



HOW TO LET GO

Nose to the grindstone? Working 24/7? Time to chill out, says Carol Slessor.

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For busy executives, getting off the treadmill is often easier said than done. But it's an issue you can't afford to ignore. Work-related stress can cause a range of problems, from poor judgement, irritability and difficulty concentrating to physical symptoms such as breathlessness, headaches, chest pain and high blood pressure.

So where do you start if you want to reduce your stress levels? Here are a few suggestions:

Get some exercise.

If you're feeling bogged down or physically drained, exercise will release tension and relax you. Whether that's going for a walk, running or visiting the gym, it allows you to get out of the environment causing you stress.

Practice relaxation techniques.

There's a wide range you can use, from stretching to deep breathing. If you're able to do it, a 15-20 minute cat-nap can recharge your batteries. Massage, especially neck and back massage, can release tension and help you sleep. Many massage companies visit offices in the lunch hour.

Dance the night away.

I'm a big fan of dancing. It's a great stress-buster when you're feeling out of sorts. Singing can also help you let go - and can be useful for anyone who give presentations as it teaches you about audience interaction.

Go dating.

The right partner could help you deal with the demands of work. Research from the University of Toronto found that going home to a hug from a supportive spouse could reduce blood pressure pushed up by a stressful job. So if you're single, it could be time to find Mr or Mrs Right.