



Keeping Your Job

Once you land a job, it's important to take steps to make sure that you keep it. If you make your work as valuable as possible to your boss, he or she will see you as an important part of the work force.

Produce the best work you possibly can. You can do this by following these simple rules:

- **Pay attention to quality** . Check your work often to be sure it is right.
- **Finish your work on time** . Meet the scheduled deadlines, or even finish early.
- **Get the job done without constant supervision** . This means you should show some independence and not bother your supervisor with constant questions about how to do your assigned tasks. To avoid this, it is important to learn to read manuals and to look up information on your own. If you can't find the answers you need, ask your co-workers. Then if you are still confused, ask your supervisor for help.

- **Be prepared to handle problems** . Don't take criticism personally. Listen carefully to the suggestions that have been made to improve your work quality. Then make the needed changes. Remember: It is your work that is being criticized, not you.
- **Keep your feelings under control** . All of us lose our patience occasionally, but it's important to stay in control. Don't become nervous, cry, lose your temper or hit someone or something.

Answer these questions to see what you have learned about keeping a job:

1. Roger works at a clothing store, and he hates to take inventory. He almost never finishes inventory on time. When he's involved in inventory, he takes out his frustration on the customers and loses his patience easily. What can Roger do to be a better employee?

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2. Betty constantly asks her boss how something should be done or what needs to be done. She has been working for 4 months. How can Betty become more independent and take more responsibility?

3. Jason takes careful notes when his supervisor talks to him about the areas in his performance that need improvement. Before submitting new work, he refers to his notes to avoid making the same mistake twice.

But he never makes direct eye contact with his boss. He never says a word, not even to ask questions when he doesn't understand an assignment. If Jason is ever fired, what will probably be the cause? How can Jason become a better worker?

Another way to help you keep a job and do it well is to control your stress. We all need to avoid job burnout if possible. People become burned out if they have too much stress over a period of time.

Burnout occurs usually after workers lose enthusiasm and drive. The newness they once felt about their jobs has fizzled out.

Work stress has many causes, including:

- Work overload
- Threats to job security
- Time pressures and deadlines
- Too little to do
- Boredom
- No chance for advancement
- Not getting enough rest

Because stress levels will increase in any job, you need to learn how to keep stress down to a level that allows you to stay productive. Here are some signs that you are suffering from job-related stress:

- Feeling that you do not want to go to work
- A sense of failure
- Anger and resentment
- Guilt and blame
- Feeling discouraged
- Negative attitude
- Isolating yourself from others
- Feeling tired and exhausted all day
- Frequent clock watching
- Postponing contact with others
- Stereotyping others
- Inability to concentrate

- Feeling trapped
- Problems sleeping
- Frequent headaches or upset stomach
- Resisting change
- Unnecessary worry
- Conflict with family and co-workers
- High absenteeism
- Use of alcohol and/or drugs to cope

Knowing about the stress around you can help you deal with problems in a realistic way. The first step in treating a case of burnout is to tell your supervisor or boss how you are feeling and why.

Another approach is to try to renew some of that old drive and energy you once had. Look for new ideas, think about changes that will make you more productive, and learn new things as often as possible. You will feel less bored, and will feel better about your job and yourself.

You can prevent burnout by dealing with your stress. It is important to take care of yourself.

Here are ways to overcome stress and prevent burnout:

- Get enough sleep.
- Exercise regularly and eat right.

- Take regular vacations.
- Be realistic about your worries. If you cannot do anything about a problem, let it go!
- Organize your life. Clear up clutter around your house, your car and your work area.
- Take a 10-minute break from routine work every hour. Do chores that require less concentration.
- Talk to others about how you feel. They may have the same problems.
- Restore your faith and focus on the good things that are happening to you.

Keep in mind the six biggest energizers at work: pride, participation, teamwork, learning and recognition. These encourage positive feelings, help you remove stress, and give you something to feel good about every day.

If you try your best in everything you do, your work will show it. The supervisor will see you as someone who is valuable. When you keep stress to a reasonable level, you are less likely to become burned out. You will be productive and more likely to keep your job.

Prevent job burnout by dealing with stress.

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