

3 Tips to help you stress less at work

A little short-term stress may be just the push you need to bring your best to difficult work projects. But chronic stress is a different story.



Workplace solutions to try

Defined as a consistent feeling of pressure, chronic stress can develop into physical symptoms, including headaches, nausea and high blood pressure. Negatively affecting your mental well-being, chronic stress also contributes to anxiety, insomnia and relationship issues.

No matter the challenge or where you may face it, the State of Iowa has resources to help you be healthy everywhere. Try the following three stress-busting tips to face work challenges head-on — so you can feel and perform at your finest.



Read more

**helpful stress-
management
tips from BlueSM
magazine.**

1. Identify your stressors

“Stress comes from a multitude of sources — and we often experience not just one, but several workplace stressors simultaneously,” says Dr. Matthew Stanley, Senior Medical Director of Behavioral Health at Wellmark® Blue Cross® and Blue Shield®.

Learning to recognize what’s contributing to your workplace stress can help you better meet those challenges. For example, if you’re worried about an upcoming project, creating an action plan and talking to a coworker or manager may ease your mind and provide helpful insights.

A recent study by the Mayo Clinic points to another simple solution that can help you champion workplace stress: Discover and define your purpose.



2. Pinpoint your purpose

Individuals with a strong sense of purpose may be better equipped to head off workplace stress. Exploring what inspires you and fostering that sense of purpose can contribute to better sleep, a stronger immune system, lower stress levels and clearer cognitive functions.

To bring this powerful positivity to work, look for opportunities to develop and share your skills. “Supporting or assisting others can help you feel happier, stronger and more connected,” says Dr. Stanley.

Setting meaningful goals streamlines your focus and contributes to a greater sense of well-being, too. For help finding your purposeful path, check out your [**State of Iowa’s Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\) and well-being services.**](#)

3. Practice self-care

You may not think of self-care as being work related. Think again! The following tips can be practiced throughout the workday, right from your desk or workspace:

- **Eat right.** Good nutrition and hydration together will help you stay energized throughout the day, boost your mood and fuel cognitive abilities.
- **Take breaks.** If your job allows for it, take short walks throughout the day. Or schedule time for exercise during your lunch break, even if it is just for 15 minutes.
- **Stay connected.** Watercooler conversation is a great way to build connections at work. Avoid gossip, though, and instead steer conversations towards your new favorite restaurant or your coworker’s upcoming vacation. Scheduling a weekly commute call with a friend can be another great way to recharge before or after your workday.
- **Breathe.** This is an easy exercise to try: Breathe in deeply through your nose, filling your lungs; hold for a moment; and slowly exhale. Called “box breathing”, this technique can be done in four-part sequences any time you need a mini break.
- **Set healthy boundaries.** Creating a bit of separation between home and work can help you stay more focused at your job — and feel more relaxed when you’re not. Try tackling personal tasks only during commute times or lunch breaks. And, when possible, refrain from completing office-related to-dos during your free time.

Maintain your mental balance

From work to home and everywhere in between, we’re here to help you feel and be your best — no matter where you are. For additional tips and resources, be sure to reference your State of Iowa [**Healthy Everywhere guide.**](#) Available to all State of Iowa employees, the guide includes important information about mental well-being and simple how-tos to make healthier habits a part of your daily routine.