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Get the Most Out of Your Day at the Office



What would your life be like if you could make every day at work a great day? Julie Alexander, president of Great Days Presentations in Garland, Texas, and author of "Make Life Count! 50 Ways to Great Days," asks people in her seminars to complete this sentence: "I have a great day at work when..." "Most people complete this sentence by adding, 'I have a great day at work when I get things done,'" says Ms. Alexander. "I'll never forget one woman's comment. This was a woman who worked for a large hospital as an administrative

assistant and had to take directions from three bosses. Instead of complaining, this woman said, 'I have a great day at work when I choose to have one.'

If you've been feeling like a victim at your job, you may be able to change your approach to work. Even if your situation is difficult, you can make choices to create better days at work.

Here are a few:

Start the day before

"A great day at work really starts at the end of the day by clearing off your desk, figuring out what you need to do the next day, then prioritizing those things the best you can, realizing you're probably going to be interrupted," says Ms. Alexander.

Focus on your work

"People who have great days are the ones who are able to focus on their work a little better than others. Some people use work time to take care of their personal stuff," explains Ms. Alexander. "They're caught up with making personal phone calls or chatting with people

about their problems, then they get stressed when they don't get everything done."

To help you set aside your personal distractions, write them on a piece of paper or in a journal. When you write out personal problems that are bothering you, it keeps them from swirling around in your head and distracting you from your work.

Give 100 percent

"People who have great days at work are the ones who give 100 percent," says Ms. Alexander. "Many people do just enough to get by or stay out of trouble. People who give their best tend to get caught up in their work and, therefore, enjoy more of what they're doing."

Reward yourself

Your supervisor may not notice your extra efforts all the time, so it's your responsibility to reward yourself for giving extra effort to your job.

Make a list of 10-minute rewards -- things that are fun for you: taking a walk outside, reading a joke book, listening to music. Then take a short reward break, in the middle of the morning and in the middle of the afternoon. Taking a couple of short breaks during the day also will help lower your stress so you can accomplish more when you get back to work.

Get along

"People who have great days at work are good at getting along with others," says Ms. Alexander. "They make a sincere effort to get along with their coworkers, supervisors and clients or customers."

While you may not like all the people you work with, you can show everyone respect and consideration.

"All through the day you're making choices," says Ms. Alexander. "The ways in which you do your work, get along with people and view your job are some of the choices you make, and you can choose to make it a great day."

Krames Staywell

Coping with the Death of a Loved One



Losing someone you love can cause seemingly unbearable pain. The death will be tough, and it does get easier with time. If you are finding it difficult to accept a loss, you can learn ways to cope and move on without forgetting how much your loved one meant to you.

What You May Experience Immediately After a Loss

The depth of hurt will depend on how close you were with the deceased.

- Sometimes the emotion is so unfamiliar and strong that when you initially learn of the news, all you feel is numbness.
- It can consume your thoughts leaving you unable to make decisions or function normally.
- Loss can not only affect you emotionally, but also physically. You may feel nauseous and experience headaches and vomiting.
- Once the initial shock and adjustment has passed and your daily routines pick back up, you are likely to experience the loss in a different way.
- Depending on the person's past involvement in your life, you may feel the absence of the person more strongly, and may feel that your life will never be the same again.
- You may want to be alone because you think no one understands.
- You may question if there was anything you could have done to make things different.

If you have experienced all or some of these feelings, they are all part of the normal grieving process. Learning to cope with these emotions, while difficult, can help you work through the loss and come out stronger in the end.

Various Kinds of Loss

Any death of a loved one is difficult, but research shows that sudden, tragic deaths and deaths of young people often are the hardest to accept. When a child dies, parents often feel like they can't go on. The pain can be so intense that parents may wish they could give their own life so the child may live. The child's siblings may also be deeply affected by this loss.

The death of a spouse is also especially difficult to accept. Routines that were once normal in a partnership, like kissing goodnight or saying goodbye before going off to work, are now nonexistent. The living spouse may have extreme depression while trying to cope with the loss. Older adults may have a very difficult time dealing with death, as they are confronted with mortality more frequently. Older adults may become depressed by experiencing so much loss in their friends and family.

Finding Ways to Cope

Talk, talk, talk, no matter how hard it is to do so. Others who also loved the deceased make great listeners and people to listen to. You can share stories and talk about how much you miss and loved the person with these friends or family members. Consider reading books about grief, talking to a counselor or clergy member, or joining a support group. Professional therapists are trained to help people who are dealing with grief and get to a place where they can manage their emotions and function in their daily lives. If you feel suicidal or in complete despair or depression, seek professional help immediately.

You need to take time to grieve and face your grief. If you don't, it will cause great emotional distress later. Your life could become out of control, or you could indulge in alcohol, drugs, overeating or other negative habits in order to mask the pain your grief is causing. By not facing the death, it will cause more problems in the long-run, so try to address these feelings now.

Helping the Survivor Cope

If you find yourself in the position of helping someone cope with loss, use the following tips:

- Listen. Try to say little. When you do speak, offer comfort, not clichés.
- Be there for support in the days, weeks, months, or even years after the loss.
- Include the survivor in holidays.
- Send a thoughtful card or flower or call the survivor on the anniversary of the loss.
- Accept the survivor's feelings, and attempt to show him or her love and compassion.

Written by Life Advantages - Author Delvina Miremadi ©2012

Deskercise for the Office Bound



Most people who exercise regularly say that being active makes them feel healthier and more energetic. And that's not limited to joggers or tennis players. Many office workers are doing simple exercises at their desks, with surprisingly healthy benefits.

These activities give you a mental boost, fight stress and promote flexibility, health experts say.

The body dislikes staying still for long. The longer you're still, the more tension that accumulates from being in one position.

Yet, the average American sits for 7 1/2 hours a day! If you're stuck behind a desk for that long, you can do some simple exercises while sitting or standing. No special skills or equipment is needed. One of the simplest exercises, for instance, is to just lean back in your chair and stretch.

Mind you, the exercises won't develop your cardiovascular system, build strength or make you look better in your bathing suit. But they will reduce muscle tension and stress and help maintain the strength, flexibility and muscle tone you already have.

Remember to breathe normally while holding your body in one of the stretching positions. When you're done, finish with some slow, deep breathing.

If you work at a computer terminal -- and if you're reading this at work, then this is for you! -- stretch your wrist muscles occasionally and take short breaks, health experts say. The idea is to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome, a painful wrist malady caused by repetitive movement.

The experts recommend doing the desk exercises every hour or so, even if you do only one exercise at a time. Anything is better than staying in one position.

In doing these exercises, go slowly and use the full range of motion. Sometimes joints won't move quickly through a full range of motion, so if you do an exercise too quickly, you won't get the full benefit. You also risk pulling a muscle if you do the exercises too quickly.

It's important to get up once an hour and walk around, even if it's just to a filing cabinet. Sitting for long periods puts stress on the lower back, and leads to muscle atrophy and a loss of flexibility.

A 10-minute walk is the best exercise for the office bound, experts say. When that's not possible, the desk exercises are the next best thing.

Pectoral stretch:

Clasp hands behind head. Pull shoulder blades together and elbows back. Repeat 2 times.

Purpose: Stretches pectorals or chest area.

Sitting bend:

Sit in a chair, feet flat on the floor, knees about 12 inches apart, hands at sides. Bend over as far as comfortable, hands reaching toward or touching the floor. Hold 3-5 seconds and then slowly pull your body back up into a sitting position while tightening your abdominal muscles. Relax, and repeat 4-5 times.

Purpose: Stretches low back and hamstrings.

Wrist flexion and hyperextension:

Flexion -- gently apply force with the left hand to stretch the right wrist toward the underside of the right forearm. Hold for 3-5 seconds, relax and repeat with other side. Repeat exercises 5 times each wrist.

Hyperextension -- gently apply force with the left palm to bend the right hand backward. Hold 3-5 seconds, relax and repeat 5 times each wrist.

Purpose: Stretches wrists.

Hug:

Brings arms across chest trying to touch as far around the back as possible. Hold for 10 seconds, relax and repeat with a different arm on top.

Purpose: Stretches back and shoulders.

Head tilt:

Slowly bend head to the right as far as possible, then to the left, then forward (with chin against your throat) and to the back. Repeat 2 times in each direction.


Purpose: Loosens up, stimulates neck muscles.

Vertical stretches:

Feet shoulder-width apart, raise up on toes, extend the arms overhead. Alternately, reach as high as possible with each hand for 7-10 seconds. Relax, and repeat exercise 4 times.

Purpose: Reduces tension and activates all major muscle groups.

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