

So Much to Do, Too Little Time



Numerous distractions interfere with everyday work. Constant emails, to-dos, and competing needs of those with whom we must communicate grab at our attention. If you continually end the day having only skimmed the surface of what had to be accomplished, you may be a victim of a work habit called “reactionary workflow.” Reactionary workflow is responding to what’s constantly in front of you and demanding your attention. The result is only skimming the surface of your to-do list and barely touching the most important work. Reactionary workflow is a problem of the modern workplace. Technology keeps a conveyor belt of information, issues, problems, and needs coming at us full speed—both personal and business related—24/7. To reduce reactionary workflow, practice four intervention steps: 1) Make a list of absolute-must-get-done items with the time needed to complete them each day. 2) Schedule them. 3) Open your “notepad” or WordPad tool on your computer and paste incoming urgent items to this list. 4) Spend the last hour of your day responding to this list of items. This system is not a cure-all, but with practice, it can help turn the table on reactionary workflow.

Source: Statista.com

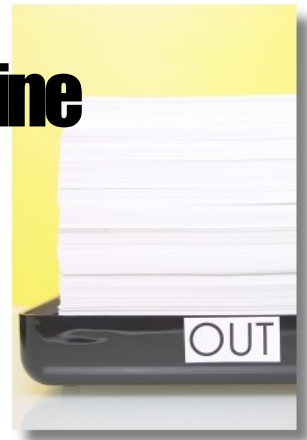
Hidden Opportunities for Managing Stress

Many factors can contribute to workplace stress. Some may be out of your awareness. Discover them with a guided approach. Consider working with a counselor or an employee assistance program to find interventions in the following areas: Your workload, capabilities, need for resources, techniques, or approaches to the job; discovery of more meaning in the work; finding inspiration; your need to be creative; your role and its modification; being given more responsibility; required time/frequency of work; quantity of work; time pressure; participation in decisions; having more choices in actions taken at work; improved communication with boss/coworkers; improved social interactions; resolution of disputes/ coping with others; opportunities for leadership; and examination of work-life balance. Modifying any of these factors could lead to the relief you seek from overwhelming job stress.



Up Your Self-Discipline

Improve self-discipline by practicing empowering behaviors that become reflexes to drive you in a more rapid pursuit of your goals. 1) Start with avoiding criticism for falling short of your ideal self. 2) Recognize self-discipline is a learned skill, not a personality trait. 3) Practice improving self-discipline at multiple points during the day, from completing a chore to starting a new large project you have postponed. 4) Find the big “why” to stir your motivation. 5) Identify steps to the end result, and act immediately. Take the first one, and then the next. 6) Maintain work-life balance. Procrastination or distraction can be your mind’s way of avoiding burn-out. Lack of balance therefore undermines self-discipline. 7) Set deadlines, and link them to undesirable consequences that are external, not self-punishing. For example, commit to others when goals will be achieved. 8) Your body has peak performance periods during the day. Leverage these periods to supercharge self-discipline.



Develop a Stress Management Plan

Develop a personal stress management plan by monitoring for a week what causes you stress. Keep a diary. Then experiment with stress management techniques. A jog around the block that you normally take may offer relief from the aftermath of a distasteful conflict at work today, but would a discussion with a good friend be better? There are many techniques for managing stress—physical exercise, leisure pursuits, creative writing, a massage, or even new beliefs about the nature of a problem that give you a more resilient attitude about it. Find a practical list of strategies online or at the following resource.

