

Module 7 v Activity 9 v ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

How Lifestyle Affects Your Work

A lifestyle is made up of the habits and activities that you develop for day-to-day living. It includes what you eat, when and how long you sleep, and other daily activities. Physicians and other scientists know that your lifestyle can affect the amount of stress in your daily life. Dr. Peter Hanson, physician and lecturer on stress, points out that stress affects your health and emotions. Many of the reasons people miss work are directly related to their lifestyle. Here are some ways you can mold your lifestyle to increase your success at work.

- ◆ **Get a Good Night's Sleep.** Most people need 6 to 8 hours of sleep each night. Your body rests better when you sleep on a regular schedule. Many young people make the mistake of going to parties or other social activities on work nights. This can result in less sleep. Then they often skip work the next morning or wake up late for work. Not having enough sleep will lower your energy level on the job. You will not work as efficiently or enthusiastically without sufficient sleep.
- ◆ **Eat Well.** Eat well-balanced meals on a regular schedule and avoid too much junk food. Consume plenty of fruits and vegetables. You are less likely to be ill when you have good eating habits.
- ◆ **Exercise Regularly.** The majority of jobs in the U.S. are service and information-related jobs and don't require much exercise. Regular exercise keeps a person in top physical and mental condition and aids the release of job-related stress.
- ◆ **Avoid Smoking.** A Robert Half International survey reports that one in four employers will reject a smoker who is competing for a job against an equally qualified non-smoker. There is plenty of medical evidence to prove smoking is hazardous to both smokers and non-smokers. Many organizations offer incentives and help for employees who want to stop smoking.
- ◆ **Avoid Excessive Alcohol Consumption.** Alcohol can cause health problems. The more alcohol you drink, the more you may damage your body. Drinking to excess will reduce your performance on the job the next day. Drinking during or right before work is often cause for dismissal.
- ◆ **Avoid Drugs.** Illegal drugs are harmful to the body and mind. You should not take any drugs unless specifically prescribed for you by a physician. Policies about illegal drug use vary among organizations. If you test positive for certain drugs, some organizations give you a choice of entering a rehabilitation program or being fired. Other employers will simply fire you outright.
- ◆ **Keep Good Company.** Your relationships can affect your work. For instance, if your friends don't work, they may want you to adapt to their schedule which may make you too tired for work the next day. If a conflict like this occurs, you need to establish a priority for work and social activities. Avoid people who may get you into trouble with the law. Employers do not appreciate workers who miss work because they are in jail. In fact, you could get fired for missing work for that reason if your employer finds out. Many people make friends and socialize with other employed people to avoid such problems.

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- ◆ **Socializing with Co-workers.** Socializing means participating in activities with other people. We all need time to socialize with friends and acquaintances. Our co-workers often become our best friends because we spend so much time with them. Relationships with co-workers can be very positive or quickly turn sour. Here are guidelines to help you avoid problems in the work relationships.
 - ◆ **Avoid romances with co-workers.** They can make relationships with other co-workers awkward and often create an unpleasant situation when the romance ends.
 - ◆ **Don't limit friendships to just co-workers.** One thing that can happen when you socialize with co-workers is that you spend a lot of time talking about work. You need to mentally get away from your job to reduce stress. This means not talking or even thinking about the job.
 - ◆ **Don't let friendships with co-workers interfere with your work performance.** Don't do someone else's work to cover for their inability or laziness. Don't side with a friend against another worker or supervisor. Try to be neutral in work relationships.

Your Lifestyle and Stress

A moderate lifestyle will serve you well throughout your life. Moderation is avoiding excess. Rate your lifestyle using the following checklist. Check each statement that is true for you. Then, score your answers to see how you measure up to good lifestyle habits that can make you a better worker.

I do something really fun on a regular basis.

I avoid eating lots of junk food.

I rarely drink to excess.

I don't smoke.

I exercise regularly.

I average 6 to 8 hours of sleep on work nights.

I have friends I can rely on.

I do not use illegal drugs.

I gain strength from my religious beliefs.

I eat at least one well-balanced meal daily.

Count the numbers of statements you checked. Score yourself using the following guidelines.

8 or more: Reflects a positive lifestyle; effective on the job. **6 to 7:** Reflects moderate lifestyle; will assist you on the job. **5 or Less:** Reflects a vulnerable lifestyle; you may find your lifestyle may cause some job problems.