

Stress

Stress plays a role in increasing a person's risk of injury and many people experience different levels of stress throughout the day. Stress can be beneficial; at certain levels it makes people pay more attention to what they are doing and makes them more productive. When stress becomes too high, it can begin to interfere with the ability to make good and safe decisions.

If you watch people under a lot of stress it is often seen in the way their bodies react. Their shoulders draw up, head comes forward, their jaw tightens and their fists clench. All of these movements happen without people being aware of them. The problem is that rarely do any of these physical changes help people accomplish a task faster or better, and actually interferes with their efforts. Unfortunately, in many cases, people take their mental stress and translate it into a physical problem. Many of the headaches, neck aches, and backaches experienced are aggravated by stress reactions.

The first step in doing something about stress reactions is to recognize that they exist. The next is to realize that they do nothing to help and may hinder or interfere with people's efforts.

Dealing Effectively with Stress:

Take Two

When people are feeling tense, they should take two seconds to stop and take a breath. This allows them to re-evaluate what they are doing and gather their thoughts. They may notice something that they need to do, or not do, that can make the activity safe. While it seems like this takes time, remember that people are significantly more likely to make mistakes when they are stressed, tense, and hurried.

Stretch

It is hard to stretch and remain tense at the same time. Unfortunately, the last thing people think about when they are tense is stretching. That's why it is so important for people to get into the habit of stretching and changing postures frequently during the day. If stretching becomes an unconscious habit, they don't have to consciously think about doing it when they are under pressure.



STRESS

Talking Notes

POINTS TO REVIEW

1. Stress changes your posture.

People often express their stress through physical changes in the body. These changes can increase the demands on the body and increase the risk of injury by causing awkward postures, tense muscles, and inefficient movements.

2. Stress is a part of life. How you deal with it is what makes the difference.

While it is difficult to eliminate stress in your life, it is essential that you recognize it and deal with it appropriately. A little stress is beneficial because it keeps us alert. Stress becomes a risk factor when it becomes so high that it interferes with our thoughts and actions.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are some things that can cause stress? What are some simple methods for dealing with your stress?
2. What are some common mistakes people may make when under stress? How can this affect safety, productivity, and efficiency?

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