

# 4MIND4BODY: WORK-LIFE BALANCE

With so many of us torn between juggling heavy workloads, managing relationships and family responsibilities, and squeezing in outside interests, it's no surprise that more than one in four Americans describe themselves as "super stressed." And that's not balanced — or healthy. Here are a few practical steps we can all take to loosen the grip that stress has on us and win back the balance in our lives.



## AT WORK

- **Set manageable goals each day.** Being able to meet priorities helps us feel a sense of accomplishment and control. The latest research shows that the more control we have over our work, the less stressed we get. So be realistic about workloads and deadlines.
- **Make a "to do" list,** and take care of important tasks first and eliminate unessential ones. Ask for help when necessary.
- **Be efficient with your time at work.** When we procrastinate, the task often grows in our minds until it seems insurmountable. So when you face a big project at work or home, start by dividing it into smaller tasks. Complete the first one before moving on to the next.
- **Ask for flexibility.** Flex time and telecommuting are quickly becoming established as necessities in today's business world, and many companies are drafting work/life policies. If you ask, they might allow you to work flexible hours or from home a day a week. Research shows that employees who work flexible schedules are more productive and loyal to their employers.
- **Take Five.** Small breaks at work - or on any project will help clear your head, and improve your ability to deal with stress and make good decisions.
- **Tune In.** Listen to your favorite music at work to foster concentration, reduce stress and anxiety, and stimulate creativity.

## WHAT WE LEARNED FROM MHA'S WORK HEALTH SURVEY

**More than half** of people who responded say that they do unhealthy things (e.g. drinking, drug use, lashing out at others) to cope with workplace stress.

**Over 75%** of people are afraid of getting punished for taking a day off to attend to their mental health.

**More than two-thirds** of people have had their sleep negatively affected by workplace issues. [2]

- ✓ If you feel like you are struggling with your mental health, visit [www.mhaofarizona.org](http://www.mhaofarizona.org) to complete an online screening. It's free, confidential, and anonymous. Once you have your results, you will be provided with resources and tools for feeling better.

### CONTACT US:

Mental Health America of Arizona  
[mhaofarizona@gmail.com](mailto:mhaofarizona@gmail.com) / 480-982-5305



- **Communicate effectively.** Be honest with colleagues or your boss when you feel you're in a bind. Chances are, you're not alone. But don't just complain—suggest practical alternatives. Looking at a situation from someone else's viewpoint can also reduce your stress. In a tense situation, either rethink your strategy or stand your ground, calmly and rationally.
- **Make allowances for other opinions, and compromise.** Retreat before you lose control, and allow time for all involved to cool off. You'll be better equipped to handle the problem constructively later.
- **Give yourself a break.** No one's perfect! Allow yourself to be human and just do the best you can.



- **Unplug.** The same technology that makes it so easy for workers to do their jobs flexibly can also burn us out if we use them 24/7. By all means, make yourself available—especially if you've earned the right to “flex” your hours—but recognize the need for personal time, too.
- **Divide and conquer.** Make sure responsibilities at home are evenly distributed and clearly outlined—you'll avoid confusion and problems later.
- **Don't over commit.** Do you feel stressed when you just glance at your calendar? If you're overscheduled with activities, learn to say, “no.” Shed the superman/superwoman urge!
- **Get support.** Chatting with friends and family can be important to your success at home—or at work—and can even improve your health. People with stronger support systems have more aggressive immune responses to illnesses than those who lack such support.
- **Take advantage of your company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).** Many organizations offer resources through an EAP, which can save you precious time by providing guidance on issues like where to find a daycare center and caretaking for an elderly parent, as well as referrals to mental health and other services.
- **Stay active.** Aside from its well-known physical benefits, regular exercise reduces stress, depression and anxiety, and enables people to better cope with adversity, according to researchers. It'll also boost your immune system and keep you out of the doctor's office. Make time in your schedule for the gym or to take a walk during lunch—and have some fun!
- **Treat your body right.** Being in good shape physically increases your tolerance to stress and reduces sick days. Eat right, exercise and get adequate rest. Don't rely on drugs, alcohol or cigarettes to cope with stress; they'll only lead to more problems.
- **Get help if you need it.** Don't let stress stand in the way of your health and happiness. If you are persistently overwhelmed, it may be time to seek help from a mental health professional. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness—taking care of yourself is a sign of strength.

