STRESS MANAGEMENT – KEY TO HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

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According to World Health Organisation "Work stress is the result of excessive pressure from your job, which typically stems from demands that don't align with a worker's abilities, little support from managers and co-workers and little control over workload".

Stress is not an illness in itself but it can make you ill. It can bleed into other aspects of your life if it's left unchecked. Managing work stress effectively is key to overall healthy and fit lifestyle. Stress affects everyone. The important thing is to learn to manage it so that our stress levels don't become overwhelming.

Some of the symptoms of stress are:

- Unexpected mood swings
- Insomnia or difficulty staying asleep
- Constant fatigue
- Weight changes: both weight loss or weight gain
- Digestion issues
- Inability to concentrate
- Headaches
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Increased bodily tension
- New or heightened obsessive/compulsive behaviour

Managing stress isn't a one-size-fits-all system. Depending on the type and regularity of your stress, your stress management regiment will look vastly different from another individual's. But it's helpful to have a toolkit of stress management techniques on hand should you need them.

Some tips to manage work stress are :-

1. *Starting on a positive note :-* Start your day with planning, good nutrition, and a positive attitude, you might find that the stress of your job rolls off your back more easily. Afterall well begun is half done.

2. *Set clear expectations for the day :-* Planning the day in advance helps to anticipate challenges for the day in advance. Once you set clear expectations for the day, it does help set clear guidelines for self and the team. A to do list definitely comes handy here.

3. *Conflict Management :-* Interpersonal conflict takes a toll on your physical and emotional health. Conflict among co-workers can be difficult to escape, so it's a good idea to avoid conflict at work as much as you can. When possible, try to avoid people who don't work well with others. If conflict finds you anyway, make sure you know how to handle it appropriately.

4. *Establish boundaries :-* In today's digital world, it's easy to feel pressure to be available 24 hours a day. Establish some work-life boundaries for yourself. That might mean making a rule not to check email from home in the evening, or not answering the phone during dinner. Although people have different preferences when it comes to how much they blend their work and home life, creating some clear boundaries between these realms can reduce the potential for work-life conflict and the stress that goes with it.

5. *Cut out noise :-* Reduce number of not so necessary meetings. Reduce recurring meetings. Set clear agenda for every meeting. Send clear communication amongst team. This helps reduce communication overload and shortens turnaround time for any task.

6. *Learn how to relax :-* Techniques such as meditation and deep breathing exercises, can help melt away stress. Start by taking a few minutes each day to focus on a simple activity like breathing, walking, or enjoying a meal. The skill of being able to focus purposefully on a single activity without distraction will get stronger with practice and you'll find that you can apply it to many different aspects of your life.

7. *Maintain healthy routine :-* Generally, doctors recommend 30 to 45 minutes for a walk during the day. Any other type of workout or sports activity would also have same effect. Adults should aim for seven to eight hours of sleep. Sleep deficiency can cause impaired daily functioning, productivity, focus and judgment, as well as frustration, crankiness and worry — which can exacerbate workplace strain.

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