

STRESS – IS YOUR LIFE A BALANCING ACT?

Time, family, money, work, relaxation, noise, holidays, hobbies ...

One thing is for certain we all experience stress. A certain amount of stress is constructive and good; it keeps us functioning well; it keeps us alert; it even keeps us happy. Too much stress causes strain; prolonged stress may lead to illness.

You may experience headaches, knots in your neck, sweaty palms, and difficulty sleeping – particularly waking up early in the morning. It may be that you feel run down and lethargic.

We all suffer these symptoms from time to time, particularly when the demands of our lives become hectic and prolonged. When we see these signs of stress it is time to relax and time to regain the balance. There is a lot that we can all do individually day-by-day to protect ourselves from prolonged damaging stress and manage stress.

Day By Day Stress Savers

- Take deep breaths and release slowly;
- Clench your fist and then release it slowly;
- Go for a twenty minute walk;
- Count to ten slowly;
- Talk with a friend;
- Have a warm bath;
- Make a conscious effort to smile.

Long-Term Ways Of Managing Stress

Learn New Skills:-

- Sign up on a time management course;
- If it is offered to you try assertiveness training.

Physical Exercise:-

This is probably the most important stress-buster of all. When we exercise we release chemicals from our muscles into the bloodstream that helps us relax. It may sound a contradiction, but taking regular physical exercise helps us sleep better and helps us relax. Try:-

- Dancing;
- Walking;
- Swimming;
- Badminton;
- Cycling;
- If there's enough time golf.

Try Developing A New Interest:-

- Join a club;
- Start a hobby; do it with others – this way there is less chance of you giving up.

In short, make time for yourself!

There is an old Turkish saying which says:-

“Your day is divided into three. Eight hours for working, eight hours for sleeping and eight hours for talking”

Some of us find it much easier to talk than others. Although a very simple proverb, it underlines a very powerful concept.

SCA is taking its' responsibility to help employees manage their stress levels very seriously. Your plant may already have taken part in a plant-wide stress audit and received feedback on this. If not, all the major plants are being included in this audit over the next eighteen months, and such an audit programme is also being considered for the sheet plants. In this way we hope at SCA to be able to identify areas of stress and help employees and managers manage these appropriately.

