

## Try to relax

The key to effective relaxation is finding what works for you. Yoga, listening to music, deep breathing and meditation are all things some people find helpful.

## Get the support you need

Seeking support can be key to getting through stressful situations. Ironically many will withdraw from those who might offer the most support. Even worse, stress can put a strain on the relationships you most depend on.

Even so, taking the time to talk with someone can be an important step to managing a stressful situation. Friends, family and work associates can help you let off steam.

By talking, solutions can start to become clear. Talking to someone will help you realise that you are not alone and help to reduce tension. If you can't turn to anyone close to you, you might find it useful to contact your employers Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) if they have one. Alternatively see your GP.

## Useful websites

- [www.livinglifetothefull.com](http://www.livinglifetothefull.com)
- What is stress? - Mind
- Get help with stress - NHS ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))

**For further information,  
please call us on**

**> 020 8295 8250**

[maitlandmedicaloccupationalhealth.com](http://maitlandmedicaloccupationalhealth.com)



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# Managing Stress

Know the signs and coping  
mechanisms

# What is stress?

Stress is what happens when the pressure you're under is more than you can cope with.

Stress is blamed for more lost working days than the common cold. Stress can result from sudden changes in circumstance just as much as from on-going struggle. The more stress gets to you the less likely you feel you can cope with what life throws your way.

## But stress needn't get the better of you!

Recognising the signs, taking control of your reactions and making sure you get the right support can make all the difference to how you deal with stressful situations. This leaflet will give you some ideas on reducing your stress levels, giving you the means to look forward with more confidence.

## Knowing the signs of stress

### How many stress symptoms can you recognise?

- Feeling angry or irritable, mood swings
- Feeling anxious, apprehensive or nervous
- Feeling depressed or low
- Suicidal thoughts
- Increased eating or drinking, or loss of appetite
- Frequent colds, infections, aches, pains or allergies
- Disturbed sleeping patterns Withdrawing from people

- Unable to concentrate
- Feeling guilty, ashamed, embarrassed
- Feeling helpless or out of control
- Loss of self-worth
- Changes in weight
- Breathlessness or feeling faint
- Sweating or clammy hands

## In the long term, stress can lead to more serious physical effects.

Knowing the signs can be a useful early warning, allowing you to take action to reduce stress levels. If you're suffering symptoms on a regular basis, you may wish to speak to your GP.

## Taking control & challenging negative thoughts

When stress takes over, normal challenges can look like threats, and serious events can seem unbearable. You can't always change the world around you, but you can change your reaction to it. Focusing on the negatives or predicting the worst can all take their toll and can lead to such as anxiety, low mood and anger.

## Taking one thing at a time

Try writing a list of the things that are stressing you and under each item write what needs to be done. You can then prioritise. Tasks can seem more manageable when written down.

# Look after yourself

## Give yourself a break.

It's easy to let stress take over your life. Making sure that difficulties aren't your only focus can be essential to getting through them.

Some form of physical exercise -even walking - can get your body's defences working and help bring stress levels down. Team sports can be particularly good.

Eating well is essential when you're feeling stressed -make sure you get a good balanced diet to be at your best. Keep hydrated; make sure you drink plenty of fluid.

Take time to do the things you enjoy. Spending all your time worrying will only wear you down further and leave you less able to cope. Give yourself things to look forward to -even a few hours out of the usual routine can give you a sense of perspective.

