



Ideas for Leaders to Reduce Office Stress

Leaders are responsible for establishing the culture of their departments and companies. Unconsciously, many leaders signal expectations for unhealthy actions or behavior patterns. If you work late, eat at your desk, rarely make a child's sporting event, email late at night or fail to exercise, it is likely that your employees will follow your lead and model what you do. Your actions may create work stress and reduce both mindfulness and employee productivity.

Lead by example and encourage the following:

- _____ 1. Set clear goals for each day.
- _____ 2. Offer flexible hours.
- _____ 3. Encourage employees to take short breaks throughout the day.
- _____ 4. Exercise as a team.
- _____ 5. Listen to understand.
- _____ 6. Encourage employees to stand up and move every hour.
- _____ 7. Give time off to volunteer for a favorite nonprofit.
- _____ 8. Establish an exercise team challenge (steps per day).
- _____ 9. Discourage multitasking.
- _____ 10. Ask employees to turn off phone and computer notifications.
- _____ 11. Send a short article about a relaxation technique.
- _____ 12. Encourage meditation.
- _____ 13. Take screen breaks to rest their eyes.
- _____ 14. Bring in a new favorite recipe to share.
- _____ 15. Offer a stretch break.
- _____ 16. Demonstrate exercises to do at your desk or on the plane.
- _____ 17. Walk outside or down the stairs.
- _____ 18. Ask someone else to take a short break *with* you.
- _____ 19. Recommend a TED Talk on stress management or meditation.
- _____ 20. Identify and minimize distractions.
- _____ 21. Establish "no technology" zones/times.
- _____ 22. Ask employees to provide *their* favorite stress reduction techniques.
- _____ 23. Ask for the best time to disturb others.
- _____ 24. Discuss work-life integration and what it means.
- _____ 25. Let others know when *you* need uninterrupted time.