Relaxation Techniques at the Workplace

Learning Objectives

• Identify common causes of stress
• Provide stress busters and relaxation techniques to reduce stress
• Discuss the importance of good posture, the advantages it provides, and the consequences of developing bad posture
• Provide easy and safe stretching techniques that can be executed in the workplace

Causes of Stress at Work

• Work load
• Deadlines
• Desk clutter
Stress Busters

• Practice letting go
• Breathe slowly and deeply
• Practice speaking more slowly than usual
• Use a time management technique

Stress Busters (cont.)

• Go outside for a quick break
• Drink plenty of water and eat small healthful snacks
• Check your posture
• Plan a reward for the end of your day

Relaxation Techniques

• Diaphragmatic breathing
• Progressive muscle relaxation
• Guided imagery
• Meditation
Diaphragmatic Breathing

- Changing your breathing will allow you to think more clearly
- Changing your thinking will allow your breathing to slow and become deeper
  - Sit back in your seat
  - Make your hands comfortable
  - Close your eyes
  - Take a deep breath (inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth)
  - Breathe again - Repeat until you feel calm and settled

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- A two-step process to relax your muscles
  - Find a quiet place
  - Find a comfortable position that supports your head and neck
  - Close your eyes and take deep breaths
  - Tighten the muscles in your hands (clench your fists) for four seconds and then release
  - Repeat this process with other muscles in your body
  - Focus on letting go of the tension in that muscle area
  - Finish with slow and even breathing

Guided Imagery

You will need:
- Quiet time
- Privacy
- An alarm clock (maybe)

Steps:
- Get into a comfortable position
- Start using diaphragmatic breathing
- Begin to envision yourself in a relaxing environment
- Involve all of your senses in this imagery
- Stay in this place for as long as you need
Meditation

The most basic way to meditate:
• Get into a comfortable position
• Close your eyes
• Clear your head

Additional tips:
• Give yourself time
• Start with short sessions
• There are other types of meditation that you can try:
  • Focused meditation
  • Activity-oriented meditation
  • Mindfulness techniques
  • Spiritual meditation

Safe and Effective Stretching

• Three tips before you begin stretching:
  • Take a general review of the area to be stretched
  • Do all stretches gently and slowly
  • Stretch only to the point of tension

• In conjunction with regular stretching:
  • Move around
  • Drink plenty of water
  • Practice deep breathing

Stretches You Can Do While Seated

• Let your chin fall forward to your chest; relax your shoulders and keep your hands by your sides

• Keeping your shoulders still and your head forward, slowly rotate your chin towards your shoulder (left and right)

• Interlock your fingers in front of your chest and straighten your arms with your palms facing outward

• Sit upright and place one arm across your body; keeping your arm parallel to the ground, pull your elbow in toward your opposite shoulder (repeat on both sides)
Healthy Posture

• What is good posture?
  • Training your body to stand, walk, sit or lie down in a position where the least strain is placed on your supporting muscles and ligaments

• Why is good posture important?
  • Keeps bones and joints correctly aligned
  • Helps decrease normal wear and tear of joints
  • Decreases stress on ligaments
  • Prevents spinal abnormalities
  • Prevents strain
  • Prevents back and muscular pain
  • Contributes to overall better appearance

Healthy Posture (cont.)

• Requirements for healthy posture
  • Muscle flexibility
  • Normal range of motion in joints
  • Balanced (symmetrical) spinal muscles
  • Awareness of your posture

• Contributors to poor posture
  • Obesity
  • Pregnancy
  • Weak muscles
  • High-heeled shoes
  • Tight muscles
  • Poor work environment
  • Poor sitting and standing habits

Healthy Posture for Sitting

• Sit with your back straight and shoulders back
• Allow the natural curves of your back to be present
• Distribute your body weight evenly
• Bend your knees at right angles
• Keep your feet flat on floor
Healthy Posture for Sitting (cont.)

- Avoid sitting in the same position for more than 30 minutes at a time
- Adjust chair height and work station so that you can sit close to your work
- Turn your whole body instead of twisting at waist
- When going from sitting to standing avoid bending at the waist

Healthy Posture for Standing

- Hold your head up and straight (chin in)
- Align earlobes with the center of your shoulders
- Hold your shoulder blades back, chest forward and knees straight
- Stretch the top of your head toward the ceiling
- Hold your stomach in
- Wear shoes that support the arches in your feet
- Avoid standing in the same position for too long
- When standing for long periods of time, try to elevate one foot on a stool (switch elevated foot every few minutes)

Benefits of Practicing Relaxation Techniques

- Increased ability to concentrate
- Increased ability to deal with unavoidable stress
- Better communication with co-workers and superiors
- Better health
- Overall increase in positive career outlook
Resources

Contact your EAP
or
Work-Life Program
for
Assistance

Thank You!

Questions???

Works Cited


