

# Safety & Training

RELAX

STRESS

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## eSource

A monthly resource for members of IMEA's Safety, Education & Training program.

### Controlling Stress

**Stress.** Many of us are faced with it everyday, but we might not know how to deal with it. It is important to learn how to handle stress because it can affect our performance and relationships in our work and home. At work, stress can lead to distraction and cause an unfortunate accident. At home, stress can put a strain on family relationships.

Stress usually occurs when there are changes in our lives and we feel that we don't have enough resources to deal with those changes and demands. Stress can occur not only from negative life experiences, but also from positive ones. People react and deal with stress differently, but common stress symptoms include upset stomach, fatigue, tight neck muscles, irritability and headaches. Some people react to stress by eating or drinking too much, losing sleep or smoking cigarettes. Stress may also make you more susceptible to illnesses, including the common cold, ulcers, and some cancers.

The first step to managing stress is to identify your "stressors"; those things that are making you react. Stressors many not only be events that cause you to feel sad, frightened, anxious or happy. You can cause stress through your thoughts, feelings and expectations. Look at the list below. Which cause you stress? Can you think of other stressors?

- Not enough time
- Unexpected change
- Extra responsibility
- Personality clashes
- Money difficulties

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### From the Desk of Duane Richardson

#### ***Safety Audits A Must For All Workplaces***

We are all concerned about a healthy workplace, irrespective of where we work and at what position. This is because numerous workplaces have witnessed accidents that have caused minor or major injuries and sometimes even results in fatalities. This is where safety audits come to the forefront. **What is a Safety audit and why is it required at a workplace?**

A **Safety Audit** is the examination of a work area to ensure that the work area is as safe as possible for the professionals. From the employer's point of view also, it is excellent solution as it protects your business from various safety hazards. For instance, a good audit consists of thorough inspections covering each and everything you can only think about.

**Contact me for additional information or to schedule an Audit of your Utility.**

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## Controlling Stress (Continued)

Everyone has to deal with life's problems. A key to Dealing with the big and little everyday stressors is coping with stress in a positive way.

1. **Acceptance-** Many of us worry about things we have no control over. For example, a family illness, great deal of change at work, or finding out that your basketball team lost. One way to manage stress is to accept when things are beyond your control. It may be helpful to think positive thoughts such as, "Someday I'll laugh about this, or "It's a learning experience."
2. **Attitude-** Try to focus on the positive side of situations. Ask yourself, "What good can come out of this?" "What can I learn from this situation?" and "How can I handle this better when it comes up again?" Solutions come easier when you focus on the positive and your stress level will be reduced.
3. **Perspective-** We often worry about things that never happen. Keep things in perspective by asking yourself, "How important is this situation? Can I do anything about it? In five years, will I even remember it happened?"

Think about the situations in your life that cause you stress. Are they important or unimportant? Are they controllable or uncontrollable? If they are controllable events, you can take action to change the situation; if they are uncontrollable, you can use your skills in acceptance, attitude and perspective to reduce the stress.

## Fighting Fatigue

Fatigue is the condition of being physically or mentally tired or exhausted. Extreme fatigue can lead to uncontrolled and involuntary shutdown of the brain.



Fortunately, there are ways to fight fatigue:

- Get eight hours of sleep before starting work.
- Sleep at the same time each day. If they rotate shifts, establish clockwise rotations (From day to evening to night). Clockwise rotating makes it easier to go to sleep when a worker goes to bed.
- Take all scheduled work breaks. A snack or exercise during the break will refresh them.
- When trying to sleep during the daytime, find a cool, dark, quiet location. Use earplugs, soft music, or a fan to block out noise.
- See their doctor about sleep disorders medications for illness, and using bright light on the job or during waking hours.
- Eat a well-balanced diet beginning the "day" with high protein foods and ending with carbohydrates. Do not eat great quantities before bedtime; they may cause trouble sleeping.
- Avoid caffeine. These substances cause sleep disturbances.
- Walking, stretching, and aerobics can help a person stay awake. Exercise will give you stamina and help you to fall asleep later.
- Work carefully and very methodically, always following proper procedures.

When you're fatigued **you will make errors in judgement.** Your mind or eyes can be off task and you can make a critical error.

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