

## COPING SKILLS FOR WORK STRESS



**Track your stressors:** Keep a journal for a week or two to identify which situations create the most stress and how you respond to them. Record your thoughts, feelings, and information about the environment, including the people and circumstances involved, the physical setting, and how you reacted. Did you raise your voice? Get a snack from the vending machine? Go for a walk? Taking notes can help you find patterns among your stressors and your reactions to them.

**Time management:** Prioritizing tasks and setting realistic deadlines can help reduce stress by avoiding last-minute rushes and feeling overwhelmed. For example, creating a to-do list and prioritizing tasks based on importance and deadline can help you stay focused and on track. Add time buffers between tasks so that even if one goes over the time limit, the overall schedule stays intact. If you tend to procrastinate or have trouble avoiding distractions, try tackling the biggest, most difficult and most important task first thing in the morning—the one you’re likely to put off for later. Only move on to other things once you’ve completed that task.



	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<p><b>DO</b> <i>Do it now.</i></p> <p>Write article for today.</p>	<p><b>DECIDE</b> <i>Schedule a time to do it.</i></p> <p>Exercising. Calling family and friends. Researching articles. Long-term biz strategy.</p>
NOT IMPORTANT	<p><b>DELEGATE</b> <i>Who can do it for you?</i></p> <p>Scheduling interviews. Booking flights. Approving comments. Answering certain emails. Sharing articles.</p>	<p><b>DELETE</b> <i>Eliminate it.</i></p> <p>Watching television. Checking social media. Sorting through junk mail.</p>

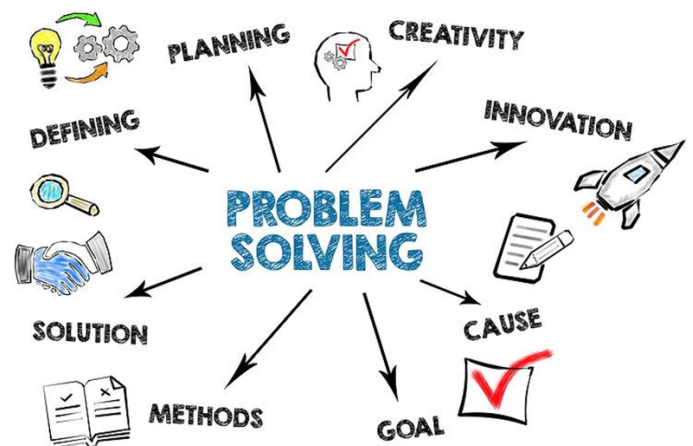
**Prioritize:** A decision matrix can help you decide what to prioritize according to importance and urgency. You can break down your list by:

- **Do immediately:** Important tasks with defined deadlines, or ones you’ve put off for so long they’re now overdue
- **Schedule for later:** Important tasks with no defined deadlines
- **Delegate:** Tasks that someone else can do
- **Delete:** Tasks you can eliminate because they’re not critical to your goals or mission.

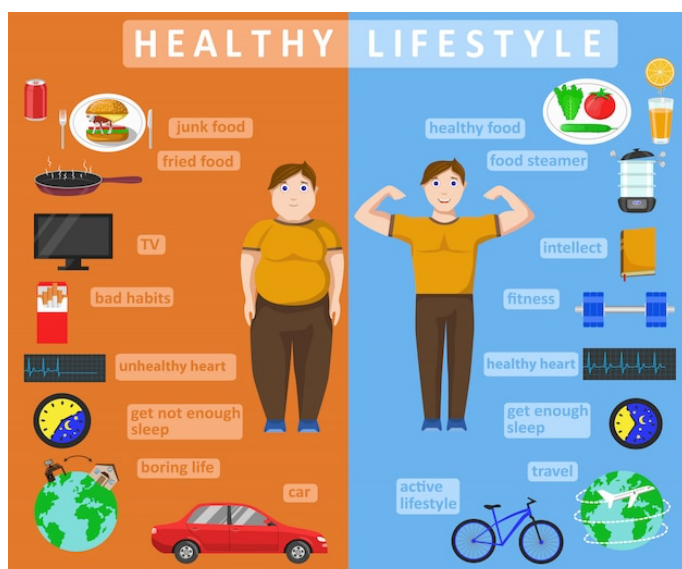


**Positive thinking:** Focusing on the positive aspects of a situation can help you maintain a more optimistic outlook and reduce stress. For example, if you are feeling stressed about a deadline, you might benefit from focusing on the positive aspects of the situation, such as the satisfaction of completing the task or the opportunity to showcase your skills. Positive thinking can help cut out negative thoughts, which can help you feel better and more confident about yourself and your abilities. By cutting back on gossiping and negative talk in the office, you can increase productivity and decrease tension in the office. Positive thinking will help you getting over your fear of failure and help you in deciding to take on new challenges.

**Problem-solving:** Breaking down problems into smaller, more manageable parts can help you find solutions and reduce stress. For example, if you are feeling stressed about a financial problem, you may benefit from breaking the problem down into smaller parts and developing a plan of action. This could include creating a budget, cutting expenses, and finding ways to increase income.



**Avoid Multi-tasking & Learn when to say NO:** Multi-tasking cuts efficiency and can even be dangerous as Mental juggling involves “switching costs” that slash productivity. Although task switching might cost only a few seconds per switch, it adds up if you multitask frequently. Your risk for error also increases. To avoid half-baked work, know your limits and be willing to say no. Recognize your strengths and weaknesses. Focus on what you’re good at and, if possible, delegate what can be done better and faster by other people.

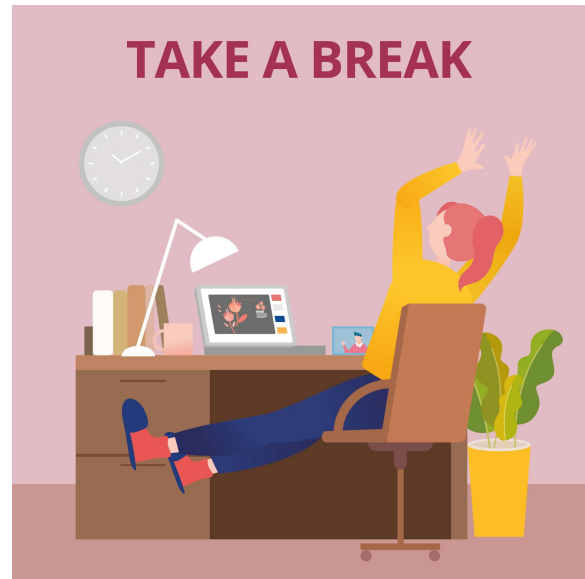


**Develop healthy responses:** Instead of attempting to fight stress with fast food or alcohol, do your best to make healthy choices when you feel the tension rise. Exercise is a great stress-buster. Yoga can be an excellent choice, but any form of physical activity is beneficial. Also make time for hobbies and favourite activities. Whether it’s reading a novel, going to concerts, or playing games with your family, make sure to set aside time for the things that bring you pleasure. Getting enough good-quality sleep is also important for effective stress management. Build healthy sleep habits by limiting your caffeine intake late in the day and minimizing stimulating activities, such as computer and television use, at night.

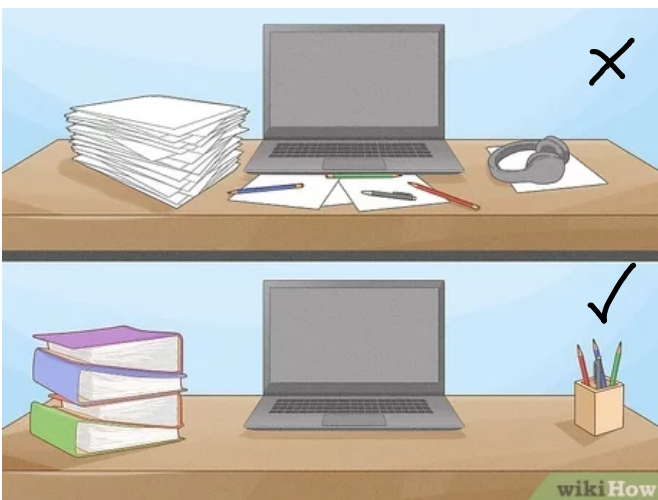


**Set boundaries:** In today's digital world, it's easy to feel pressure to be available 24 hours a day. Establish some work-life boundaries for yourself. That might mean making a rule not to check email from home in the evening, or not answering the phone during dinner. You can set boundaries by saying no to unreasonable demands or requests, set boundaries with colleagues and clients or by setting limits on the amount of time you spend working. By doing so, you can maintain a balance between your work and personal life, which can help reduce stress.

**Take breaks/ Time to Recharge:** To avoid the negative effects of chronic stress and burnout, scheduling regular breaks throughout the day to rest and recharge can help reduce stress and improve overall well-being. For example, you can schedule a 5-10 minute break every hour or so to rest, stretch, or take a walk. You can also take a lunch break, and use that time to do something that you enjoy, such as reading a book or listening to music. Neither engaging in work-related activities, nor thinking about work. Don't let your vacation days go to waste. When possible, take time off to relax and unwind, so you come back to work feeling fresh and ready to perform at your best. Taking breaks will help refresh your mind and boost productivity.



**Organize and declutter:** A clean and organized work space can help reduce distractions and improve focus, which can in turn reduce stress. For example, you can clear your desk of any unnecessary items, such as old papers and empty coffee cups, and make sure that everything you need is within reach. You can also use desk organizers, such as trays and filing cabinets, to keep your work space tidy. Additionally, you can declutter your computer by organizing files and folders, and deleting unnecessary files.





**Learn how to relax:** Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, and mindfulness (a state in which you actively observe present experiences and thoughts without judging them) 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.



**Social support:** Talking to friends, family, or a therapist can provide a sounding board and can help you process your stressors. For example, if you are going through a difficult time at work, you may benefit from talking to a therapist to work through your feelings and develop coping strategies. A colleague who shares their knowledge and expertise to help a you complete a project provides informational support. Social support can lead to higher quality relationships, positive affective reactions, and increased individual performance and can buffer the negative effects of stressful demands. This will improve your morale, job satisfaction, and overall performance, as well as reducing stress and burnout.

