

PRINT MATTERS

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Top five tips for managing stress

We don't really need scientists to tell us stress is bad for us. As magazine publishers, we feel it every day as we wear multiple hats and juggle endless deadlines. But when you consider that chronic stress is linked to several of the leading causes of death in this country (heart disease, cancer and strokes, to name a few), then we probably ought to pay a little more attention.

With that in mind, we've put together a list of suggestions that will help you reduce your daily stress. Even if you can only implement a few of these ideas, your well-being and your productivity will improve straight away.

Be realistic.

1. Carmel Tajonera regularly helps busy clients develop stress management strategies. The process starts with an honest assessment of what they're capable of accomplishing day to day. "One thing I recommend is to acknowledge we're not invincible," Tajonera said. "We're human, and there's only so much we can do."

Instead of committing yourself to an unrealistic workload, she suggests setting smaller, more manageable goals each day. "Then you'll feel you've gotten something accomplished." You will also eliminate the perpetual feeling that you're behind, which creates ample stress in and of itself.

Take recess.

2. Even when you're swamped, you can afford a few minutes away from your phone and computer. "Take a break or a 10-minute walk," Tajonera said. "It gives you some time to refuel and take yourself out of that stressful situation. You'll come back with some clarity and more focus."

The more physical you can make your break time, the more tension-busting power it has. So if walking isn't practical, try yoga or some stretches. Meditation and breathing exercises can help, too.

Sleep rules.

3. It's no secret that the number one stress-reducing tool is sleep. People who don't get enough of it are three times more susceptible to catching colds and, worse, are more likely to experience spikes of the stress hormone cortisol in the afternoon and evening, which in turn makes them more vulnerable to heart disease and hypertension. Furthermore, a lack of sleep zaps energy and therefore productivity.

Making sleep a priority is not that difficult. You just have to set some bedtime rules and follow them. Tajonera suggests trying to go to bed around the same time each night and turning the phone off if at all possible. Also, have a buffer of electronic-free time before you go to bed. "You're getting yourself in a better place to rest," she said. "Then you're better able to face the stresses of the next day."

Pursue order.

4. Another proven strategy for busy publishers: If you haven't done it yet, get organized. And if you don't know how, research it or ask others for help. Even relatively small tasks, like de-cluttering your desk, can ease stress. "Being organized helps with a sense of control,"



said Ari Meisel, founder of Less Doing, More Living, in an interview with dailyburn.com. "We all need some control in our lives in order to stay motivated."

*(Editor's note: Please see past *Print Matters* articles titled "Yes, you really can be organized" and "Time management tips for publishers" in the Resources section at www.jpapontiac.com.)*

Keep perspective.

5. John Hoke knows all about wearing multiple hats. As publisher of *Amateur Wrestling News*, Hoke manages circulation, does promotional mailings, handles his magazine's advertising and updates its website. "I also take out the trash and sweep the floor," he said, half-jokingly.

He takes the magazine's quality seriously, but he's at peace with the idea that things won't always fall neatly together. "If the magazines get out a day or two late, it's no big deal."

Hoke says publishers should relax a bit more where they can. Never make work the focus of your existence. Hoke's top priority, for example, is time with his grandchildren.

Essentially, the best approach to thriving in the face of extreme busyness is taking care of yourself. Prioritize sleep. Make time for stress-relieving exercises and for what matters most to you. Self-care is not selfish, Tajonera said; it's strategic. "It's the oxygen mask in the plane scenario. You have to put it on yourself first. Then you're in a much better place to support others who need you."

And you're in a much better place to produce a top quality publication as well.