



# STRESS

## What Is Stress?

All of us will have felt stressed at some time in our lives. Stress is a reaction to physical or mental pressure. Stress, in some cases, can actually be useful and can help focus and drive. For example we can feel stressed when we have an exam or an interview, but this is short-lived. You may feel anxious and scared or have physical symptoms like sweating or a fast heartbeat. Once the exam is finished, or the interview is over, hopefully all these symptoms resolve and we carry on with life.

When we get the balance right, we experience a kind of energy and dynamism that makes stress not only essential but also a positive experience.

It is only when there is an imbalance between the demands we experience and our capacity to fulfil them that stress is felt to be a negative factor in our lives, affecting your mood, your body and relationships with yourself and others.

When we under pressure our whole body responds, and any part of our system can show a reaction.



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# Signs And Symptoms Of Stress

## Mental

- Constantly worried, anxious or scared
- Feeling overwhelmed and out of control, poor concentration

## Behavioural Changes

- Tired all the time
- Change in appetite
- Drinking or smoking more or turn to other drugs
- Neglect our personal appearance
- Avoiding people or situations that may increase your stress
- Taking risks or the opposite, becoming withdrawn

## Emotionally

- Irritable and unable to switch off
- Feeling depressed or uninterested
- Have low self esteem

## Physically

- Sweating or feeling hot and clammy
- Feeling sick or having butterflies
- We may experience breathlessness
- A tense back or shoulders

# Causes Of Stress

Stress can affect everyone in different ways, there is no, one reason that causes stress and it can vary greatly between people and situations.

Stress can become out of control when we feel we can no longer cope, or we don't have the resources to be able to manage the situation we find ourselves in. This may be due to pressures at work, or at home, financial worries or health problems among other factors. The important thing is to develop awareness of your own vulnerable areas in order to protect your self from stress induced health conditions.

# Top Tips For Stress

## A Problem Shared Is A Problem Halved

This is a well-known phrase for a reason. By talking about our feelings to a friend, family member or even a stranger through Counselling, it helps to offload your feelings and see things from a different perspective. It may also help to get someone else's advice and support. Feeling supported means that you are not alone.

## Top Tips For Stress

### Write A 'To Do' List

Often when we have a lot going on, it can be difficult to see the woods for the trees. By writing things down in order of priority, it can be useful to better allocate time. Don't underestimate the satisfaction of ticking things off the list!

### Own Your Thoughts

Sometimes it's easy to get carried away with a thought or feeling, unable to stop ruminating or running away with a particular worry. Challenge these thoughts or give them a name every time they arise. "Hello fear", "Here you go again negativity". Naming these feelings breaks the thought cycle and gives the thoughts less power. Try it.

### Get Help

We all like to be independent and capable, but asking for help doesn't mean that we lose these things. You are never alone in your worries, and no-one will mind if you ask for help. It is our own minds that give us the limitations and tell us that we shouldn't ask for help. Most people won't mind at all and will be pleased to help out.

### Do Something You Enjoy

Go for a walk or take some time for yourself, doing something you enjoy. Life can be so busy that we forget to take time for ourselves. Read a book, take a bath, paint your nails or write a poem. Just allowing yourself some mental space can be extremely helpful.

### You Are Not Your Thoughts

Thoughts are things that we have, thousands and thousands of them every day, some negative and others positive. When we feel down, the negative thoughts tend to outweigh the positive and we follow these thoughts to the end. Eventually thoughts become our beliefs and we start changing our behaviour. A simple technique to help this could be to imagine each negative thought as a bubble floating up to the sky. Pop that bubble and let it go. Replace it with a positive thought.

### Exercise Your Right To Say 'No'

As humans, we tend to want to help and to say 'yes' to everything. We do this even when we know there isn't enough time or space in our lives, but we feel we should. If you have too much on your plate, it is OK to say 'No', actually it's quite liberating! Give it a try.

## Stress-Busting Activities

Just as stress isn't caused by one particular factor, coping with stress is unlikely to have one simple resolution. Everybody is different and our needs differ daily. Maybe you would find calm in breathing techniques, learning relaxation techniques, yoga, Qi-gong, mindfulness or meditation.

Join one of our classes on the Torus Wellbeing EAP Portal to help combat stress.

## Further Information

For further information and a thorough assessment, contact the Torus wellbeing book an appointment email: [info@toruswellbeingclinic.co.uk](mailto:info@toruswellbeingclinic.co.uk)



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