

Working in schools can be stressful!

These articles are intended to help the great people who work in schools.

Key points

Establish a regular sleep routine - seek expert help if bad patterns persist

Make 30 minutes of exercise per day a habit by making it part of your routine

Monitor how well you are fueling your body - drink lots of water, monitor caffeine, snack well and take a break to sit and eat

Treat yourself as a priority - lots of other people are depending on you

To keep the body in good health is a duty... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.

Buddha

Look After YOUR Health

Working in schools can be demanding for a number of reasons. Working with people can be stressful because at times they can be unpredictable. We never quite know what is going on in somebody else's world. Whether we work in the school office, tuckshop, library, classroom or other area of the school, we can at times be at the forefront of some busy, frustrated and stressed parents or carers. We are trusted with the care, well-being and education of most parents' highest priority - their children. Often we are called upon to provide stable and consistent responses and support to families who are struggling and under duress.

It is therefore vital that we look after ourselves and ensure that we have healthy reserves in place. Whilst looking after yourself is not *rocket science* - a timely reminder never goes astray.

Get a Good Night's Sleep

Most adults sleep an hour or two less than previous generations. Lack of sleep not only causes long-term tiredness affecting our mood and mental performance and will have an impact on our physical health. The part of our brain that controls our sleep / wake time is regulated by light and darkness. This ensures that sleep / wake hormones are released at the right time. A regular routine helps.

Stick to a regular routine so you wake up feeling refreshed and re-energised.

Establish an Exercise Routine

Often when we get busy we stop exercising. At times we feel too tired to exercise but cardio or aerobic training boosts our vigour and can help us sleep better. Raising the heart rate not only conditions the heart and lungs, it can also improve your mood and concentration because the exercise releases endorphins that make you feel good.

Ideally exercise should be part of our regular routine and needs to become a habit. Most people find it takes three weeks to develop a habit that becomes part of your routine. Making a commitment to exercise with a friend can help us establish exercise as a habit as we are held accountable by the commitment.

Aim to get 30 minutes of aerobic exercise each day.

Fuel Your Body Well

It's commonsense that what you eat impacts on how you look and feel. Often staff in schools are busy and 'eat on the run'. The following mistakes are therefore common:- skip breakfast, drink too much caffeine, eat at your desk or whilst on duty, snack on the wrong things and don't drink enough water. Each of these can contribute to feeling fatigued.

To maintain energy levels throughout the day, it is essential to drink lots of water (8 glasses). Each meal should contain a combination of protein and low GI carbohydrates and plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Honestly reflecting and identifying and addressing any problem areas in how you are fueling your body is important. If you are still experiencing fatigue, you may be suffering an underlying medical condition and should see a doctor.

Monitor how well you are fueling your body and address any bad habits.

Stay Home When You Are Sick

Whilst we mean well, staff in schools often come to school when they are sick. This can lead to taking longer to recover as well as spreading germs to others as well!

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