

# How To Improve Your Productivity...And Get More Things Done Each Day

Are there too many things on your calendar each day to get done? If your answer is "yes," you may be guilty of a common assumption made by many people, say researchers.

According to a study reported by the American Psychological Association, research reveals that people over-commit because we expect to have more time in the future than we have in the present. Of course, when tomorrow turns into today, we discover that we are too busy to do everything we promised. Keep this fact in mind. It will help you to better-plan your days and avoid unnecessary frustration.



## Three ways to improve your productivity at work

How can you improve your productivity and get more things done each day? Here are three strategies that can help:

1. **Schedule your time for work – Be consistent.** Don't do personal things when you are scheduled to work. Make a "To Do" list and prioritize your tasks. A list is most effective for those of us who need to consult a reference or see it in writing. When you have completed a task, cross it off your list. You'll get a real sense of completion and satisfaction as you see your list getting shorter and shorter.
2. **Do the most-difficult, time-consuming, least-favorite job first** – It may sound crazy but you'll be doing it when you have the most energy and motivation. If you tackle the toughest job first, the rest of your tasks will seem that much easier.
3. **Don't allow yourself to get interrupted by other people's "emergencies"** – How many times have you had your tasks and activities planned, so you could finally get caught up with your own work, and all day long other people keep coming to you with their last-minute problems that only you can fix? You don't want to say no, you want to be a team player, but you have stuff to get done too, right? Remember, that being a team player also means respecting others' time and realizing that others have responsibilities too. If your co-workers can't grasp this, you have to. Learn to say no in a polite but firm manner: "I would really like to assist you with that, and I know you have a deadline. Unfortunately, I have a project which I must complete for my boss today. If you can come back tomorrow or another time, or better yet, schedule some time with me so that it is on my calendar, I would be more than happy to help you."

## Counseling can help...

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- Learning ways to communicate better
- Learning how to argue in a healthier way
- Learning how to resolve conflict and problem solve in a productive manner
- Learning appropriate expression, disclosure and resolution of painful emotions
- Learning how to state your needs clearly and openly within your relationship
- Learning how to work through unresolved issues
- Learning how to negotiate for change within your relationship

## Seek help early

Marriage therapists recommend that distressed couples seek help earlier. Many couples who get divorced either do not go to therapy, or go much too late after one partner has already given up on the relationship. Couples are often better served by starting therapy when they "get stuck in negative patterns that they can't get out of on their own," the study authors concluded.

## Your EAP is here to help

If you are concerned about a particularly difficult marital or relationship issue, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for FREE and CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals or information. If you need help, why not call an EAP counselor today? We're here to help you.

## WELLNESS

# 7 Ways To Improve Your Sleep To Help Alleviate Stress



Stress experts report that chronically stressed people almost always suffer from fatigue and people who are tired do not cope well with stress. When distressed people get more sleep, they feel better and are more resilient and adaptable in dealing with day-to-day events.

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# Teen Suicide Risks



Teen suicide is alarmingly common. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control, it is the third-leading cause of death for people age 15 to 24 (following accidents and homicide). Studies show that 4 out of 5 teen suicide attempts have been preceded by warning signs. Parents and

teens should be aware of some of the warning signs of depression and suicide. The American Academy of Pediatrics describes the following signs that may signal that a depressed teen may be considering suicide:

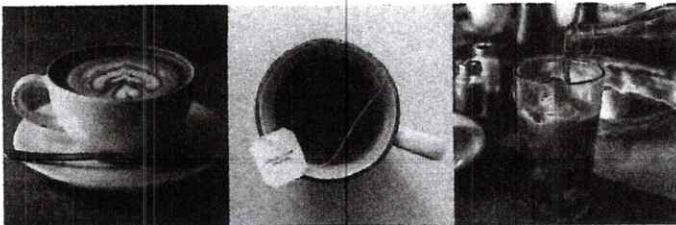
### Teen suicide warning signs

- withdrawal from friends and family members
- trouble in relationships
- difficulty getting along with others
- changes in the quality of schoolwork or lower grades
- rebellious behaviors
- unusual gift-giving or giving away own possessions
- appearing bored or distracted
- writing or drawing pictures about death
- running away from home

### Improve your sleep...

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Did you know that most sleep difficulties (about 80%) are either caused or reinforced by our own behaviors or daily habits? If you have trouble sleeping, the tips below will help you get the most out of your hours in bed:



**Stay away from stimulants.** Coffee, tea, colas, chocolate and some over-the-counter medications contain caffeine which stimulates the central nervous system and increases blood pressure and heart rate. Drinking a can of cola or cup of coffee in the late afternoon can keep you awake at midnight. Avoid consuming caffeine at least 4 to 6 hours before bedtime.

**Don't smoke, especially before bed.** The nicotine in cigarettes is a stimulant. Insomnia is among smokers'

- changes in eating habits
- dramatic personality changes
- changes in appearance
- sleep disturbances
- drug or alcohol abuse
- talk of suicide, even in a joking way
- having a history of previous suicide attempts

**Note:** The warning signs above are some typical behaviors which may be cause for concern. This list is not intended to be all inclusive or a diagnostic tool. Instead it is a guide to increase awareness and prompt intervention.

### How to help your child or someone you know

If one or more of these signs occurs, parents, family members, friends, or community and school professionals should talk to the child about their concerns and seek professional help from a physician or a qualified mental health professional. Professional help should be sought immediately if a person is experiencing suicidal thoughts. For 24-hour suicide prevention and support, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK, or get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention. In addition, you can contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for information and support regarding how to most-effectively help your child. With support from family and appropriate treatment, children and teenagers who are suicidal can heal and return to a more-healthy path of development.

greatest complaints. Research shows that smokers take longer to fall asleep and wake up more often during the night than nonsmokers. Having a smoke before bed may feel relaxing, but it is actually putting a stimulant into your bloodstream.

**Go to bed at regular hours.** An erratic schedule can cause problems such as "Sunday night insomnia." This problem occurs to people who stay up late and sleep late on weekends and then try to switch back to their usual bedtime to prepare for Monday morning. Try to go to bed at roughly the same time each night and, no matter how long you slept, get up at your usual time in the morning.

**Exercise regularly.** Sleep is facilitated by relaxation and exercised muscles relax more easily. Aim for 20 minutes of exercise that increases your heart rate at least three times a week. Late afternoon is best.

**Don't use alcohol to induce sleep.** A nightcap can lull you to sleep, but alcohol typically produces light, unsettled sleep. Also, using alcohol to fall asleep could lead to dependency.

**Establish a relaxing bedtime routine.** Set the mood for relaxation before bed. Start letting down about an hour before bedtime: read, listen to music or take a warm bath.