

# Top Ten Stress Busting Tips

"*The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work."*

Health and Safety Executive

## 1. Learn to manage your time more effectively

We waste a lot of time doing unimportant tasks, especially when stressed, so prioritise your day and do the important jobs first. The unimportant ones can wait, and often they will disappear completely leaving you time to do other things. Also, do not put off the unpleasant tasks – avoidance causes a great deal of stress. Give unpleasant tasks a high priority and do them first.

## 2. Adopt a healthy lifestyle

If we eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly and ensure we get adequate sleep and rest our body is better able to cope with stress should it occur. If this is not the case, then this may be a warning sign so don't ignore it. Engaging in some form of physical activity may help you by working off the biochemical and physical changes that occur within your body due to stress. Relaxation also helps your body return to its normal healthy state. Good relaxation techniques include breathing exercises, massage and a variety of complementary therapies.

## 3. Know your limitations and do not take on too much

We can cause ourselves a great deal of stress because we do not want to let people down. We then end up doing more than we should. Learn to delegate effectively and be assertive so that you can say 'No' without upsetting or offending.

## 4. Find out what causes you stress

Take time to discover what is worrying you and try to change your thoughts and behaviour to reduce it. A stress assessment can help you to fully understand the causes, the implications to your health and how to manage, cope and make necessary changes.

## 5. Avoid unnecessary conflict

Do not be too argumentative. Is it really worth the stress? Look for win-win situations. Look for a resolution to a dispute where both parties can achieve a positive outcome. Find out what the real cause of the problem is and deal with it.



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## 6. Accept the things you cannot change

Changing a difficult situation is not always possible. If this proves to be the case, recognise and accept things as they are and concentrate on all that you do have control over. Managing change effectively is essential or else performance will be reduced.

## 7. Take time out to relax and recharge your batteries

You will perform more effectively during work if you regularly take a short 10-15-minute break, easily making up the time you used relaxing. Alongside this, at least one annual break of at least 10-14 continuous days is recommended.

## 8. Find time to meet friends

Friends can ease work troubles and help us see things in a different way. The activities we engage in with friends help us relax and we will often have a good laugh. It boosts the immune system that is often depleted during stress.

## 9. Try to see things differently, develop a positive thinking style

If something is concerning you, try to see it differently. Talk over your problem with somebody before it gets out of proportion. Often, talking to a friend/colleague/family member will help you see things from a different and less stressful perspective. You may also need to consider professional help in order to achieve the desired outcome and prevent ill health and/or burnout.

## 10. Avoid alcohol, nicotine and caffeine as coping mechanisms

In the long term, these faulty coping mechanisms will just add to the problem. For example, caffeine and nicotine are stimulants – too much and the body reacts to this with the stress response increasing or even causing anxiety symptoms. Alcohol is a depressant!



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