

You Can't Be Productive if You Don't Take Care of Yourself

By Laura Stack

How healthy are you? How good do you feel? How much energy do you have throughout the day to accomplish the things you want to? Recent studies have shown that we have the potential to dramatically affect productivity by paying closer attention to our health. In other words, when you feel good, you can accomplish more. You can get on the road to healthier productivity by adopting these tips.

1. **Get adequate sleep each night, so you're not sleepy during the day.** Sacrificing sleep is actually counterproductive, so experiment until you find the amount of sleep that works best for you, and stick with it. Don't nap during the day, either.
2. **Get sufficient exercise.** Getting 15-30 minutes of exercise every day is crucial to maintaining your energy level. The less active you are, the less energy you have.
3. **Use all your allotted vacation time each year.** Don't put off vacation to make your boss happy; studies show it won't make you more productive. You need long vacations every year so you can recharge your creative batteries.
4. **Pamper yourself on a regular basis.** It's not selfish to treat yourself well, as long as you don't overdo it. You need to be able to enjoy life in order to be productive at work, so learn how to "do nothing" effectively.
5. **Maintain a noise level in your office that's conducive to productivity.** Noisy environments lead to higher stress, which leads to lower productivity. Do everything you can to cut down on the noise, from relocating your office to listening to music on special noise-reduction headphones.
6. **Ensure your workspace is comfortable and ergonomically correct.** You can't be productive if your workplace is hurting you. Use ergonomic equipment, and learn techniques to avoid vision problems caused by too much computer use.
7. **Practice healthy eating habits.** Always eat breakfast, focus on healthy food alternatives, and never go more than six hours without eating. Poor eating habits can make you fuzzyheaded and less productive -- and fat.
8. **Take a lunch break every day.** Consistently working through your lunch hour is not only bad for the employee, it's bad for the employer. Always eat something at lunch so you can keep your blood sugar at the right level and stay clearheaded.
9. **Drink the right amount of water each day.** To avoid the negative effects of dehydration, you need to drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day --

possibly more. Coffee doesn't count, and neither do tea or sodas; in fact, they have diuretic effects that will rapidly dehydrate you.

10. Control your environment and rid yourself of things that bring you down.

Surround yourself with happiness. Get rid of things that have negative memories attached to them, especially reminders of failed relationships.

Instead of over-eating, working too hard, not exercising enough, and skimping on your sleep, make personal choices that lead to increased productivity. Learn to rest, to laugh, to recreate, and treat your body right, or you'll live to regret it. The choices you make today will affect how you feel tomorrow.

© 2009 Laura Stack. Laura Stack is a personal productivity expert, author, and professional speaker who helps busy workers Leave the Office Earlier® with Maximum Results in Minimum Time®. She is the president of The Productivity Pro®, Inc., a time management training firm specializing in productivity improvement in high-stress organizations. Since 1992, Laura has presented keynotes and seminars on improving output, lowering stress, and saving time in today's workplaces. She is the bestselling author of three works published by Broadway Books: *The Exhaustion Cure* (2008), *Find More Time* (2006) and *Leave the Office Earlier* (2004). Laura is a spokesperson for Microsoft, 3M, and Day-Timers®, Inc and has been featured on the CBS Early Show, CNN, and the New York Times. Her clients include Cisco Systems, Sunoco, KPMG, Nationwide, and 3M. To have Laura speak at your next event, call 303-471-7401. Visit www.TheProductivityPro.com to sign up for her free monthly productivity newsletter.