



“serving those who serve us”

September 2007 - Newsletter

Stress Busters: 10 Little Things To Try!

Researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health indicate that many of us experience a growing sense of stress during the fall months. In some cases, this is related to the opening of school and all that this entails, such as shopping for clothes and readjusting schedules. For others, it is the anticipation of the coming winter months as we say goodbye to the laid-back days of summer. But the concept of “stress management” can itself become stressful when one considers intimidating therapies such as “autogenic training,” “biofeedback” or “transcendental meditation.” However, stress management can sometimes be achieved by making minor adjustments rather than radical makeovers! Here are 10 such suggestions that are easy to try:

1. Go to bed just 15 minutes earlier at night. You will feel noticeably refreshed in the morning and more energetic in taking on the day and its challenges.
2. Nourish your friendship circle. Reconnect with non-public safety friends to expand your world view. If your opinion of people in general is based solely on what you experience on the job, it’s possible to become cynical or negative. Remember you deal with 5-10% of the overall population and its problems.
3. Learn to say no. Resist the urge to accede to someone’s request for your time or assistance if you’re already multi-tasking. This does not make you a selfish person.
4. When faced with stressful situations, reflect on similar situations that you have successfully withstood in the past - draw on pre-existing strengths. You survived those and you’ll survive these!
5. Learn to appreciate your family and co-workers. All too often, we tend to take their positive traits for granted and focus instead on traits we wish we could change, alter or redirect.
6. Don’t procrastinate. When we postpone burdensome tasks, they continue to loom on the horizon and drag us down.
7. Avoid perfectionism. The discovery of fuzz balls under the bed doesn’t mean that you must embark on a cleaning crusade.
8. Focus on improving yourself in some small way. According to Leslie Bonci, a dietician at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, “four fewer bites of food per day can translate into a weight loss of ten pounds per year.”
9. Limit interaction with “negative” acquaintances who chronically reinforce feelings of hopelessness, anger and despair.
10. Catch yourself when tempted to “catastrophize;” i.e., when your mind fixates on some remotely threatening situation and anticipates a horrendous outcome.

Chronic stress can drain the joy out of living and contribute to physical illness as well. Contact EAP for confidential and constructive assistance in developing an effective stress-busting strategy.