

Balancing Work and Your Health

BY DEB BROWN, NSCA CPT, CWC, CNS

*“Your job is temporary, your health is forever.
(Repeat that last line).”*

The corporate world is increasingly stressful these days for many people. Layoffs, an uncertain economic climate and the shift back to in-person work time has exponentially increased the stress and angst that many people are feeling while on the job. Additional challenges in the workplace include long commutes, unpredictable schedules, difficult clients, long hours, increasing amounts of work responsibility, demanding bosses, and attempting to balance work/family obligations. It's easy to let your health take a back seat as you prioritize work demands. But I argue that this is time to re-focus and double down on taking good care of your health. Here are some ideas to maintain optimal health in the workplace:

Exercise: Preferably in the morning before the work day starts. Lunchtime or even after your work day will work as well. Consistency is key! Even if you can squeeze in 30 minutes of movement after a long day, you will feel better. I cannot stress enough how a regular exercise program will help you feel more centered and grounded on a daily basis. This helps reduce stress in a big way.

Healthy Eating: Try to eat every 3–4 hours (small mini-meals) that keep your energy up and blood sugar on an even keel. Set an alarm



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on your computer or phone to remind you. Drink water and non-caffeinated beverages frequently so that you can stay hydrated. Make sure you are getting some healthy carbs, protein and fat at every meal. Do not eat at your desk if you can help it. A change of scenery is always refreshing. If you must stay in/near the office, at least try to get out of the office for a quick 10-minute walk outside.

Set Boundaries: Try to get out of work at a reasonable time every night. Make appointments with yourself to work out, and treat that like any other appointment. Sure, sometimes it will not work for you to get out the door on time, but you can at least shoot for 80%. Realize that you need to make yourself a priority. Your job is temporary, your health is forever. (Repeat that last line).

Actively Manage Stress: Realize that stress is not going away. Figure out ways to adapt and manage it. Eating properly, exercising, getting enough sleep and employing relaxation techniques will all help you to be able to manage stress. If you can, get regular massages. Get outside for some fresh air and sunshine on a consistent basis. Practice meditation or yoga for relaxation. Dedicate time to your hobbies and passions to help create a balanced life. Invest time in relationships with friends and family.

Deb Brown is an NSCA Certified Trainer and the owner of the On The Move Fitness Personal Training Studio located in Conifer. For more information about our services, please visit www.onthemovefitness.com or call us at 303-816-1426.
