

According to the World Health Organization, 31% of adults didn't meet the recommended levels of physical activity in 2022.

FOR YOUR BUSINESS

by LINDSEY PORTER

During the busy festive season for small business owners, work can easily become fraught and feel less cheery. Take heart with these suggestions to help you stay balanced and focussed.

Prioritise time for yourself

Encourage other team members and suppliers to do the same. Even a few simple, regular deep breaths can help you recharge, lead to clearer thinking and avoid burnout. When you find yourself under pressure or feeling frustrated, place or imagine your hands on your lower abdomen and take a deep breath in through the nose, gently swell your belly into your hands and soften with your exhale. This is abdominal breathing. Another effective health hack to restore calm is to hum. By using your internal sound vibrations, you can help reduce feelings of stress and anxiety.

Stay connected

When the pressure is on to deliver and meet deadlines, remember to stay connected with your customers, staff and suppliers. Even the briefest of updates help to manage expectations, reduce pressure and improve customer loyalty. Be sure to keep communications brief, clear and timely. To save time when sending updates, consider using autoresponders in place on your social media channels as a holding message for people needing to contact you.



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Plan ahead

One of the most effective things to do is to plan ahead. Make a plan in a way that works for you whether visual, on a spreadsheet or another format. Allow it to be subject to change, keep it close by and review it often. Cover all the main bases in your plan: budgets, staffing, inventory and marketing requirements. Consider alternative plans if deliveries or staffing change.

Having scenarios and options committed to paper can reduce the mental load of carrying and remembering responsibilities and timelines. By planning ahead, taking care of your team and keeping communication open, small businesses can navigate the festive season with less stress, while maximising opportunities for growth and success—keeping it joyful. ■

Seasonal distress

How to take care of yourself this time of year



Lindsey Porter is a motivational speaker and runs Yoga-Nu-U (yoganuu.com).

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Getting out there

Nature-based interventions help reduce stress and anxiety levels and improve mental and physical well-being, according to the Royal College of Psychia-

trists. A brief walk around the block, mindfully noticing elements of nature, such as clouds and birdsong, can help recharge and improve your wellbeing. Even more effective is spending time in green areas, such as parks,

near trees or by a stream. Bringing nature indoors can support your good mental health, such as a small potted plant, a leaf or a shell, according to Mentalhealth.org.uk.—LP