Managing Job-related Stress

Job-related stress is difficult to manage in any industry, but the nature of the technology field can make work a pressure cooker. The irritations of glitches, tight deadlines and uncooperative equipment can build up, turning enjoyment and satisfaction into exhaustion and frustration. Eventually the stress can overwhelm you, potentially leading to illness, injury and job failure.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) found that 25 percent of workers feel that their jobs are the number one stressor in their lives. They also found that work-related stress has a higher relation to health issues than family and financial problems.

Watch Out for Early Signs
Watch out for these serious signs that stress is having a negative effect on your overall well-being:

- Insomnia or fatigue
- Feeling anxious or irritable
- Muscle tensions or headaches
- Upset stomach
- Extremely sore back
- Apathy, loss of interest in work
- Trouble concentrating
- Social withdrawal
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope

Early symptoms can develop into more serious health complications such as depression, anxiety and even heart conditions.

Reducing Stress
To reduce stress on the job and your risk of developing a more serious health condition, consider these recommendations:

Keep healthy life habits
- Eating healthy meals and snacks instead of fast food or vending machine grub can have a positive effect on your mind and your mood.
- At home, take care of any personal things you have to do on the computer right away and then ignore it. You spend at least eight hours staring at a desk staring at a screen. When possible, spend your time at home with friends and family and being active.
- Find non tech-related hobbies or interests. Being involved in something you can easily separate from work will help you leave work frustrations at the office.

Take regular breaks
- Take a breather in between long tasks. Stretch your legs—take a short walk around the office and clear your mind.
- Eat lunch away from your desk so you aren't tempted to work during that time.

Know when to walk away
- Tech workers are often naturally more detail-oriented than others, causing stress to intensify when dealing with a frustrating problem. Walking away for five minutes, a lunch hour, or until the next work day is sometimes what it takes to clear your head and eventually solve the problem. When you come back you may have the new perspective you need to find a solution.

If you feel overwhelmed, it's alright to take a break. Seek the advice of a co-worker, step outside or go get a cup of coffee and get away from the stressor for a few moments. This many help you gain a fresh perspective.