

# ARE YOU STRESSED FROM YOUR JOB?

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It's probably a fairly common occurrence to talk with a co-worker and hear them describe how stressed out they are at work. While this seems to be the new norm in the American workforce, one can't help but wonder if employees have always felt this way. What's even more thought-provoking is the idea that this workplace stress might be doing more to our bodies than we think, as [the effects of constant stress can lead to job burnout](#).

Just how stressed are we, what contributes to it, and how can we change our workplace so that it's a place of productivity and accomplishment rather than fear and fatigue?

## Bad Job Or No Job?

A common comparison that's made when it comes to workplace complaints is that having a bad job must at least be better than having no job at all, right? [A recent study in the United Kingdom](#) actually found just the opposite, having surveyed a group of individuals who were previously unemployed and who began working at jobs that brought on a lot of stress.

It turns out that stress levels in the newly employed individuals were higher than those who remained unemployed, signaling that workplace stress might be more detrimental to our health than we thought.

Perhaps it's due to a sense of powerlessness, as [the American Psychological Association reports](#). Poor job descriptions, inadequate training, overbearing bosses, and a sense that nothing you do will change your circumstances all contribute to elevated stress in the workplace. Contrast that with the idea that at least an unemployed person has a multitude of options in front of them, and it's no surprise the UK study found the results they did.

### Influencing Factors

When we talk about stress in the workplace, many people envision having a packed schedule and just too much to do. But stress can be attributed to a large number of factors, all of which accumulate into a feeling of discomfort, hopelessness, or even fear.

[A survey conducted by the American Institute of Stress](#) polled 751 individuals who work full-time in the United States. Their results found that a surprising number of people feel so much stress at work that it translates into violent thoughts, with 14% of respondents saying they felt like hitting someone at their workplace but didn't, and 25% reporting they have felt like screaming due to the amount of stress they experience at

work.

Stress not only comes from a hostile co-worker or boss but can be created due to a [lack of opportunity within the workplace](#). Only about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of Americans feel that their job allows for adequate advancement opportunities in the future, and many feel they are strapped with tasks that require more time than they have to devote to them.

Unsafe work conditions can also lead to a great deal of stress in the workplace, as on-the-job injuries are prevalent. [Nearly \\$50 billion dollars was spent in 2014 due to workplace accidents](#), and the combination of these injuries and stress can contribute to an overall unhealthy work environment.

## Ways To Combat Stress

Reducing your level of stress at work isn't out of your control, despite the fact that external factors might be the cause for your concern. Experts suggest trying to calm yourself down when things get tense and [utilize some of the following ideas to help improve your mental space](#):

- Taking a deep breath can do wonders to help calm your mind after a stressful meeting or email, and engaging in this practice a few times a day can help with your overall mood.
- Learning to respond to stressors instead of reacting to them can help lessen their effects. Distinguish what's in your control and what isn't, then act accordingly.
- Think about the goals you've created for yourself, whether it's getting a promotion in the next year or outworking everyone else so you can get a huge bonus. If these ideas are contributing to your stress level, assess how realistic they are and think about scaling them back a bit.
- Constant interruptions throughout the day make it difficult to be productive and thus can make you feel

stressed out. Try closing your office door or placing a "do not disturb" sign on your cubicle to help you get more done.

- Diet can play a large role in our stress levels as well, so make sure to eat balanced meals and get plenty of sleep and exercise throughout the week.

If your job is stressful, there are ways to deal with your environment that should help to lessen the effect it has on you. Remember that your Human Resources department or even a primary care physician can both be excellent resources if things are getting to an unmanageable point. And if all else fails, another job with less demanding hours or a different company culture might be a better fit for lowering your stress on the job.