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## **5 Ways to Beat Stress in the Payroll Department**

If the pressure of your payroll job is weighing you down, and you're not sure how to deal with stress at work, you're in good company. In a recent [Accountemps study](#), 52 percent of workers polled said they are somewhat or very stressed at work. Additionally, 60 percent feel employee stress has increased over the past five years.

Workplace stress is bad for your productivity, personal happiness, and physical and mental health. But payroll never ends, and it seems that every payday results in at least a few people upset about their withholdings. The good news is you can better manage your anxiety level. If you want to know how to deal with stress at work, here are five ways to reclaim your inner peace.

### **1. Amp up your physical activity**

Exercise can feel like torture when you're in it, but its stress-relieving effects stay with you long after your workout. For one, it increases blood flow to your brain, improving memory and helping you process information better. According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), working out also combats depression by increasing the amount of endorphins (aka "feel-good" neurotransmitters) you produce. Happiness and health go hand in hand.

So make exercise a regular part of your life. Opt for public transportation rather than driving. Jog up the stairs in your workplace instead of waiting for the elevator. Take a lunch-time yoga or tai chi class to reduce stress and learn to let go. And rather than surfing the web during breaks, head outside for a brisk walk. Before you know it, your workplace anxiety — and maybe even your weight — will drop.

### **2. Learn to unplug**

Because people need to get paid every two weeks or every month, it's understandable why payroll specialists are reluctant to get away for an extended period. In another [Accountemps survey](#), 41 percent of workers polled said they didn't take any or all of their [vacation days](#) because they're concerned about coming back to a pile of work. Another 35 percent said they didn't want others to have to manage their workloads.

It's one thing to be a dedicated employee, but quite another to jeopardize your mental health. Vacation time exists because you need and deserve that time away to relax and recharge. So go

ahead and schedule that week-long break — no guilt or work emails allowed. Ask colleagues to cover for you, and return the favor when it's their turn to get away. Be sure to create an out-of-office message so you aren't overwhelmed by an overflowing inbox when you return to work.

### **3. Practice single-tasking**

[Recent research](#) suggests multitasking is out because it hurts your health and productivity. But mindfulness, the act of focusing on the present, is in. Embrace being in the moment by not getting distracted by another task or problem. When analyzing data or compiling a report, concentrate on the content and not what else you have to do. During meetings, pay attention to the speaker rather than checking your messages. Control your environment so as to reduce distractions. Do you really need to be notified of every email that hits your inbox? The better you are at monotasking — a basic [time management](#) technique — the more efficiently you can finish your work.

### **4. Indulge in outside interests**

Here's a question to ask yourself: Are you letting work creep into your personal life? If you're still toiling away during evenings and weekends, it's time to draw some boundaries and work on a pet project. Some excellent choices include those that require you to focus, such as baking, gardening, woodworking or playing an instrument. Or give back to the community by volunteering your skills for a worthy cause. Having non-work interests gives you something to look forward to and provides another means of relaxation.

### **5. Make some changes**

Naturally, peak periods like year-end processing and reporting deadlines are stressful. But if your anxiety level is high all year long, take a good look at your work environment and consider whether it's time to start a [job search](#). There's no easy way of coping with bad management, a toxic workplace or an office bully. In these situations, you could relieve the stress by finding another employer. While it's true that a job change is stressful as well, the peace of mind might be well worth the effort.

While no payroll job is 100 percent stress-free, there's no need for work-related worries to take over your life and harm your health. Workplace happiness is within your reach and control.

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