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Coping with stress at the office

The workers of the world are working more. So says an annual study of employee benefit trends from MetLife. In 2010, 40 percent of employees admitted their workload had increased compared with the previous year.

While there are many reasons that can account for a heavier workload at the office, heavy layoffs in countries across the globe has, in many instances, left those who weren't laid off with extra work. And companies might be surprised to know just how much this approach isn't working. The MetLife study also found that 68 percent of employees surveyed reported that the quality of their work had suffered and that fear of losing their jobs played a significant role in how well they did their jobs.

While employees might not be able to quell their fears of one day being laid off, there are things they can do to reduce the stress that often accompanies such fears. Stress is a part of most professions and can even be a good motivator. However, when stress is prolonged or excessive, the results can be very unhealthy. Men and women with high stress levels are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety and cardiovascular disease. When faced with prolonged or excessive stress at the office, men and women can take the following approaches to avoid succumbing to stress.

- Determine what is causing the stress. Stress triggers vary depending on the individual, so men and women who are coping with excessive stress should write down anything that causes them a negative response, whether that response is physical, emotional or mental. After a week, sit down and look at the various things that triggered these negative responses. Choose one and work to resolve it. Determine if there is a way this trigger can be avoided. Do this with each trigger one by one. It might not be possible to successfully address each trigger, but it's worth the try and it is likely that certain triggers can be successfully avoided.

- Manage time effectively. One of the problems with an increased workload is the time in the day to complete that work does not simultaneously increase. This reality makes it easy to become overwhelmed with stress. But a few time management techniques can help. Prioritize certain tasks, ensuring projects that are time-sensitive get done ahead of those that aren't. When setting a schedule for work, be realistic. If a schedule isn't realistic, that will only cause more stress.

Stress at the office is likely always going to be a concern for working men and women. However, there are ways to effectively cope with stress no matter how daunting a workload might be.



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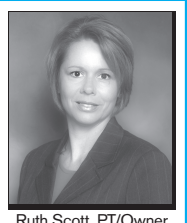
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