varying degree of procrastination - and everyone in the world has felt the urge to put off things off until later.

## Questions to Ask Yourself about Procrastination

Do you have a tendency to leave unpleasant chores/tasks until the last minute? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you hope that if you put off tackling something, it will just go away or somebody else will do it? \_\_\_\_\_

When you fail to get a job done on time, do you blame someone else? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you set unrealistic deadlines for yourself, which almost guarantee you won't get the job done on time? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you overload yourself with work and then complain that there's too much to do? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you running out of excuses and alibis to explain why you aren't getting things done on time? \_\_\_\_\_

## Tips for Conquering Procrastination

- Plan and schedule individual tasks
- Break down an “overwhelming” task into manageable “chunks”
- Start with the easiest step first
- Don't become paralyzed by perfectionism
- Set a deadline(s)
- Make a list and cross off completed tasks
- Plan a specific, realistic reward for completing an unpleasant task
- Look at what you've already accomplished - then look ahead
- If getting started is the challenge, start in “10 minute” intervals
- When you feel that impulse to work on it, do it
- Work together with an associate or team member for support and encouragement

If one tip doesn't work - try another. And try, try again.



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## **Activity: Food for Thought**

The following questions are provided so that you can reflect upon the ideas presented in this section. These questions should be considered in the context of your present job and home environment.

What have you learned about yourself and your use of time as a result of the information and activities in this section?

What opportunities do you see to make better use of your time and get your “top payoff” activities done?

Do others that you deal with waste your time in the process of fulfilling your responsibilities? If so, how might you limit the impact of this on your time?

What other ideas have you gained from this section that can help you improve upon your time utilization?

As acknowledged previously, no one has complete control over his or her time. However, you do control a major portion of it. And even when you do not have control over everything you do, you always have some degree of freedom in how you do it.

Thus, you have two basic approaches to better managing your time utilization.

***First***, develop the greatest degree of efficiency in handling those things that must be done. Don't put you off. Get organized. Plan the routine as much as you can.

***Second***, address your highest priority obligations. Develop good personal work habits to cut down on wasted time.

Any change in habits takes time. Monitor your progress and within a few weeks you can get the new behavior patterns well ingrained in your routine.



# Stress Management

In this section, you will learn the causes of stress and its symptoms. You will learn about both the positive and negative aspects of stress in your life, and identify your own particular responses to stress. With this information, you will then learn some stress-management techniques to monitor and handle stress on an ongoing basis.

Stress is everywhere today, and it is often driven by time pressures in today's workplace. The demands of life today act on us and result in the condition we call "stress."



*Stress Management*

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## Stress at Work

A number of specific stressful working conditions, such as repetitive work, assembly-line work, electronic monitoring or surveillance, involuntary overtime, piece-rate work, inflexible hours, and arbitrary supervision have been studied over the last 15 years.

These studies have shown that the greatest risk to physical and mental health from stress occurs to workers facing high psychological job demands or pressures combined with low control in meeting those demands. Job demands are defined by “working very fast,” “working very hard,” and “not enough time to get the job done.”

Considerable evidence exists linking ‘job strain’ to hypertension and coronary heart disease. Without question, the issue of job stress is of utmost importance to the public health community and working people. The economic costs of job stress in general (absenteeism, lost productivity) are difficult to estimate but could be in the billions of dollars each year.

Our fast-paced world has brought many changes in all aspects of your life – not the least, your workplace and the fundamental way people now approach work.

Why you think in today’s culture you see so many signs of stress at work?

You can’t get away from the stress of work. With longer work hours, people are essentially on the job almost all of the time. People aren’t getting as much time away - time to defuse - like they had in the past. This trend does not appear to be decreasing, but rather increasing all the time.

People are increasingly having trouble with alcohol, drugs, depression, and acting aggressively at work. And these aren’t isolated instances. They are a composite picture from chronic work distress, as well as difficulties trying to deal with personal life overload from marital problems, single parenthood, financial worries and the like. The stress is so great that people are snapping. And no one has to tell you that it’s getting worse.



A 1999 Occupational Hazards article states that “American workers put in an average of 47 hours a week, almost 10% more than 20 years ago.” And “75 % of workers believe there is greater stress on the job.”

American culture in particular appears to promote stress as the socially acceptable road to and result of achievement.

What are some things that indicate that stress is everywhere in the workplace today?

Both the work and the increased speed and complexity of work these days is leaving everyone from the executive suite to the factory floor throbbing from a massive migraine just trying to get all your work done.

With workforces being thinned down and with increased urgency to meet competitive demands, a lot of pressure is exerted on employees. There is more work to do in less time and with fewer people. It often affects communication and the way we deal with people.

If an employee feels isolated, unappreciated or as if he or she has no voice, it puts that individual under enormous pressure. The changes put more demands and pressures on each of us to make adjustments - to do more with less. At work this means often more assignments, more priorities - and fewer resources to go around.

Most employees don't just sign up to get overworked because they enjoy it. Economic, technological and business factors such as downsizing, the skills shortage, and high unemployment have forced those American workers left sitting in the hot seat to give 150% (or more) just to stay on top of their workloads. Now, company leaders have come to expect and rely on this kind of accelerated pace.

Events that take place in the workplace converge and influence how a person will act outside of the workplace. You can't be separated. The stress from a job can spill over to the family and personal relationships. And difficulties in the family and personal relationships can spill over into the work environment as well.

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## Activity: Am I Feeling Stress in My Life?

**Part I:** Do any of these statements describe you? Check the ones that do.

- \_\_\_\_\_ At times my heart pounds so hard I can almost hear it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm often tired, even when I have had enough sleep.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I grind my teeth at night and/or during the day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I sleep too much or can't sleep at all.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I often experience indigestion, queasiness, or other stomach problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have unexplained pains in my neck, shoulders, or lower back.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I smoke, drink alcohol, and use prescription drugs more often than usual.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can't concentrate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have a negative attitude.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I often feel confused.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I often feel depressed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I often feel so keyed up that I can't relax.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I experience frequent nightmares.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I always feel like I don't have enough time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm always in a hurry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I often withdraw from friends and family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I alternate between lashing out at others and clamming up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I often feel angry, irritated, impatient, or uncomfortably tense.

Total # of items checked: \_\_\_\_\_

If you checked **NONE** of the statements, you are handling stress remarkably well. Congratulations and keep up the good work!



If you checked **1-3** of the statements, you are experiencing mild to moderate stress in a few areas of your life. By using strategies for stress reduction, you should be able to learn to control or eliminate the stress in your life.

If you checked **4-10** of the statements, you are experiencing high levels of stress in several areas. Life-style changes are suggested, and you should seriously pursue methods of stress reduction immediately.

If you checked **more than 10** statements, you have a severe problem with stress. Serious thought should be given to changing your overall life-style and seeking professional help.

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## What is Stress?

The stress response is the way in which the body reacts in a stressful situation. It is anything that stimulates you and increases your level of alertness.

Stress is your body's response to the world around you. Stress is also the result of your body's response to the pressures you put on yourself.

When the body detects stress, the brain assesses the situation, decides how to respond, and initiates a chain of reactions that result in a "stress response." The nature of the response is normally of an intensity and duration necessary to keep the body in balance and protect it from harm. At these times, we may not even notice anything. At other times, however, we become very aware of our body's response to a stressful situation.

An example of a simple physical reaction to stress is the adjustment your body makes in cold temperatures. Your body responds to maintain a constant internal temperature, regardless of outside temperature changes. When you feel cold, your body shivers and circulation increases, moving more blood to the surface of your body and warming the skin. In turn, you adapt to this physical reaction by putting on more clothes or moving to a warmer location.

However in an emergency situation, your stress response can be very noticeable and give you the energy and alertness you need for survival. Just like our historical ancestors, this is where "fight or flight" symptoms hold us in good stead.

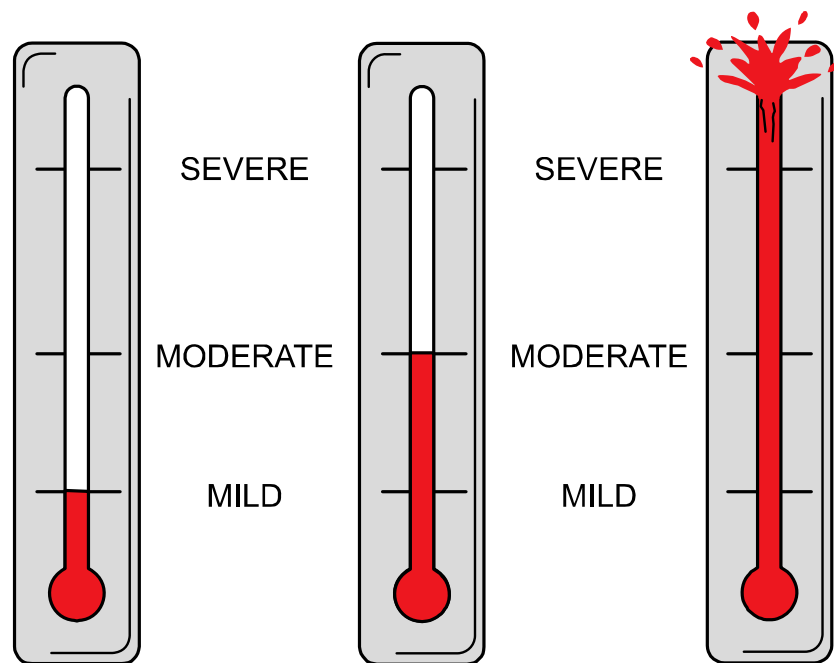
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## Levels of Stress

Another way of looking at stress is anything that stimulates you and increases your level of awareness. Life without stimulus would be incredibly dull and boring. Life with too many stimuli is unpleasant and tiring. It can ultimately damage your health.

Stress is a condition human beings have dealt with since time began. It's a natural process - a part of life. As such, it can be both productive and destructive. Learning to manage stress will greatly increase your own wellness in the fast pace of life today.

The “art” of stress management is a balancing act. You want to keep yourself at a level of stimulation that's healthy and enjoyable - at just the right place on your internal stimulus scale.



*Three Levels of Stress*



## Three Levels of Stress

### *Mild Stress*

Mild stress is responsible for the constant changes that take place inside our bodies; we usually aren't aware of mild stress or our reactions to it.

Responses include:

- Regulated body temperature
- Increased heart rate and breathing when climbing stairs
- Eyes automatically adjusting to light or dark

### *Moderate Stress*

Moderate stress can bring excitement and motivation into our lives.

Responses include:

- Stimulation of our senses and passions
- Motivation to try new things
- Desire to make changes in our lives
- Increased energy levels
- Faster activity of the brain
- Improvement of short term memory
- Faster decision making
- Improved memory
- Sharpened focus and attention

This level of stress is helpful when giving a presentation, playing sports, or taking a test. Sometimes we call it nerves. If we manage it well, moderate stress can be used to our advantage.

## *Severe Stress*

During extreme stress, our hearts start beating faster and we experience a rush of adrenaline. Our physical response is similar to that of our primordial ancestors.

Severe stress dates back to the beginning of time, starting with the cave dweller. Its origin is the body's response to life-threatening danger. Today, it is our response to what we sense as a threatening situation.

Responses include:

- Increased alertness or anxiety due to an increased production of adrenaline
- Increased energy
- Heightened reaction times
- Faster heart rate
- Raised blood pressure
- Reduced blood flow to hands and feet
- Increased metabolism
- Reduced functioning of the immune system
- Reduced blood flow to internal organs
- Quicker, shallower breathing
- Tensing of muscles
- Reduced tension in the stomach and bowels

These changes in the body have the effect of creating an alert mental state in the brain, which to our ancestors meant “fight or flight.”

Often people are able to accomplish extraordinary things for a short time while under extreme stress. However, as you can see from the responses, a severe level of stress is not a state that is healthy to maintain for a long period of time.



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## Symptoms of Stress

High levels of stress over a sustained period can damage your health. Much like a doctor recognizing symptoms and patterns of symptoms, the sooner you recognize you are under stress, the sooner you can do something to address it. This is particularly true for stress occurring over a long period of time.

What are different “warning signs” that someone is under too much stress?

As stress increases, your ability to recognize it often decreases.

### Short-term Stress Reactions

These are the symptoms we talked about earlier in class, often called “fight or flight” survival reactions to a stress-causing situation. They occur as your body adapts to what it perceives as a “physical threat” and are caused by release of adrenaline. Although you think of them as unpleasant or negative, they are signs your body is ready for the explosive action assisting survival or a high performance situation.

These are often linked to a single event and disappear after the event. Athletes commonly have these symptoms before an event, performers before a performance. For many people, public speaking or a job performance situation can trigger these reactions.

What are some signs of short-term stress?

Although these symptoms are often brief, when not managed effectively, they can produce negative effects over time.

## Short-term Performance Effects

While adrenaline helps you survive in a “fight or flight” emergency, these stress responses have negative effects in situations when it’s not a survival situation:

- Clear judgment is interfered with, and it makes it difficult to take the time to make good decisions. The effects include:
- Difficult situations are seen as a threat, not a challenge.
- When you need good physical skills, it gets in the way of fine motor control.
- It consumes mental energy in anxiety, frustration and distraction – the kind of energy that should be used instead for the work at hand.
- Psychologically it damages the mindset you need for high quality work by:
  - Creating negative thinking
  - Damaging self-confidence
  - Disrupting focus and concentration
  - Making it difficult to cope with distractions



## **Long-term Stress Reactions**

When stress and this adrenaline response is sustained repeatedly over time, rather than for just a single event, physically and mentally you will see the symptoms. One of the ways adrenaline prepares you for “fight or flight” action is by diverting resources to your muscles from the other body maintenance areas. This means that if you are exposed to adrenaline responses for a sustained period of time, your health may begin to suffer. Physically it can show up in negative symptoms.

Some negative symptoms of long-term stress include:

- Change in appetite
- Frequent colds
- Headaches
- Feelings of intense and long-term tiredness
- Skin eruptions
- Back pain
- Digestive problems
- Asthma
- Aches and pains
- Sexual disorders

When you're under stress or have been tired for a long period of time, you can find that you are less able to think clearly and rationally about problems. This often leads to the following mental and emotional responses to long-term stress:

- Worry or anxiety
- Confusions, and an inability to concentrate or make decisions
- Feeling ill
- Feeling overwhelmed or out of control
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Frustration
- Hostility
- Impatience and irritability
- Restlessness
- Sleeping problems
- Drinking more alcohol and smoking more
- Changing eating habits
- Relying more on medication

In and of itself, one symptom may not be significant; but when several occur, it is likely stress is a factor.



## **Long-term Performance Effects**

When you or someone else is under long-term stress, these symptoms can show up:

- Talking too fast or too loud
- Excessive yawning
- Nervous mannerisms  
(nail biting, pacing, drumming fingers, etc.)
- Bad moods
- Irritability
- Defensiveness
- Being critical of others
- Aggressiveness
- Irrational behavior
- Overly reactive and overly emotional
- Unreasonably negative
- Inability to concentrate
- Trouble making decisions
- Increased forgetfulness
- Making more mistakes
- Being more accident prone
- Changing work habits
- Increased absenteeism
- Neglecting personal appearance

As you can see from the physical, mental and behavioral symptoms of stress over the long term - the effects of long-term stress can be serious. Without taking action to relieve stress, it can lead to fatigue and exhaustion, depression, burnout, serious stress-related illness, or a mental breakdown.

Short-term stress can be recognized and easily managed. However, it is important to recognize when the signals continue for a long time and you are on overload.

People can avoid mental and physical burnout by keeping in mind there's a limit to your energy and you should respect this limit. As you get better and better at your jobs, other people will want more and more of your time. It is easy for commitments to get bigger in that way. Other people often don't realize the effect their actions have on you.

Stress is a natural and inevitable process - and some level of stress is always present for all of us. A positive response will enable you to go the extra mile, study a little more, and make positive changes in your life. Negative responses, if left unchecked, build up gradually, tend to be cumulative, and may have undesirable mental and physical effects



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## **Common Sources of Stress**

Most people realize that aspects of your work and life-style can cause stress. While this is true, it is also important to note that stress can be caused by your environment and even what you eat and drink.

### **Environmental Factors**

Your living or working environment can cause stress. It may come from noise, crowding, pollution, messiness, dirt or other distractions.

Your environment can be a source of unpleasant or distracting stimuli. Again this is very individual. What is stressful for one person in the environment may be a pleasant stimulus for someone else.

For example, some people enjoy the social contact of close working quarters and don't mind if phone conversations or conversations with visitors are overheard by others. For many others, however, personal space is critical, and in tight quarters with many cubicles where there is little to no privacy, these people feel uncomfortable and experience increased levels of stress.

Crowding and invasion of personal space has been scientifically shown to create stress reactions in other mammals, too. We are all aware of the stress reactions we see in animals in cages at the zoo.

### **Nutritional Factors**

Caffeine raises your level of stress hormones making it more difficult to sleep. It also can make you irritable.

Bursts of sugar from sweets can make you feel more energetic for a brief period. However, your body reacts to stabilize abnormally high sugar levels by releasing too much insulin. This in turn causes a serious energy dip shortly after the sugar high.

Another nutritional factor often overlooked is salt. Salt raises your blood pressure and puts your body under chemical stress.

As well as these specific sources of chemical and nutritional stress, you may experience stress physically if you eat an unbalanced or unhealthy diet. Also, eating too much or too little can lead to health problems, and in turn generate stress.

Unhealthy dieting or skipping meals results in too little fuel to function, putting your body under nutritional stress.



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## Activity: Identifying Stressors in My Work Environment

The purpose of this activity is to allow you to assess the stress factors operating in your work environment.

Circle the number that most accurately represents how often you experience the workplace situation described.

1 = Seldom      2 = Sometimes      3 = Often

Stressors in My Work Environment:

I can't get the information I need to do my job. 1 2 3

What's expected of me or how well I perform isn't clear. 1 2 3

Competition results in back-stabbing. 1 2 3

I don't have the resources or tools I need to do my job  
(equipment, assistance, etc.) 1 2 3

I'm picked on or discriminated against at work. 1 2 3

My job interferes with my family time and personal needs. 1 2 3

I have to deal with conflicting directions and expectations. 1 2 3

My work environment lacks room for originality and personal input. 1 2 3

I am not given enough authority to do my job. 1 2 3

I frequently feel pressure from deadlines. 1 2 3

The people I work with aren't friendly or helpful. 1 2 3

I have little input into decisions that affect my work. 1 2 3

Aspects of my work change too quickly/too often  
(new procedures, technologies, management team). 1 2 3

I don't have a clear idea of departmental or company goals. 1 2 3

My work doesn't provide clear or reasonable paths for advancement. 1 2 3

Subtotal: \_ \_ \_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

If you scored **15 – 25**, your work environment is slightly stressful; you only need to make a few changes to reduce the stress you experience.

If you scored **26 – 36**, your work environment is moderately stressful. You have specific areas you can try to change to reduce your stress level.

If you scored **37 – 47**, your work environment is highly stressful. You have many areas that need immediate stress reduction remedies.



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## Life Crises

Different life crises have different impacts. A life crisis, such as divorce or bankruptcy, can disrupt anyone's life. In cases where you are aware of what is taking place, you can be proactive and prepare to manage your stress. After the situation has settled down, it is useful to recognize the impact of the crisis and look back on the level of stress you experienced.

The following is a list of life crisis stressors.

### Possible Life Crisis Stressors

Death of spouse	Divorce
Separation	Jail term
Death of close family member	Personal illness or injury
Marriage	Fired at work
Marital reconciliation	Retirement
Change in health of family member	Pregnancy
Sexual difficulties	New family member
Business readjustment	Change in finances
Death of close friend	Change to different line of work
Increased arguments with spouse	Large mortgage or loan
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	Change in responsibilities at work
Son or daughter leaving home	Trouble with in-laws
Outstanding personal achievement	Spouse begins or stops work
Begin or end of school or college	Change in living conditions
Change in personal habits	Trouble with boss
Change in work hours or conditions	Change in residence

Change in school or college	Change in recreation
Change in church activities	Change in social activities
Moderate mortgage or loan	Change in sleeping habits
Family get-togethers	Change in eating habits
Holidays (other than Christmas)	Christmas
Minor violations of the law	

When you are in danger of suffering a large number of stress-producing events, try to minimize the other stressors in your life. If, for example, you have lost someone close to you, try to avoid changing your job at that same time.

The cumulative effect of the stresses in your life can be an important predictor of health problems.

If you experience any of the life crisis stressors use the specific stress management techniques you will learn in this class to help you through any particularly difficult time.

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## Stress Management Techniques

As we have said, it is not enough just to be aware of what causes stress, it is also important to recognize the signals that tell us we are becoming overstressed. These stress indicators are our body's "early warning system" designed to let us know that it is time to reduce the level of stress before serious or prolonged problems develop.

### Techniques for Managing Stress

Sometimes the simplest stress relievers can often make a difference. Some examples where you have control include:

#### EXERCISE



#### DIET



#### RELAXATION



#### SOCIAL / SPIRITUAL



*Techniques for Managing Stress*

### *Exercise*

Exercise is one of the single best techniques used to defuse stress. It not only alleviates physical signs of stress, it also increases the body's production of endorphins. Endorphins are chemicals the body produces that literally make you feel better.

Incorporating any form of exercise into your daily life will help you respond to stress in a more positive way on an ongoing basis.

Exercise regularly, in the type of activity you enjoy, because physical activity provides a great balance in our life and relieves stress of all kinds.

### *Diet*

Poor nutrition was shown earlier as a cause or enhancer of stress. For example, skipping breakfast or lunch usually takes away the ability to cope with a stressful event or situation.

Be proactive. If a stress-causing event such as a tight deadline, unpleasant discussion, or public speaking is coming up, just like any athlete would do for an event or performance, be sure to “fortify” yourself with good nutrition. Well-balanced meals are critical to making it through these stressful times.



## *Relaxation*

Some suggestions for relaxing to reduce stress are:

- Walk your dog - or get a pet. Scientific evidence shows that there are psychological and physical benefits of owning a pet.
- Use simple breathing exercises. Deep breathing helps you relax and reduces physical and emotional tension. Just one deep breath can help you calm down in a tense situation or a case of nerves.
- Listen to relaxing music.
- Read something unrelated to work or see a movie/video/DVD.
- Talk to a friend for social support and stress release.
- Garden.
- Get away for a break, especially when you are under long-term stress. Try frequent 3 day getaways, rather than waiting all year for a 2 week vacation.

## *Social/Spiritual*

Growing isolation is a sure sign as well as cause of high levels of stress or burnout. Stress has been shown to be greatly reduced when people don't feel isolated or alone with your problems.

- Join a support group or club.
- Balance your job with an interest and friends outside of work.
- At higher levels of stress, or burnout - talk to a professional counselor.
- Take yoga classes.
- Practice meditation.

What are some other social or spiritual things that can be done to relieve stress?



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## **Activity: Stress Action Plan**

In this activity you will use the results of previous activities and the information you have learned in this class to create your own personal Stress Action Plan.

The action plan will include the things that you are going to do to manage stressful situations. Some elements of the action plan will be actions you are going to take to contain, control, or eliminate problems that are causing stress. Other elements may be health related such as taking more exercise, changing dietary habits, or improving the quality of your environment. Another part of the plan may cover time management techniques that you will employ when stress levels begin to build.

Refer to your results in the following activities in developing your “Stress Action Plan:”

From the “**Activity: Am I Feeling Stress in My Life?**,” what are my overall physical and emotional reactions to stress:

From the “**Activity: Identifying Stressors in My Work Environment,**” what are the primary stress factors operating in my work environment:

## Guide to Stress Management Techniques

Exercise	<p>Exercise regularly in the type of activity or sport you enjoy.</p> <p>Take short or long walks.</p> <p>Take the stairs instead of the elevator.</p> <p>Go out for lunch instead of eating at your desk.</p> <p>Walk farther from the parking lot.</p>
Diet	<p>Don't skip any meal: breakfast, lunch or dinner.</p> <p>Fortify yourself with good nutrition when faced with stressful situations.</p> <p>Avoid sugar and caffeine.</p> <p>Cut down or quit smoking.</p> <p>Eat a variety of foods from the major food groups.</p> <p>Eliminate or at least limit alcohol.</p>
Relaxation	<p>Take time for yourself.</p> <p>Get a pet.</p> <p>Use simple deep breathing exercises.</p> <p>Listen to relaxing music.</p> <p>Read something unrelated to work.</p> <p>See a movie/video/DVD.</p> <p>Talk to a friend for social support and stress release.</p> <p>Garden.</p> <p>Get away frequently on short 3 day vacations.</p>
Time Management	<p>Know the roles and goals important to you in your life.</p> <p>Find time for important roles in planning your schedule.</p> <p>Prioritize.</p> <p>Have a plan or daily TO DO list.</p> <p>Recognize your own time wasters.</p> <p>Use effective timesavers.</p> <p>Overcome procrastination.</p> <p>Effectively handle interruptions.</p> <p>Plan ahead and be prepared.</p> <p>Acknowledge your personal energy pattern.</p> <p>Focus on top payoff activities.</p>



Social/Spiritual	<p>Stop negative thoughts.</p> <p>Clear your mind of distracting thoughts.</p> <p>Change your perspective.</p> <p>Talk with someone – a trusted friend or clergy.</p> <p>Join a support group or club.</p> <p>Balance your job with an interest and friends outside of work.</p> <p>At higher levels of stress or burnout, talk to a professional counselor.</p> <p>Take yoga.</p> <p>Practice meditation.</p>
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Consider these three factors in creating your personal “Stress Action Plan:”

1. Your personal causes of stress
2. The symptoms you experience
3. Stress management and time management techniques you will use to manage your stress

The contents and structure of your plans are individual to each person. It will depend on your own personal circumstances.

## Example Stress Action Plan

Stressful Responses and Situations	My Personal Stress Action Plan
I feel so keyed up that I can't relax and I'm often tired, even when I have had enough sleep.	I will immediately stop drinking so much caffeine. I will start to exercise on a regular basis. I'll also try meditation and relaxation techniques.
My work environment lacks room for creativity and personal input, and I'm not given enough authority to accomplish my job.	I'll be proactive and assertive, and ask my boss for feedback and increased authority.
My job has changed recently and I now have frequent pressure from deadlines.	I'll organize my priorities and use time management techniques to feel in control and be more productive.
My father is elderly and in poor health. I worry a lot about losing him.	I'll discuss my concerns with my friends and family and get support from them.

Some people may realize as they look over their plans that they need to make significant life-style changes. Others may find that the changes and actions needed are relatively simple.

You need to remember that no matter what steps you need to take to reduce stress in your life, it is vitally important to get some balance into your life. You need to leave time to have fun, to have “down” time, to relax with friends and family, to exercise, to develop new and satisfying interests. If you can do these things, much of the stress in your life will take care of itself.



# Summary

Now that you have learned new skills and techniques for personal wellness, time management, and stress management , you will be able to:

1. Be proactive in making better life choices to ensure optimum mental and physical health.
2. Implement a successful time management plan to accomplish top priority goals and activities.
3. Apply stress management techniques to monitor and manage stress more effectively in your personal and professional life.

The benefits you reap from what you have learned will be governed by your attitude, because effective self management flows out of our attitudes as well as the specific techniques and methods used.

If you truly want to improve your personal well-being, it will take commitment, practice, and continued effort.

A person who has learned these important skills, but lacks commitment, will find little change in his/her overall life.

As important as they are, the techniques taught in this course are not enough by themselves. There must be an individual commitment and dedication to use them.

It is recommended that you make a commitment to begin immediately to incorporate these skills and techniques into your daily activities.

You shouldn't be discouraged by occasional failures or set backs. When a skill or technique doesn't work well at first, figure out what went wrong, and decide how it can be modified for a more positive result.

The benefits of effective self-management are attainable only through making a concerted effort every day.

