

# Saying 'No' at Work Can Be Good for Your Health

今回は、働きすぎによる健康リスクと「ノー」と言う大切さについての話題です。仕事を頼まれるとつい引き受けてしまう人も多いですが、上手に線引きをしないと心や体に負担がかかることも。語いでは「stressed」という語を取り上げていますが、これは「強いストレスを感じている」「精神的に疲れている」という意味で、たとえば“I feel stressed before presentations.”（発表の前はストレスを感じます）のように使います。あなたは、職場でストレスを感じたとき、どう対処していますか？講師と話してみましよう。



## 1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

People might find it hard to set work limits or say “no” before taking on too many responsibilities. But experts say it is important for workers to learn to set such limits, or boundaries.

These limits can be important in helping workers protect their physical and mental health. And as with any new skill, setting boundaries gets easier with practice.

Justin Stewart is a 36-year-old who works as a news show production assistant. He told The Associated Press that in the past, he had problems setting clear limits in his work life.

Stewart explained that when starting his career, he held several jobs. In addition to his full-time position, he also rented cars at the airport and did sales at a store. He said his life was so busy that he said he would sometimes sleep in his car between jobs. After a time, he had to be hospitalized for extreme tiredness and an infection.

Stewart said that over time, his busy work life finally caught up with him. “While people around me praised my **hustle**, I eventually paid the price.” He added, “The doctor looked at me and said, ‘I don’t know what lifestyle you’re living, but you’re too young to be this **stressed**. You’re going to have to quit something.’”

As a result, Stewart began trying to set boundaries. He gave up his side jobs after deciding he could live without the extra money. If people from the news show contacted him to work after-hours, he told them he was not available and suggested other people who might be able to help.

However, experts say making such changes can be difficult. Many people already have a hard time turning down work requests –from both co-workers and managers. For example, it might make some people feel good to be needed or to please others. But as with any new skill, setting boundaries can get easier over time.

Here are some suggestions from employment experts and workers for effectively setting meaningful work limits.

## •Take control of your time

If your goal is to do less, adding things to your daily plans may seem like a bad idea. But it can actually provide more control over your time.

Bobby Dutton is the founder of event production company GBM6.

Every Monday at 2 p.m., he plans the task he is most likely to delay finishing. And to keep from becoming too busy, he even sets his daily activities, like walking his dog and eating lunch.

## •Practice “no” responses

If workers have a hard time saying no, they can write down what to say beforehand. And it can also help to say it out loud.

Cara Houser is a workplace **engagement** coach. She says workers do not always have to explain themselves when turning down a request. They can simply explain they are not available, thank the person for asking, and suggest when they might be available.

Amber Krasinski grew up in a working-class environment where saying "no" to a manager could mean losing pay. As the founder of marketing company IvyHill Strategies, Krasinski worries that she will lose business if she turns down a project.

So, she often says “not yet” when one more project is too much. “That phrase has helped me through a lot of situations,” she said.

## • Know yourself

When asked for help, workers may want to agree immediately. However, when faced with a new work request, it can be better to take time before answering. Use the time to consider such things as workload, energy level, and interest.

Israa Nasir is a [psychotherapist](#) in New York. She suggests that workers pay attention to the activities and interactions that leave them feeling tired or stressed. Those kinds of events can be put on a “No List” to be dealt with later.

## • Technology can help

Experts say that just because mobile devices can keep people connected to work all the time, they do not have to interfere with a person’s non-working life.

For example, Nasir said she found herself checking email far too often on weekends. So, during weekends, she moved the Gmail app from her iPhone’s homepage to the second page. This extra step helped her avoid checking her email.

Experts also suggest using an [email signature](#) as another tool to manage expectations. This tool can include more than just your name and contact information. You can also use it to let others know your working hours or upcoming vacation plans.

And that’s the Health & Lifestyle report.

I’m Anna Matteo.

And I’m Andrew Smith.

Cathy Bussewitz reported this story for The Associated Press from New York City. Anna Matteo adapted it for VOA Learning English.

## 2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. **hustle (n.)** hard work and energy to achieve a goal quickly

He got the job because of his hustle and positive attitude.

2. **stressed (adj.)** feeling mental or emotional strain or tension

She always feels stressed before a big presentation.

3. **engagement (n.)** involvement or participation in something,

Employee engagement is important for a healthy workplace.

4. **psychotherapist (n.)** a therapist for mental health

She sees a psychotherapist weekly.

5. **email signature (n.)** an automatic email closing text

His email signature shows hours.

## 3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. Why was Justin Stewart hospitalized earlier in his career?
2. What does Bobby Dutton do every Monday at 2 p.m. to help manage his time?
3. How did Amber Krasinski learn to say “not yet” instead of saying “no” to new projects?
4. Have you ever found it difficult to say “no” to someone at school or work?  
How did you handle it?
1. Which of the experts’ tips on setting boundaries do you find most useful? Why?