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| Title | Performance under pressure_ managing stress in the workplace |
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| Brief Introduction | <p>EVERYONE IN TODAY’S WORKPLACE is under pressure. We are living in an era of uncertainty, with wildly fluctuating markets and fiercely competitive business conditions. Organizations are determined to get more and better work out of fewer people, and most employees are routinely told they must work smarter, faster, better, longer, and harder. It is no wonder that study after study shows that managing stress is a growing challenge.</p> <p>In general, we tend to think of stress as something negative; but in fact, it does have tangible benefits. Stress generates action. It creates a physiological boost that gives you increased energy and clarity with which to perform well. If channeled correctly, stress can enhance your performance and the performance of those you manage. Of course, if channeled incorrectly, stress can be overwhelming and performance will rapidly decline.</p> <p>In today’s complex world, most of us are susceptible to feeling and manifesting stress, at least sometimes, in all the different areas of our lives. The workplace in particular holds many potential stressors, so many that we are all in constant danger of “stressing out.” The</p> |

critical task for you as a manager, then, is to gain a better understanding of stress in the workplace, in your organization, and in teams and individuals. We encourage you to consider best practices for reducing stress, alleviating the effects of stress, and intervening to help “stressed-out” employees. However, there are limits to what a manager can do to help employees manage stress. Ultimately, to perform well under pressure, employees must develop stress management skills.

The good news is that, with training, all individuals can learn how to work well under pressure for optimal performance. The ability to perform well under pressure comes down to two skills:

1. Perceiving a situation in an optimal way (optimal perception)
2. Using the physiological boost associated with stress to one’s advantage (optimal energy management)

Unfortunately, most individuals must work at developing these skills. That is the principle focus of this pocket guide.