

## Fight Frustration in the Office and Beyond: Tips for Creating Happier, More Productive Days

**I**t doesn't take Monday morning traffic to cause extreme frustration at work. It can even be things as small as a co-worker showing up to a meeting late, a client calling to cancel his latest order or the coffee pot being empty in the break room.

Unfortunately, when you don't handle your anger and frustration in a constructive way, it tends to build up. As your stress levels rise, you tend to be less productive, thus finding it harder to concentrate or multitask. Eventually, those high levels of stress can take their toll and lead to burn out. The solution is to manage your frustration and stress properly and quickly so that it doesn't get in the way of a productive workday.

Here are some tips for handling frustrating situations in the office and beyond.

### **1. Start off with some affirmations to help you get through the frustration. Here are a few affirmations to help you increase your tolerance of stressful situations. Think of these and say them to yourself the next time you find yourself upset.**

- In the long run, it is more satisfying to take the more challenging route, than to take the easier and less disciplined approach.
- I am happiest when I work on long-term, challenging projects in which I work against inertia and take risks.
- While I may have to do many things that are difficult, unpleasant or boring, they are almost never impossible to accomplish.
- In order to achieve pleasant results, I often have to do challenging things.
- Yes, it is a pain to do this now, but I'll be able to accomplish so much more than by waiting to do it later.

### **2. Follow up with a "workout" that will get you moving – at least your endorphins.**

Although it doesn't seem like a typical fitness program, laughing gives your body a great workout

and releases endorphins, which can improve your mood, focus and energy. Even though you may not work up an actual sweat or earn a medal in competition -- laughing brings great benefits. So, keep a humorous book on your desk, sign up for a daily knock-knock joke or just find something amusing to think about during the next frustrating situation.

- **Pump up the oxygen.** One of the ways exercise builds energy is by forcing you to breathe deeply. Each in-breath, or "inspiration," brings fresh oxygen into your body. Laughter does the same thing. Notice that you can't laugh long without having to take a breath. Your brain gets fresh oxygen and you feel great. The deep breathing that comes with a good laugh will also force you to relax.
- **Pump up your muscles.** Working out when you feel tense is a tried and true way to relieve stress and tension in your muscles and your mind. Laughing does the same thing with a lot less effort! Notice how your muscles relax after you laugh.
- **Turn on the neurotransmitters.** Scientists suspect that laughing resembles exercise in another positive way. When you exercise, your body produces "happy hormones" that make you feel great. Nor-epinephrine makes you feel energetic, endorphins cheer you up and serotonin helps you feel less tense. It appears that laughing may release these hormones too.
- **Make it all part of a game.** One of the reasons tribal healers often wear wild outfits and perform entertaining antics is to make people laugh. Ancient wisdom taught that laughter and fun on a regular basis keeps people healthy. Organizations that take time for recreation, games and fun also learn that relieving tension helps groups make better decisions.

### **3. Sometimes it takes a bigger change to notice a difference. By implementing just a few of the following lifestyle changes, you will be able to reduce stress and frustration levels. Here are some suggestions:**

- Research shows that companion animals, like dogs, cats, rabbits and birds, help people live lon-