



Managing Workplace Fatigue

Between hectic schedules, stress and difficulty sleeping, many people find themselves fatigued during the workday. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to reduce your fatigue levels and stay more alert at work.

Risks of Fatigue

Symptoms of fatigue include moodiness, drowsiness, loss of energy, and lack of motivation and concentration. These are not ideal qualities to display at your job. Not only does fatigue make you less productive and less personable, but it can also pose serious safety concerns if you work in a hazardous position.

Quick Energy Boosters

The following strategies can help boost your energy:

- Eat a snack that includes complex carbohydrates and protein, such as an energy bar or half a peanut butter sandwich on whole-wheat bread. Avoid foods with high amounts of added sugar, as they can cause a sudden drop in energy levels later in the day.
- Get moving. Even some brief movements or a short walk can be very energizing.
- Try to vary your day and switch to different projects or tasks when fatigue sets in (as much as your job allows).
- Have a mini-meditation session at your desk. This can help you calm down and feel more alert.
- Drink a glass of water. Don't rely too heavily on caffeine to boost your energy.

Lifestyle Changes

To fight fatigue long term, incorporate these healthy changes into your life:

- Limit your coffee and soda intake to one or two drinks per day. Consume plenty of water to keep hydrated.
- Eat nutritiously. Healthy foods and proper portion sizes will help you stay energized. Don't skip meals or overeat, and always start your day with a balanced breakfast.
- Exercise regularly. This will increase your energy levels and help you sleep better at night.
- Engage in calming activities, such as yoga, stretching or journaling.
- Avoid smoking. In addition to affecting your cardiovascular system, it can make you feel tired.

Sleep Habits

Fatigue is generally caused by poor quality or inadequate quantity of sleep. Try these tips:

- Aim for seven to eight hours per night, even if that means rearranging your schedule.
- Create a good sleep environment (e.g., proper temperature, noise levels and lighting).
- Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, even on weekends.
- Limit caffeine, alcohol, big meals and rigorous exercise close to bedtime.

By taking these steps, you can lower the risk of fatigue and better protect yourself on the job. Contact your supervisor for additional information.

Preventing Tech Neck

While not an official medical diagnosis, “tech neck” has become a familiar phrase in today’s workplace. As smartphones, laptops and tablets have become everyday tools, people spend more time hunched over screens. The result is a growing number of individuals who spend hours per day behind screens reporting stiffness, discomfort and pain in their neck and shoulders.

Tech neck refers to the strain placed on the cervical spine (the part of the spine in the neck) when a person consistently looks down at a device or sits with poor posture while using technology.

The human head weighs about 10 pounds in a neutral, upright position. However, when tilted forward at a 45-degree angle—the position many adopt while scrolling or typing—the effective weight on the neck can increase to nearly 50 pounds. Over time, this added pressure strains muscles, tendons and ligaments, leading to discomfort or pain.

Symptoms and Causes

According to the Mayo Clinic, common symptoms of tech neck include the following:

- Stiffness and soreness in the neck and shoulders
- Headaches, particularly tension headaches
- Reduced mobility or difficulty turning the head
- Tingling or numbness in the arms in more severe cases

The causes are not limited to smartphone use. Hours spent at a desk without ergonomic adjustments, craning toward a laptop screen or even lounging on the couch with a tablet can contribute to the problem. Tech neck is essentially a modern posture issue driven by repetitive movements and sustained positions that overload the upper spine.

Prevention and Management

The good news is that tech neck is preventable and manageable. Consider these tips:

- **Improve ergonomics.** Ergonomics is all about setting up your environment so it supports your

body. Set up your workstation to reduce unnecessary strain. Position your computer monitor so the top of the screen is at or just below eye level. If using a laptop, consider a stand or external keyboard and mouse to bring the screen higher. Sit in a chair that supports your back, with feet flat on the floor and shoulders relaxed. At home, avoid spending hours working from couches or beds, which often encourage poor posture.

- **Follow the 20-20-20 rule.** Breaks are essential. Every 20 minutes, try to look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.
- **Strengthen and stretch.** Short stretch breaks during the workday can be particularly effective in preventing long-term strain. Simple exercises that counteract the effects of tech neck include chin tucks, neck tilts and shoulder blade squeezes.
- **Mind your phone habits.** When checking your phone, bring the device up to your eyes rather than bending your head down. Use voice commands or headphones when possible to reduce the amount of time spent looking downward.
- **Prioritize movement.** Long stretches of sitting can intensify neck and back problems. Whenever possible, stand during calls, walk while brainstorming or simply take a few laps around your workspace. Even five minutes of movement each hour can improve circulation, reset posture and reduce stiffness.
- **Seek professional support.** If symptoms of tech neck persist or worsen, employees should consider contacting a health care provider. Physical therapy, massage or targeted exercise programs can help address more severe discomfort.

Tech neck may be a modern phenomenon, but the solutions are rooted in timeless principles: good posture, regular movement and self-care. Contact your supervisor for more workplace safety guidance.



Live Well, Work Well

November 2025

The Power of Gratitude and Positive Thinking

It can be easy to get caught up in everyday stress and negativity. However, practicing gratitude can be a powerful tool to improve mental health. Gratitude involves recognizing and appreciating life's positive aspects. By focusing on what one has rather than what one lacks, gratitude helps shift the mindset to a more positive and resilient state.

Gratitude is similar yet different from appreciation. The American Psychological Association defines gratitude as “a sense of happiness and thankfulness in response to a fortunate happenstance or tangible gift.”

Gratitude encourages individuals to savor the present moment and acknowledge the good in their lives, no matter how small. This positive focus can lead to a more optimistic outlook and stronger relationships. It also encourages resilience, the ability to bounce back from setbacks more quickly. Similarly, gratitude instills a sense of control over emotions, enabling calmer and more effective responses to stressors. A positive outlook doesn't mean ignoring life's challenges; rather, it means approaching them with a constructive and hopeful attitude.

Ways to Practice Gratitude

Regularly acknowledging what you're grateful for can cultivate a sense of contentment. Starting small and being consistent can make a significant difference. Consider these tips to get started:

- Keep a gratitude journal, writing down things you're grateful for and reflecting on why they're meaningful to you.
- Try gratitude affirmations to reinforce positive thinking. Instead of writing down what you're grateful for, repeat it to yourself daily.
- Express thanks to others, sharing why you're grateful for them or how they're positively impacting your life.
- Embrace mindful moments by pausing to appreciate the beauty or the good around you, such as a sunny day or a kind gesture.
- Take a walk and consciously notice things you're grateful for in your surroundings. Then, reflect on how they enhance your life.

Remember, gratitude is a journey; every small step can lead to a more positive and fulfilling life.

Combatting Tech Neck

While not an official medical diagnosis, “tech neck” has become a familiar phrase. As smartphones, laptops and tablets have become everyday tools, people spend more time hunched over screens. The result is a growing number of individuals reporting stiffness, discomfort and pain in their neck and shoulders. Tech neck refers to the strain placed on the cervical spine (the part of the spine in the neck) when a person consistently looks down at a device or sits in poor posture while using technology.

The good news is that tech neck is preventable and manageable. A few small changes in daily habits can make a big difference, so consider these tips:

- **Improve ergonomics.** Set up your workstation to reduce unnecessary strain. Position your computer monitor so the top of the screen is at or just below eye level. Sit in a chair that

supports your back, with feet flat on the floor and shoulders relaxed.

- **Follow the 20-20-20 rule.** Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. This not only eases eye strain but also encourages you to reset your posture.
- **Strengthen and stretch.** Encouraging short stretch breaks (e.g., chin tucks, neck stretches and shoulder blade squeezes) during the workday can be particularly effective in preventing long-term strain.
- **Mind your phone habits.** When checking your phone, bring the device up to your eyes rather than bending your head down.

Contact a doctor if tech neck symptoms persist or worsen. Physical therapy, massage or exercise programs can help address severe discomfort.

Adjusting to Daylight Saving Time

Most of the United States shifts between standard and daylight saving time (DST) each year in an effort to “save” natural light. Clocks will get set one hour back on Sunday, Nov. 2, when the DST period ends. Although you may be excited about gaining another hour in your day, the disruption of DST can wreak havoc on your physical and cognitive health for several days, weeks or even months.

Your internal clock regulates critical processes, including the immune system. Interruptions to the circadian rhythm, your body’s 24-hour cycle that regulates wake and sleep, can also impair your focus and judgment. If your area follows DST, consider these tips to help adjust to the time change:

- Exercise in the morning to increase your wakefulness and reset your internal clock.

- Prioritize daylight exposure to help preserve your circadian rhythm.
- Keep a regular sleep routine and aim for seven to nine hours of sleep each night.
- Remove sleep disturbances (e.g., excess amounts of alcohol, caffeine and blue light exposure) a couple of hours before bedtime.

While you may be tempted to use the bonus hour to indulge in various activities, health experts recommend using that time for sleep. To help make the DST transition easier, consider going to bed 15 to 20 minutes early in the days beforehand to help your body get used to the difference. If you have specific concerns, talk to your health care provider.