Facts and Figures about Stress in the Workplace

Effective stress management in the workplace is a worldwide need, urgently expressed in medical, governmental and business media. The Bureau of Labor Statistics’ research findings warn business that increasing job stress is responsible for an estimated annual cost of $10,000 per worker, $300 billion for the US economy.\(^1\) Among the nation's top executives, an estimated $10 to $20 billion is lost each year through absence, hospitalization and early death, much of it a direct result of stress.\(^2\) The taboo of admitting to being stressed has been “outed.”\(^3\) Medical journals and organizations cite stress as the cause of 60-90% of all illness\(^4\), with job stresses a major contributor. Up to 75% of Americans say their jobs are very stressful\(^5\), and 65% of are taking steps to control stress in their lives.\(^6\)

More serious and uncontrollable insecurities have immerged since these figures were first published: a weakened national economy, high unemployment and terrorist escalation. Add to this the pressures of corporate downsizing, global economic competition, job insecurity and hectic family life, and we see extreme and elevating levels of stress on executives and workers.

Benefits The main benefit of stress management is improved physical and mental health. Other benefits include enhanced efficiency, effectivenes, morale and overall attitude in the workplace. Cost savings from these improvements for employers are substantial.\(^7\)

Example of positive results of stress management training from one study.\(^8\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability time</td>
<td>52% reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of service</td>
<td>13% improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work days absent</td>
<td>56% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress hyper-reactivity</td>
<td>46% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription drug use</td>
<td>32% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity measures</td>
<td>7% improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s office visits</td>
<td>53% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunoglobulin A</td>
<td>31% increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache frequency</td>
<td>48% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievances</td>
<td>32% reduction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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\(^1\) The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates, using indicators such as absenteeism, diminished productivity, employee turnover, accidents, medical, legal and insurance costs and workers comp claims. The U N International Labor Office called Job Stress the 20th Century epidemic.

\(^2\) The American Institute of Stress

\(^3\) See summary of articles on CEO’s and stress from Fortune, 10/28/02, in the appendix.

\(^4\) 60% of the illnesses they treat are stress related; American Family Physicians Association. Dr. Paul Rosch, M.D., American Institute of Stress, places this figure at 75-90%. Health care expenditures are 50% greater for workers who report high levels of stress; Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. Job stress increases risk of health problems such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, musculoskeletal disorders, psychological disorders etc.; Encyclopaedia of Occupational Safety and Health.

\(^5\) The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).


\(^7\) Costs are $10,000 per working person, $300 billion for the US economy annually; The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

\(^8\) The Canadian Institute of Stress Management, from a comprehensive company wide stress management program.
Benefits for Customers through Stressmanager

The **health care providers** will benefit from lower health care claims for stress related illness.

The benefits to the **employer** of less stress in their workers are cost savings on worker turnover, worker comp claims, absenteeism, and health care cost reduction.\(^9\) In addition, improvements can be expected in employee moral, productivity and quality of service.

Employers are becoming aware of the increasing issue of stress of their workers for reasons of productivity and health costs. The health and well being department head of Siemens-Austria spoke with us of constant pressure from his management to “find something, and it needs to be affordable”, to increase the health of the work force. After he had purchased a $10,000 biofeedback machine, used for stress control by his employees, he commented, “I wish I had one of these for everyone”.

The benefit for the **users** is learning to cope with stress easily and effectively, improving their health and well being at the workplace and at home. The user can also expect increased efficiency and productivity. The Stress Manager provides a tool that is one key part of the solution to a firm’s total stress concerns.

Medical and **therapeutic providers** of stress management services benefit by adding a new tool to assist with stress management for their patients

Stress management **consultants** benefit with improved results when they incorporate the Stress Manager to reinforce their own regime.

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\(^9\) The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates job stress to cost Americans 200 – 300 billion dollars annually, using indicators such as absenteeism, diminished productivity, employee turnover, accidents, medical, legal and insurance costs and workers comp claims. Health care expenditures are nearly 50% greater for workers who report high levels of stress; Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. Job stress increases risk of health problems such as cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, psychological disorders etc.; Encyclopaedia of Occupational Safety and Health.
Appendix

In Fortune Magazine’s Health section, 10-28-02, we found many of our previous findings and statistics confirmed and updated 1) on stress in the workplace, 2) the stress management industry and 3) the training methods we are using in our product.

1) The statistics on stress in the workplace

New study by National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health: more than half US working people view job stress as a major problem in their lives; % more then doubled since the ‘90’s

The number of people who called in sick due to stress has tripled in the past four years.

Fully 42% of employees--double the percentage a year ago--think their co-workers need help managing stress.

Marlin Co, workplace research firm’s 2002 annual survey said 29% of respondents put themselves in the highest category of stress--extreme or quite a bit--the highest percentage in the poll's six-year history

In 2002 the European Community officially dubbed stress the second-biggest occupational-health problem facing the continent.

The American Institute of Stress, a research group, estimates that stress and the ills it can cause--absenteeism, burnout, mental health problems--cost American business more than $300 billion a year.

2) Expert remarks: the stress management industry

"People are absolutely nuts, stressed off the map," says Dr. Stephen Schoonover, author of Your Soul at Work and head of the executive development firm Schoonover Associates, which helps executives combat stress and balance their lives. He has seen his practice surge 30% over the past two years. Like each of the dozens of stress experts we talked to--MDs, psychiatrists, therapists, workplace gurus--Schoonover says, "I've never seen it this bad."

Ten years ago --Dr. Jim Quick, president of the International Stress Management Association and a professor at the Baylor School of Medicine in Texas, used to say that we were not more stressed than we had been; people were just becoming more aware of their stress. "I don't think that is the case this time around," Quick says. "We have a problem."

“Don't let anyone tell you it is just in your head; it is in your body too," says Quick. There is no medical definition of stress, but it is directly linked to cardiovascular disease, depression, impaired immune disorders, alcoholism, drug addiction, temporary paralysis,
bladder control problems and lost sex drive--plus the everyday headaches, back spasms, overeating, and other annoying ailments the body develops in response to stress.

Dr. Pamela Peeke treats a number of fortune 500 executives. "It's mental aerobics," says Peeke, a professor of medicine at the University of Maryland. "Top athletes do stuff like this for their bodies; the highest execs need to do it for their minds."

Dr. Scott Stacy, clinical program director of the Professional Renewal Center, estimates that the average executive will skate dangerously close to burning out two or three times in his career.

Dr. Dee Soder, Manhattan executive coach says "I hear a lot of people saying, 'It's tough.' But executives don't use the 's' word." While some executives may talk openly about their problems with alcohol, sex addiction, depression, and dyslexia, stress has become the last affliction that people won't dare admit to.

"Stress is like a violin string," says Dr. Allen Elkin of the Stress Management and Counseling Center, a clinic in New York City. "If there's no tension, there's no music. But if the string is too tight, it will break. You want to find the right level of tension for you--the level that lets you make harmony in your life."

Trends:

Stress management virtually didn't exist a decade ago; now it's a $10 billion industry. It might involve anything from breathing techniques to psychotherapy--even stints at in-patient clinics.

Top executives are experiencing less control over their jobs and more stress.

It has been very hard for top execs to seek help for stress because admitting it to be a problem has been taboo.

Competitive pricing:

For a 2-day workshop to help with moderate stress, the American Management Association charges $1,495 per attendee; most are sent and paid by their employers.

Mind/body work, such as yoga, stretching, and breathing exercises, is often effective for mild to moderate stress, (estimated at $10 - $25 per session, or massage, at $40 - $60 per session).

Outpatient psychotherapy may be appropriate for more serious cases. Sessions may cost $200 or more an hour; count on at least six weeks of therapy.

In-patient clinics in out-of-the-way spots can help with severe stress. Execs stay a minimum of two weeks at these private campuses, paying about $2,000 to $5,000 a week for eight hours a day of group and individual therapy (some insurance plans will cover a portion of the cost).
3) Methods:

Henderson, an exec recovering from overstress, wears a watch that beeps on the hour to remind her to stop whatever she is doing and take a break for stretches and deep breathing, takes short naps to replenish her energy during the day, has mastered the art of the polite no, and has a prescription written by Dr. Peeke: "Must have ten-day vacation 3x a year." After weekly sessions (at $150 an hour) with Dr. Peeke for two years, she now sees the stress doc quarterly.

Says Henderson: "I'm clear that I'm never going to be in a stress-free mode. The business of business is about stress. **But I will become the master of stress management.**"

For another overstressed exec, recovery just might be a lifelong process. Almost two years after the mountains became immovable for Haughom, he says he still has to make a conscious effort to keep his stress under control. "**The situation hasn't changed,**" he says. "**But I have changed.**"