Managing Stress as a Workaholic

Being a workaholic is something that is often perceived as working harder than other people, but in fact, it can potentially be doing damage to your physical and mental wellness.

In life, there needs to be a healthy balance between work and play, or personal time. If you are working a little too much, and almost feel like you have an addiction to working a lot, then it might be the main cause of your stress.

As you know, stress can wreak havoc on your mental health, decrease physical health, and cause a lot of adverse health conditions.

The following information is going to guide you through what being a workaholic means, why it is not necessarily a good thing, and how you can relieve stress even if you tend to work a lot.

**1. Signs You Might Be a Workaholic**

To get an accurate view of yourself and figure out if you might be a workaholic, it’s absolutely essential that you ask yourself specific questions in regard to your attitude towards specific scenarios. The answers that you provide can help you to truly examine the relationship that you have with your work and help you to see how you honestly feel. To accomplish this, you can try asking yourself the following questions.

*Do you ever try to free up time to complete extra jobs at work?*

If this is the case, then it’s entirely possible that you’re simply trying to make things more efficient. Having more time at work can be a great thing, especially if you work in a field where evaluations of completed tasks is a major part of getting the job completed. This can help you to identify where strengths and weaknesses lie, but it could also just be another way for a person to retreat into their work as some sort of escape.

*Do you find yourself working for longer hours than you told yourself or a loved one?*

Sometimes you make bad judgement calls on the amount of time that you planned to be at a specific task, but maybe you’ve just gotten accustomed to focusing on lots of unimportant details about your job. If you’re getting caught up and lost in time during tasks, it could be a sign of obsessive behavior.

Generally, people who obsess over specific and unimportant details are possibly using these obsessions to avoid or circumvent dealing with unpleasant components of their life. The need to escape dealing with these types of personal issues is completely normal, but at a certain point it becomes obvious that these things should be confronted.

*Do you ever work to avoid confronting feelings of depression, anxiety, or guilt?*

Negative emotions are powerful catalysts, and if you’ve been following a pattern of burying yourself in your work to avoid emotions then there’s definitely serious issues that need to be addressed. People who have a guilty conscience will often retreat into their work.

This can be particularly seen in cases where work can cause a person to feel isolated. A person who feels that they have no other alternatives will undoubtedly find way to fill their free time with more work. Later, in a last-ditch attempt to alleviate stress it’s possible that they will find the time to engage in vices that cause them guilt, only to be trapped in a cyclical relationship to their own shortcomings.

*Have you begun to put work above relationships, person enrichment activities, and other things that contribute to your general happiness?*

When you lose interest in the things that you love, it can show that you’ve become unhappy in some way. It’s difficult to remain happy when you don’t engage the things that make you happy. If you discover that you continually find reasons to avoid or cancel chances to engage in these types positive interactions, then it could be a sign that you’ve begun to go down that path towards becoming a workaholic, but it could also just be a sign of typical depression.

*Do you work so much that it has put your physical health in danger?*

Over the last few hundred years, a large percentage of the population in developed nations have gone from tending the field to the office. Though this way of life has its perks, the lack of physical activity puts a large section of people in danger of being completely sedentary.

A sedentary lifestyle causes the heart to become weakened and can lead to an alarming number of complications. Exercise is an important part of our biological life cycles, and they should take place at least 3 - 4 times a month to be sure that you can maintain a good quality of life.

**2. Negative Effects of Being a Workaholic**

Even though the symptoms of being a workaholic can be viewed as negative consequences in themselves, there are some long-term issues that can arise out of being a workaholic. Today, more and more people are taking a closer look at these effects, and how they can give people insight into what kinds of things cause a person to become a workaholic.

*You Become More Stressed When You’re Working*

When you’re at work and you’ve been thinking about the multitude of scenarios that could have negative outcomes for long enough, it becomes a permanent state of mind. These feelings of fluctuating self-worth can begin to color how you feel in all situations that take place at work, and it is common to begin to feel as though you are being taken advantage of somehow.

*You Disconnect from Your Own Feelings*

When a person approaches burnout or completes a major project, it’s common for them to experience confusion and a feeling of being unsettled. This usually happens because a workaholic is used to using work as a way to fill time and deal with emotions. When they are no longer able to work, they may experience a total disconnect from their own desires.

*You Become Callous to The Feelings of Others*

A lot of people who become workaholics seem to lose sight of empathy. There may even be feelings of superiority over those who don’t choose to work on the same type of schedule. This type of attitude can have the ability to inflict heavy damage on relationships, as people close to a workaholic will see how it negatively affects them over the long term.

*Your Work Performance Suffers*

At a certain point, the feelings of stress and resulting burnout can and most likely will cause the workaholic to become unfocused. This can lower the quality of their work performance. This can manifest in a variety of ways. For example, a workaholic might discover that they are making mistakes that wouldn’t be normal for a person of their skill level or experience.

*Your Sleep Becomes Disrupted*

The continued toll taken on mental and physical health may reach a point where it even affects their ability to sleep. Studies have shown that people who have this sleep disruption due to workaholism often show signs of being tired during the day, and especially in the workplace. This creates a snowball effect that can make the issues a workaholic faces seem like an immovable stone, but there is a way to be free.

**3. Finding a Good Work-Life Balance**

You understand that being a “workaholic” or working so much that it affects your daily life can affect you physically, mentally, and emotionally, but actually finding a balance in your life can be the hard part. Unfortunately, it is essential if you want to reduce your stress levels and live a more fulfilling life.

Stress is a natural reaction to the stimuli going on in your life, but it’s essential that you make an honest assessment of how you spend your time and allow yourself to rest properly. There’s no need to let the pressures of your life become so intense that they actually cause you physical harm.

In recent studies, doctors have been able to prove that consistent stress and from so many different types of life pressure can more than double your chance of heart attack. After considering how seriously being a workaholic can affect you, it’s important to remember that having a balanced life is one of the best ways to fight the tendency to become one.

*Only Set Reasonable Goals*

When you set out to accomplish things that are out of your ability without considering the complexity of the task, it can be very demoralizing, but if you set goals that are reachable, it’s a much more gratifying experience. That doesn’t mean to set the bar low, only that you should do what is the most feasible thing to do at the time and work your way up to a higher standard if you choose.

These calculated moves have help you to be more successful in the long run, and because the success is incremental, it is a lot easier and attainable for even the most pessimistic planners.

*Learn to Manage Your Time at Work*

One of the most damaging things to a great workflow is procrastination. When you put off tasks that need to be finished soon, it seems like it won’t be a big deal at first, but if anything were to go wrong, then you suddenly are even more behind and it might become difficult to meet expected deadlines. Try to take care of anything that you know could be disrupted by a sudden life event or unexpected occurrence.

The best way to tackle a large project would be to break them into groups of smaller tasks so that you can easily see your progress and do a more thorough job of checking on the quality of your work. This will make the project seem a lot less intimidating, and will take a lot of the heavy stress right off of the top.

*Take Breaks*

A lot of people underestimate the power of a quick rest period. When you have the opportunity to take breaks, you should take a break! Most reasonable employers expect for you to take breaks. There’s no reason to martyr yourself for the company brand. Remember that your job is what you do for sustaining your life, but your job is not your life.

*Listen to Your Favorite Music*

It feels good to listen to a song that you haven’t listened to in while. When you feel yourself getting stressed out listening to a familiar piece of music can help you to stay focused. Science has studied many of the effects of music on the brain, and these studies have shown that music can reduce your stress and blood pressure very quickly.

If you feel stressed often this can be a great way to occupy your mind to keep out the negative thoughts so you can focus on completing your tasks.

*Be Honest About What You Can Accomplish*

Sometimes you want to make yourself look good at work, but you didn't’ realize what the job really entailed. If this happens, it’s important to communicate with the other people depending on you. At times you can fall behind through no fault of your own, but making sure that everyone understand a realistic outcome without waiting to the last minute will reinforce confidence in you.

Be sure that when you tell them about your situation, you approach it calmly with thoughtful alternatives to keep the ball rolling. If you have fallen short of expectations, be sure to keep a cool head and be persistent in your expressions of the fact that you can restore their confidence in you.

*Accept That There Might Be Issues*

It’s impossible to be perfect. Having an improbable belief of the possible outcomes to either extreme can be unhealthy, so you should always try to manage your expectations.

**4. Healthy Lifestyle Changes**

In order to really be free of being a workaholic, it requires a person to make healthy changes in their life that will support a healthier and more balanced mindset. The thing to remember is that every person is a work in progress, so you don’t need to do all of these in one day, just try to incorporate the ideas gradually. The more mindful you become, the easier it will be to add new suggestions to the list.

*Make Sleep A Priority*

This one can be a tough one for people who become very engaged in their work. It’s easy to stay awake all night reading different pieces of information or mulling over the same issues you have with a project. This process can take away from your valuable sleep time, so you have to make getting a good night's sleep a priority.

You have to make the decision that no matter what interesting thing or imperfection you find, that sleep remains the eventual focus of the evening. That’s not to say that you shouldn’t finish those last few minutes of work that will make sure you’re finished completely, but be sure to be strict with yourself. If you know that 5 extra minutes will turn into 2 hours, then just go straight to bed.

*Make A List*

You will see people repeating information about making list forever until the end of time. The reason why is because it works. A list allows you to easily see your progress and track when you’ve finished something by crossing it off. There’s few things that are more satisfying than the experience of crossing off an entire list of tasks. If it’s something you’ve never done, then it should be highly recommended.

*Don’t Rush*

A lot of times you really want to get things over with, but when you rush you might not be taking the time that you should be taking to make sure that you are producing quality. Take your time and finish at a comfortable pace. This is most possible when you begin projects as soon as you can.

*Don’t Compare Yourself Others*

It’s important to set your own standards. Comparing yourself to other people who may have more than you or have a certain kind of house can cause a lot of suffering. It's A toxic mindset that has very little value, and it can prevent you from making the changes that you have to make to attain those successes. Learn to be patient with yourself and live your truth. That can be enough to make you feel motivated to reach for the stars.

*Learn to Say No*

If you’re used to being available to people at the touch of a button, this one could be extremely challenging, but it’s needed if you want to take care of your mental health. There’s nothing worse than being spread too thin.

When you are saying yes, it may feel good to be the savior of the day, but when you deliver your work too late and too rushed, you’ll look more like the villain. Managing the expectations of others and being more focused on what you actually need to be doing will bring you more peace.

**5. Ongoing Stress Relief Methods**

Besides the life changes that need to be made to stay free of workaholism, there are sets of things that you can do to help you alleviate stresses in your daily life. There will be a few included here based on the things that others have done to gain control over their stress.

*Spend Time Outside*

You might not realize it, but being outdoors can be a massive influence on your stress. Sitting outside for even 15 minutes a day can greatly improve your mood, and your general wellbeing. Sunlight helps your body to know what time of the day it is, and stimulates it to begin processes that create vitamin D.

*Exercise*

Working out has more than just the physical benefits. It can also work to promote emotional health. When you work out, your body begins to circulate larger amounts of blood and break down fuel to rebuild parts of your body. This means that your body will be functioning at a high level during this time. When you are filled with new oxygen filled blood, you will feel better and happier.

*Focus on The Moment*

Dwelling on the calamities of tomorrow will rob you of your joy. Try to be present with friends and family as much as you can.