

Some things to do to help reduce the stress

Reducing stress includes relaxation and making life changes that will remove or change the way you think about what is stressing you.

- **Practice relaxation and physical exercise.** Go for walks, or do gardening. Remember relaxation will be different for everyone.
- **Use deep breathing and mental relaxation or meditate** to help calm yourself when in difficult circumstances.
- **Develop small goals** that are achievable.
- **Structure your times.** Do not allow yourself to mope or dwell.
- **Coach yourself.** Use positive self talk to reduce your anxiety and overwhelming thoughts.
- Make good use of friends and work colleagues, **talk things over** with them.
- Modify your eating, **avoid lots of sugary and high energy food.**
- **Avoid excessive alcohol.**
- **Seek assistance** from a counsellor.

A Quick Check

Are You:

- Missing days from work?
- In conflict with work colleagues?
- Taking too much work home?
- Are you having difficulty delegating?
- Getting easily frustrated often?
- Having interrupted sleep?
- Putting lots of things off?
- Lacking motivation for things you normally enjoy?

Take the time to read this brochure.

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Stress, what is it?

Stress is a part of every day life. Without stress it would be hard to get things done. In all things there needs to be a balance and the same is true from stress. Too much stress makes it difficult to keep doing all the things you need and want to do.

Stress can come from a number of things which will be either external, or internal stressors.

When under stress a number of things happen which will affect how your body responds. One of the first things that the body will do is move to a higher state of alertness through the release of adrenaline and other hormones. This higher state of alertness uses a lot of your body's energies and resources.

If your life has frequent stressful events or is under constant pressure then sustained states of alertness will affect your health and functioning.

There is a need to ensure your body has the opportunity to rest and recover after a prolonged period of heightened alertness and finding ways to do this physically, mentally, and emotionally is crucial. Ways of relaxing will vary from person to person.

Identifying your stress and stressors is the first step in making it different.

Some things to look out for

The effects of 'bad' stress in people's personal and work lives can be quite significant, some things you may notice are:

- **Physical symptoms** such as, headaches, butterfly or acid stomach, grinding of teeth, pounding heart and restlessness.
- In relationships you may notice, **being easily angered and impatient.**
- Often feeling a lack of motivation or a sense of being 'down', **a general tiredness or lethargy.**
- An unexplained anxiousness or **being easily upset emotionally.**
- Having **trouble remembering** all the things that you need to do or people's names and the like.
- Find that you **begin eating, smoking or drinking alcohol more** than previously.
- Have trouble maintaining your **concentration or staying focused** on one task.
- Find yourself hoping for that **one big solution** that will sort it all out.

Some sources of stress

External stressors include:

- **Demands of work and family** being greater than you can meet.
- Not having enough money to **meet bills and pay debts.**
- Physical situations such as **too much noise**, being **continuously cold and wet** and **overcrowding.**
- Ongoing or unresolved **conflict with a work colleague, friend, or family member.**
- Saying yes to too many people and **unattainable deadlines.**

Internal stressors include:

- Your **beliefs about how things should be done** and the way people should behave.
- Having **expectations that are too great** for the time and resources you have available.
- Feeling inadequate and **lacking in confidence.**
- Allowing yourself to **assume the worst**, and worrying about it before it happens.