

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

# Time Stressed

According to the American Psychological Association, More than one-third (36 percent) of American employees report they are typically stressed out during the workday.

Technology was supposed to make life simpler and allow for more time for leisure—what happened? Thanks to email, cell phones and Blackberries, our office often follows us home. For many people the work week has grown longer. It's getting harder and harder to devote quality time to family and friends.

Take a look at some of the causes of stress and see what can be done to simplify life.

**Keep perspective.** Although there are no quick fixes, it's important to try to keep all aspects of life in perspective and enjoy the moment. Remember:

- **You can't do it all.** It's important to continually re-evaluate priorities against personal values.
- **Live in the moment.** Focus on "the now". Don't worry about work when you're with your family, or about family issues while at work.
- **Realize that the "super parent" doesn't exist.** You can't be with your children all the time. When you are with your children, relax and really focus on them without distractions.
- **Try not to over schedule your children.** By limiting activities to your children's favorite interests, you'll leave more time for family traditions and down time.

**Set priorities.** Create a weekly list of things that need to be done. Prioritize everything on this list, using the ABC method. A = "Must do" items, B = "Should do" items and C = "Nice to do" items. Then ask yourself:

1. Why am I doing this?
2. How urgent is this task?
3. Can anyone else do this?

**Get organized.** A major cause of stress and of wasted time is clutter and lack of organization. Try these suggestions to clear some clutter from your desk and your life:

- At work, make daily "to do" lists.
- Do one job at a time and complete the most difficult tasks when your energy is at its peak.
- Break large jobs into smaller parts that are more easily completed.
- At home, learn to say "No" to invitations and activities that put pressure on your time.
- Create a family calendar to track activities.
- Consolidate errands and chores and delegate tasks.
- Get your children involved in chores.
- If possible, simplify your life with low-maintenance clothing and simple dinners and lunches.

**Build support systems.** A support network can help you balance work and family. This network can include neighborhood friends, parents at the school, extended family members and co-workers. These people can be invaluable resources when you need a hand, a break or a supportive, listening ear.

The pressures on our time can sometimes seem never-ending. Getting organized, focusing on the most important tasks and getting help when needed can all help to keep some balance in life. Above all, prioritize what is really important and never lose sight of the big picture.

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