



I'm fed up and I can't take it anymore
Tips for de-stressing your day

De-stressing your work day begins with you. Keeping up with vendors, board members and numerous unit owners could cause any community association manager to feel overwhelmed, but there are ways to make your day a little less stressful. Try a few of these tips!

1. **Get to work 30 minutes early.** Most highly successful people relate that they begin their work day with some quiet, private time. That means getting to work early and setting up the day ahead. It may include reading the newspaper, checking email, listening to voicemails or just going through the mound of paperwork on your desk to determine what you'll tackle during the day. Having about 30 minutes of alone time at work before the phone begins to ring or other employees enter the office may go a long way to making your day less stressful and more enjoyable.
2. **Use a calendar.** Another skill that highly successful people swear by is using a calendar and sticking with it as much as possible. Things pop up that you can't necessarily control, but some things are easily managed using a calendar, like scheduling days for maintenance, board or unit owner meeting or paying bills. Calendars have become so much easier to use with technology. You probably have a great app on your phone that will not only allow you to schedule your day, but set up alerts to notify you of appointments or events.
3. **Keep a "to-do" list.** Closely related to maintaining a calendar is creating a daily, weekly or monthly "to-do" list. Need to send out notices to unit owners, or schedule maintenance in the laundry facility? Or perhaps you're a little behind on filing away paperwork that you're required to maintain. To-do lists are a great way to accomplish that laundry list of things you need to get accomplished. Update the list frequently and you'll find your stress level decreases as you get some of those pesky jobs done that you've been dreading.
5. **Keep records organized.** An ever-growing pile of paperwork that needs to be filed away could cause anyone stress, so nip it in the bud by filing things away quickly. Doing so will allow you to know where everything is and you'll be able to access those records just as quickly. The job may seem overwhelming at first, but filing things away weekly, or even daily, will soon make your day much less stressful, and you'll find it's much easier to keep up with a small amount of filing rather than a heap.

6. **Require vendors be on time.** Your time is valuable so make every effort not to allow others to interrupt your time and force you onto their schedule. One way is to require vendors to be on time and show up as scheduled. Whether the roof is getting replaced or office supplies are being delivered, demanding timeliness by others will keep your day on track, just like you had planned. Unforeseen interruptions and delays will pop up, so just accept those and do your best to keep things on track.

7. **Pay bills timely.** Most everyone dreads the effort required to sit down and get the bills paid. In today's high tech world bill paying couldn't be easier, so come up with a spread sheet or other system for timely paying bills. Don't let the association incur late fees. You'll also find you have a better reputation when you take care of the finances promptly. And don't forget to file away the paperwork from the bills timely too!

8. **Use email with unit owners.** Perhaps the most stressful part of your day involves unhappy unit owners. Whether it's a complaint about a barking dog, cracked sidewalk or someone blocking a parking space, you're going to have to hear complaints from unit owners. Getting unit owners used to the idea of emailing inquiries and complaints will work wonders on your stress level. Having an opportunity to review someone's issue in writing is an extremely beneficial tool for de-stressing. There's just something about that human-to-human contact during a contentious situation that is unnerving. Although you'll never be able to fully eliminate dealing with an unhappy unit owner directly, getting most of your unit owners on board with using email will produce an immediate result for reducing stress.

9. **Take a break.** There's no question, taking a break during your busy work day is invaluable. Go to lunch with staff, meet up with a friend, or just close the door and your eyes for 30 minutes. Whatever you choose to do, just be sure to do something to stop the forward motion of the day for a little while. You'll be able to complete the rest of the day's tasks much better if you take a daily break.

10. **Schedule daily no interruptions time.** One of the hardest things for a busy manager to do is find some uninterrupted time to do the work. Interruptions are the number one reason that people are unable to finish planned tasks during the day. One way to avoid interruptions is to schedule some time each day to step away from the chaos and be able to work. Whether you get staff used to leaving you alone from 4-5:00 p.m. or you hang a "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door, the only way to insure that you may work in peace is to make sure you have some uninterrupted time each week or each day to do so. Some people enjoy working late in the evening or on Saturdays while the phone isn't ringing or people aren't stopping by. Others find that turning on the music or TV set helps them to focus and get more work done.

11. **Leave work on time.** Last but not least, one of the best ways to reduce your stress level is to leave work on time and go decompress and relax. We all need it. Try your best not to take your work home with you, whether physically or in your head. Your private time is the best way to make you ready for the next day's tasks, so if you're supposed to leave work at 6:00 p.m., start getting ready to leave at 5:00 p.m. Wind down your day on time, so that you may leave work on time. Then go enjoy your evening so that when that alarm clock rings first thing in the morning you awake ready to tackle the day!