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⌂ Home / Hr Library / Could Caffeine be Sabotaging Your Productivity?

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Could Caffeine be Sabotaging Your Productivity?

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Photo by Chris Benson on Unsplash

Coffee is a wildly popular, socially accepted psychoactive substance. Not only do we drink it, but we've been drinking it more recently.

According to Food & Wine, 64 percent of Americans drink a cup of coffee every day.

BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois

Learn more

Entrepreneur says a cup of java is a natural and delicious way to reduce fatigue, improve alertness, cognitive function and problem solving, improve focus and memory, and boost productivity and even promote pain relief.

Coffee is generally accepted as a way to stay focused, and the alertness caffeine brings with it has been shown to be beneficial for participation in work meetings specifically.

Plus, there's not really any stigma attached to being addicted to coffee.

Coffee could be costing you sleep

Many studies show that, while drinking coffee does improve attention to tasks, this intense focus can be myopic in nature, and may inhibit other productivity factors, such as creativity and unique ways of thinking.

Drinking coffee, especially later in the day, can interfere with your ability to sleep, which may also affect productivity.

Additionally, consuming coffee excessively may result in tired workers who feel the need to drink more and more coffee to stay alert during the workday and create a potentially dangerous cycle of addiction.

A typical cup of coffee contains around 75–100mg of caffeine. Going for that extra cup (or cups) of coffee, and taking in 200 or more milligrams, may be harmful to people who suffer from anxiety.

Caffeine stimulates the production of the neurotransmitter adrenaline, sending you into a state of stress-induced fight-or-flight if you drink too much. It can even lead to panic attacks.

The bottom line is if you drink too much coffee, it might leave you too frazzled to settle down and be productive.

And it could be making you skip meals

Coffee may lead people to skip meals, especially breakfast. Substituting coffee for breakfast can lead to an illusion of productivity.

In reality, your inbox may be piling up with work left undone because you are too shaky and may have a caffeine headache, making it tougher to tackle important projects.

You may also experience the phenomenon of "coffee crash," in which you may be productive for an hour or two but then experience a crash, especially if you stop drinking coffee.

Coffee crashes may leave you with significantly less energy than you had before you started riding the coffee rollercoaster, or even cause you to become sleepy, which is something you don't want to have to deal with at work.

As if those weren't enough caveats to the benefits of coffee, higher blood pressure caused by ingesting excessive caffeine can limit the amount of oxygen that gets to your brain, making it harder to complete even basic tasks.

Coffee's impact on productivity

There is actually no physical or chemical support of the idea that coffee increases productivity. But many still believe that it does, and the placebo effect may make that belief come true.

Coffee may help you work, but go beyond one to two cups per day, and you're probably not going to see your productivity increase.

Another coffee concern that could be sabotaging your productivity is stomach irritation.

Is it just something that happens that you have to deal with, or could it be caused by your coffee consumption?

Coffee can cause stomach upset. Some people become nauseous and may even vomit after drinking coffee, especially if they are new coffee drinkers.

If you have a sensitive stomach, you might want to skip the coffee and go for a more stomach-friendly alternative like herbal tea.

In Closing

There's no doubt, coffee is a way to wake up in the morning and get going.

But before you start drinking cup after cup all day just to keep going, remember the "dark side" of coffee drinking.

Excessive coffee consumption can cause irritability and headaches, sleepless nights, and in some cases can actually sabotage your productivity by making you too jittery to work.

It can also cause stomach irritation and anxiety, and no one's productive when they're fighting stomach issues or panic attacks.

Unless you feel the need to, you don't have to kick the habit. Just limit yourself to one to two cups of coffee per day in the morning, and you are bound to feel better.

#adrenaline   #caffeine   #Coffee   #digestion   #meals   #neurotransmitter   #Panic attacks   #Productivity   #psychoactive substance   #Sleep

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