



## SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS – 7 TIPS FOR RESILIENCE AT WORK

***Work Resilience: The capacity to manage the everyday stress of work and remain healthy, rebound and learn from unexpected setbacks and prepare for future challenges proactively.***

For many of us the working week brings a high workload, frequent change a job role that is increasingly complex. At the same time we balance a busy out of work life. It's no wonder then that resilience has become a 'must have' as we look for sustainable ways to manage the demands upon us.

While there is no magic formula for building resilience at work understanding what makes a resilient employee allows us to recognise what we need to focus on.

What's more, by making small changes in a number of everyday routines and behaviours we can make a big difference to our overall resilience.

### ***Tip 1: Keep up Your Energy Levels***

Investing in your physical energy level is an important place to start in building your resilience. It's a simple case of putting into your body what you expect to get out of it on a daily basis.

- How good are your diet and exercise routines?
- Are you getting enough sleep?
- Are you working with your body rhythms and scheduling the harder work for the times of the day when you feel more energised?
- What small shifts in routine can you make in each of these areas to make a difference to your overall physical energy?

### ***Tip 2: Make a Plan and Take Back Some Control***

Our daily workplace stresses can be either a positive challenge or a road to burnout. Which one of these you are heading for is simply a balance between the demands of your job and the supports and resources you have in place to manage these.

Develop a personal plan for your current work challenges. Write down the top three issues causing you stress at work at this point in time and determine small changes you can make to better manage these – either through action or shifting your thinking. While this will not resolve the



issues entirely, having a plan is useful as it provides direction and, more importantly, some sense of personal control. Review and build on the plan regularly.

### ***Tip 3: Get Perspective Around Your Worries***

We can spend a lot of emotional energy thinking or worrying about issues that we can do nothing about – perhaps a workplace restructure, the attitudes of our customers or a difficult boss or colleague. If we have no options to change the source of our concerns yet want to stay in the role, the only avenue we have is to change the way we view the situation so as to lessen its impact on us. Identify the biggest concern for you at work at the moment that you have no control over.

- What are your negative thoughts or beliefs about this? For example “I’ve had enough”; “I can’t take it anymore”; “Why should I have to put up with this”?
- What impact are these negative thoughts having on you? For example, experiencing frustration, cynicism, disengagement or anger?
- Who might you talk to help you gain perspective about the situation?
- How do you reframe these thoughts to lessen their impact? For example “I’ve had enough” becomes “That’s the only thing that bothers me, I really enjoy the rest of the role”, or “Their attitude doesn’t have to become mine”.

### ***Tip 4: Establish Self-care Routines***

The busier your schedule the more important it is to build reflection and mini relaxation breaks into the day. It is also crucial to put boundaries around the extent to which work intrudes on what is important to you in your home life.

- What tasks do you do that could be done mindfully rather than quickly?
- How do you build in mini-reflection time? For example creating five minutes between meetings or after seeing a client?
- Have you booked your next holidays?
- Are you ensuring you take a break to eat lunch?
- Can you better capitalise on changes in tasks to take a mini break? For example taking the stairs to talk to someone rather than emailing.
- What do you need to maintain a boundary around so that work does not overly intrude? For example taking work home, the time you leave the workplace.
- Self-care routines such as these will improve rather than detract from your productivity.



### ***Tip 5: Maximise Your Support***

Tip 2 indicated the need to balance demands with supports in order to stay engaged and challenged rather than stressed at work. In the same way that having a plan to decrease demands is important, it is also crucial to identify how you can maximise the use of resources or supports that are available to you.

- What do you need support for? For example debriefing, practical back up, professional or technical advice, task delegation, help with children or home duties such as gardening or cleaning.
- Who is in your support network and how do you maintain these relationships when you are busy?  
Where are the gaps in your support network and what can you do about this?

### ***Tip 6: Work with Your Strengths***

Working with our strengths is not only easier it also improves our job satisfaction and performance. This means that understanding and leveraging from your strengths can assist your resilience. Strengths are activities that we are good at, are drawn to and enjoy doing.

- What do you do well at work that you enjoy? What activities in your job enthuse you the most?
- How can you position to use these strengths a little more than you are currently?
- What do you do in your role that is not your strength and how do you get others to do small aspects of these for you?

While a wholesale change in role is outside of scope for most people small shifts are often a possibility.

### ***Tip 7: Recognise Non-sustainability***

Perseverance in very difficult work situations, despite the personal consequences, is not sustainable and can impact longer-term on your physical and emotional wellbeing. Many people leave their organisational exit plan far too late. They live in false hope that the situation will improve and that their role, colleagues, boss or customers will change. Blind optimism in the face of reality is not a good idea. Make every effort to improve how you manage your job but recognise when the personal cost is not worth it. Plan your exit on your own terms before you are forced into it on health or other grounds.

**For more tips read 'Building Your Resilience: How to Thrive in a Challenging Job' by psychologist Kathryn McEwen. Available at [www.workingwithresilience.com.au](http://www.workingwithresilience.com.au)**