



SUBJECT: Stress Busting

RECIPIENTS: All Service areas (including schools)

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Top Ten Tips

1. Be active

Exercise won't make your stress disappear, but it will reduce some of the emotional intensity that you're feeling, clearing your thoughts and letting you to deal with your problems more calmly. For more advice, read [how being active helps mental wellbeing](#).

2. Take control

There's a solution to any problem. "If you remain passive, thinking, 'I can't do anything about my problem', your stress will get worse," says Professor Cooper. "That feeling of loss of control is one of the main causes of stress and lack of wellbeing."

The act of taking control is in itself empowering, and it's a crucial part of finding a solution that satisfies you and not someone else. Read tips on [how to manage your time](#).

3. Connect with people

A good support network of colleagues, friends and family can ease your work troubles and help you see things in a different way. "If you don't connect with people, you won't have support to turn to when you need help," says Professor Cooper.

The activities we do with friends help us relax. We often have a good laugh with them, which is an excellent stress reliever. "Talking things through with a friend will also help you find solutions to your problems," says Professor Cooper.

4. Have some 'me time'

Here in the UK, we work the longest hours in Europe, meaning we often don't spend enough time doing things we really enjoy. "We all need to take some time for socialising, relaxation or exercise," says Professor Cooper.

He recommends setting aside a couple of nights a week for some quality "me time" away from work. "By earmarking those two days, it means you won't be tempted to work overtime," he says.

5. Challenge yourself

Setting yourself goals and challenges, whether at work or outside, such as learning a new language or a new sport, helps to build confidence. This will help you deal with stress.



“By continuing to learn, you become more emotionally resilient as a person,” says Professor Cooper. “It arms you with knowledge and makes you want to do things rather than be passive, such as watching TV all the time.”

6. Avoid unhealthy habits

Don't rely on alcohol, smoking and caffeine as your ways of coping. “Men more than women are likely to do this. We call this avoidance behaviour,” says Professor Cooper. “Women are better at seeking support from their social circle.”

Over the long term, these crutches won't solve your problems. They'll just create new ones. “It's like putting your head in the sand,” says Professor Cooper. “It might provide temporary relief, but it won't make the problems disappear. You need to tackle the cause of your stress.”

7. Help other people

Professor Cooper says evidence shows that people, who help others, through activities such as volunteering or community work, become more resilient.

“Helping people who are often in situations worse than yours will help you put your problems into perspective,” says Professor Cooper. “The more you give the more resilient and happy you feel.” If you don't have time to volunteer, try to do someone a “good turn” every day. It can be something as small as helping someone to cross the road or going on a coffee run for colleagues.

8. Work smarter, not harder

Working smarter means prioritising your work, concentrating on the tasks that will make a real difference. “Leave the least important tasks to last,” says Cooper. “Accept that your in-tray will always be full. Don't expect it to be empty at the end of the day.”

9. Try to be positive

Look for the positives in life, and things for which you're grateful. “People don't always appreciate what they have,” says Professor Cooper. “Try to be glass half full instead of glass half empty,” he says. Try writing down three things that went well, or for which you're grateful, at the end of every day.

10. Accept the things you can't change

Changing a difficult situation isn't always possible. Try to concentrate on the things you do have control over. “If your company is going under and is making redundancies, for example, there's nothing you can do about it,” says Professor Cooper. “In a situation like that, you need to focus on the things that you can control, such as looking for a new job.”

Source: SHP online

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