

5 ways to manage work-related stress



April is National Stress Awareness Month, making it a good time to take stock of how you feel at work and figure out if you're dealing with stress properly so you don't burn out or wear yourself down.

We reached out to some experts to get advice on smart tactics for tackling work-related stress.

- 1. Focus on your actions.** It's important to remember that stress is a reaction and isn't inevitable, says Beth Burgess, a therapist who runs anti-stress workshops at Smyls. "It's our response to external events and people that make us feel stressed out. To develop a stress-free mindset at work, it's important to focus on taking action rather than worrying, or actually thinking more positively about things so you no longer feel aggrieved by them."
- 2. Take action over things you can control.** Taking action in the aspects of your work life you control is key, Burgess says. "Do what it is in your power to do. If you have no control over other things, it's not worth worrying about them. Focus on what you can do to improve things rather than what you can't. It will make you feel much more empowered."
- 3. Keep your eyes on the prize.** "To deal with conflict, remember that focusing on your common goals and negotiation will get you much further than whining about a colleague or manager or their way of doing things," Burgess says. "If you feel overwhelmed or uncertain, gather more information or tools, or break things down into steps to make them easier. Be proactive about setting up templates and systems to save time. And when you've done a task, mentally leave it behind rather than worrying about it."
- 4. Establish boundaries.** Focus on your boundaries to keep stress at bay, recommends Stephanie Mazzanti, a mind-body therapist at Cancer Treatment Centers of America. This means not letting your external work environment overly affect your internal mood.
- 5. Learn to deal.** It's important for employees to have coping strategies, Mazzanti says. "For example, if a co-worker directs a snippy or negative comment toward them, they say to themselves internally, 'That is his/her own stuff, not mine.'" Deep breathing and brief periods of alone time can also help.