



Employee Assistance Program

Managing Pressure and Balancing Priorities

Do you find yourself feeling overwhelmed as soon as you arrive at work? You have two meetings before noon, new messages in your inbox, a training to complete for HR and a report due at the end of the week. Your adrenalin is already running high and you're wondering how you will get to everything you need to do. Here are some strategies to help you take control of your week.

Look forward. Plan your week before you are in it, to avoid reacting to issues. Shift your attention to what you want to accomplish throughout the workweek rather than within one 8-hour stretch. Friday afternoons are a great time for setting your intentions for the coming week. What are your top priorities for the next week? Plotting out your goals increases the chances they'll get done and knowing you have a plan in place will help lower your stress.

Front load your most critical projects. Budget in time to get to your important tasks completed early in the week. This will give you a cushion for dealing with unexpected urgent matters. Longer-term projects are typically more taxing and require a higher level of focus. Intentionally set aside time for these projects even if this means scheduling an appointment with yourself and blocking your calendar. Don't check email during this time if your job allows this. Try to avoid using fires that come up as a means of avoidance to more daunting but important projects.

Shift from a reactionary to long-range perspective. Just because you didn't get to a project one day doesn't mean it will never get done. Plan for an intense schedule and then you'll go into the week knowing that you will get sucked into urgent matters, but you will still have your designated time the following day. Avoid taking an all-or-nothing approach. Even if you had something derail you, you may still be able to carve out a few minutes to get one actionable item done. If you keep chipping away at smaller pieces of your project daily, by the end of the week you will have made substantial progress.

Remember that pressures come and go. Know that you may put in longer hours during a particular stretch, but will typically have a chance to come up for air and regroup. Crunch periods don't usually last forever. Plan for some self-care while they last to fuel you through the stretch. Recognizing that the pressures will pass will help you keep perspective and push through.

Are you feeling overwhelmed at work or in your personal life? Call your Employee Assistance Program today at the number below for help getting on track.

References: 14 Time Management Strategies from Highly Productive People, Laura Vanderkam
You Have More Time Than You Think at Work, US New and World Report, Robin Madell.



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