

# Real Life Solutions



EFR EMPLOYEE &amp; FAMILY RESOURCES



## *Step Out Of Your Comfort Zone At Work*

Don't fall into an autumn work slump! With summer in the rearview mirror, it's easy to put the work day on auto pilot, performing the same routine day in and day out without much change. This month, make a pact to shake things up in your workday by stepping out of your comfort zone - you'll be surprised at the results!

A comfort zone is described as, "A behavioral space where your activities and behaviors fit a routine and pattern that minimizes stress and risk," (LifeHacker). Humans value comfort. We fall back on the familiar and often resist change. The downfall is that our comfort zone acts as a crutch; it reinforces low anxiety and reduced stress at the expense of personal and professional growth.

### ***Why should we step out of our comfort zone?***

#### **1. Challenging yourself can help you perform at your peak.**

Comfort kills productivity. Without the stress of deadlines and expectations, we tend to perform at the minimum required to get by. Outside of our comfort zone, we undertake more tasks, and the pressure of completing them in a timely matter fuels the fire of productivity. Redefine "busy." Push your personal boundaries to hit your work stride sooner, get more done, and find smarter ways to accomplish tasks.

## 2. Taking risks is what helps us grow.

Think back to your greatest moments of growth. What was the process like? Was it easy? Failure is a universal fear, and it is often what holds us back from trying new things. By going out on a limb, you risk the chance of failure, but more importantly, a chance of greatness. It's important to remember that learning something new is difficult, expect to fumble through it for a while.

## 3. Trying new things can make you more creative

Seeking new experiences and learning new skills inspires and educates us in a way that little else does. By stepping out of your comfort zone, taking calculated risks and challenging yourself to try new things, you'll be more open minded to think outside the box of "how it's always been done." Intellectual curiosity and imagination can lead us to reflect on our old ideas or problems with new knowledge that change our perspective.

### ***How to step outside of your comfort zone***

*Here are a few tips on how to push past your comfort zone at work:*

- 1. Do everyday tasks differently:** If you're not one to speak up in meetings, create a goal of sharing your input or bringing up a new idea every week. If you're one to spend your lunch break on social media, opt to surf the web for industry trends or bounce ideas off of coworkers to fill your free time.
- 2. Go out of your way:** What makes you the most uncomfortable? Some famously uncomfortable work-related tasks include networking, public speaking and cold calling. There is a saying by Seth Godin, "If it scares you, it might be a good thing to try." By voluntarily taking part in something that is less than enjoyable, you'll have more confidence when your employers asks you to perform the task under pressure.
- 3. Don't view time as an obstacle:** Our perception of busy defines the outline of our comfort zone. Eliminate the thought, "I don't have enough time for this." Force yourself to take more on and figure it out along the way. You'll discover better ways to optimize your time or ways to complete tasks quicker and more efficiently.

Breaking free of your comfort zone is crucial to success. By changing your daily routine, challenging yourself to take risks and facing your workplace fears, you'll be more productive, creative, and see both personal and professional growth from your efforts. Look for areas where you've become comfortable or might be settling for less than you can really do. Those are the areas to focus on first!

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