

How Do You Deal With Stress?

The logo for 'Turf' features the word in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A green grass blade graphic is integrated into the letter 'u'.The logo for 'Tree Services' is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A small green leaf icon is placed above the 'e' in 'Services'. Below the main text is the tagline 'Taking Tree Care to New Heights' in a smaller, italicized font.The logo for 'DesignBuild' features the word 'Design' in black and 'Build' in orange, both in a bold, sans-serif font. A small orange square icon is placed above the 'i' in 'Design'.The logo for 'PLOW' is in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly slanted to the right.

Source: www.TurfMagazine.com

I'll start with a confession: I let stress get to me. And here's a Merriam-Webster definition of the kind of stress I am referring to: "physical, chemical, emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation."

As the owner of a small but busy landscape company near Cleveland, Ohio, I allow the workweek's disappointments and screw-ups (hey, we all have them) creep into my day-to-day life. I try to resist it, but it finds me nonetheless. I know that stress is not good for me, for my business or, sometimes, the folks around me. For that reason, I have to find ways to combat its affects.

Admitting that, and sharing in this short column what I do to relieve stress, I am hopeful you will email me and share your best stress-relieving activities. I think it would be helpful to other readers of *Turf* and perhaps fun, too. My email address is at the end of this column.

Nothing helps more with stress relief after a busy workweek than a Friday night pizza and movie with my family. More than anything else, including the pizza or the movie, I value that time to relax and be with my family.

I also enjoy hiking and running, and I like to run 5K races. Running gives me a huge boost of stress relief, plus I get to work off all that pizza. Running and hiking also force me to live in the moment and stop my mind from wandering back to the doubts and worries (many of them of little consequence really) that I unthinkingly allowed to stress me as I ran my landscape business. Don't get me wrong, thinking about work is fine, but thinking and stressing about work 24/7 is unhealthy and, ultimately, it will do you great harm.

I'm no expert on stress, but I know that if you don't have something to help you relieve stress then eventually you will be a not-so-happy person. Becoming a not-so-happy person is the first step to becoming a completely

miserable person. When this happens people will not like you, small children will cower in your presence and some medical studies show that being miserable leads to bad breath, which will not help you out in social situations.

I'm no doctor but I can tell you that stress is not good, at least not the kind of stress that keeps you up at night wondering if you will be able to make payroll. As a business owner stress comes with the territory, and as business owners we mistakenly think we can handle all of the stress that comes our way. Many of us envision ourselves as stress warriors. We're wrong. Stress is unhealthy. Stress can, in fact, be a killer.

So back to my pizza and movie night, which helps me out with the stress in my life. Spending time with my family, eating a pizza and watching a movie is escapism from the reality of everyday work that doesn't always go the way it should. Unfortunately, sometimes I let the small disappointments and screw-ups of the week build up within me, elevating my stress level.

We are all busy but we need to take some time out for ourselves and with our families. It will make us more productive at work and happier people as well.

What do you do to relieve the stress in your life? Do you have something that works for you? It could be watching NASCAR or basket weaving or ballroom dancing, but you should have something to relieve the stress that builds up through your workweek.

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