

Surviving long work hours



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Residency life is known to be physically, emotionally, and intellectually demanding; however, it is an essential part of medical education. It is the responsibility of the resident physicians to remain alert and fit while on duty. Research shows that long working hours can lead to the development of job-related stress; common symptoms and early warning signs of job stress and burnout include apathy, anxiety, frustration, fatigue, depression, anger, irritability, and physical problems like headaches, and stomach problems.

Here are some tips on how to cope with long working hours and to avoid job stress:

- (i) Get a good night's sleep. Put aside all thoughts of work and other stresses, if possible.
- (ii) Eat a good breakfast. Breakfast provides energy to get through a stressful and long day, so you should not skip this meal.
- (iii) Take breaks every few hours; you need to get away from your work area every now and then.
- (iv) Make a list of what you need to do; place the most important tasks at the top. This list will keep you on track and focused at work.
- (v) Keep energized to remain productive throughout the day. Drink caffeine in moderation and stay hydrated. Eat a healthy lunch.
- (vi) Relax after work, briefly. Take some time to read, watch television, or engage in your hobbies after each day to create a separation between your work day and your personal life.
- (vii) Take care of your health. Exercise at least a few times a week and get regular check ups with your family physician.
- (viii) Try to maintain a strong sense of life outside of work. Find time to do the things you enjoy or else your work will simply become your life.