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November 8, 2010

## Stress-Free Monday

Does the thought of Monday and the beginning of the work week bring stressful thoughts to mind? Don't let it! According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about one-third of workers report high levels of stress, increasing the individual's risk for injury and illness as well as decreasing the company's productivity.

"Many don't realize that working conditions play a primary role in job stress, even more so than one's personal characteristics," explains Dr. Jacqueline Agnew, Director of the JHSPH Center for Occupational Safety and Health. Some of the most stressful jobs are ones that take employees to the brink of exhaustion through long work hours, few rest periods, and little opportunity for worker growth or input in decision-making. On the other hand, support from co-workers and supervisors goes a long way to protect workers against the harmful effects of stress, as does a comfortable work environment that is uncrowded, quiet, and free from air contaminants and other hazards. While it is difficult to design such jobs in our fast-paced working world, the results go a long way toward keeping an entire workforce healthy and on the job. Use the start of this week to take an inventory of these factors at your job. Can you change any of these conditions for yourself or for others? Can you convince your supervisor to do the same?

Even if you can't directly change your workplace, you can take steps to combat your own work stress. First, seek to find a balance between work and personal life. Always remain relaxed and positive when approaching difficult or undesired tasks. Foster a strong support group of family, friends, and coworkers to help manage stressful situations. Lastly, be sure to get 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night; it will make you less irritable and stressed the next day. For more information, visit the [CDC website](#). Faculty and staff of Johns Hopkins may seek further assistance at <http://www.jhu.edu/hr/fasap/>.

*Every Monday, the Johns Hopkins Healthy Monday Project, part of the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, offers tips for preventing disease and injury, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Check back each week for new tips or visit our [archive](#).*



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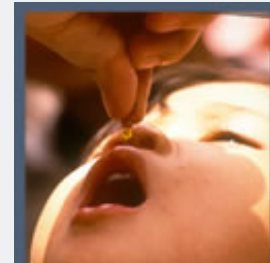
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